# Doubling the DMZ

**Yena Jang**  
**Bachelor Thesis**  
**Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague**

**Research question**The externally depoliticized appearance versus the internally power-laden nature of each space. - How the mechanisms of power have domesticated internet data and wildlife in the DMZ ?

**Abstract**  
This thesis explores the paradoxical nature of "safe zones" by examining how the current form of the Internet reflects the function of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Although both the DMZ and the Internet appear to offer protection, internal political forces render these spaces ambiguous, concealing deep structures of control. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality, the study reveals that these realms—whether physical or digital—are depicted as decentralized havens of peace, yet in reality are highly politicized. Employing a comparative and ecologically oriented perspective, the thesis analyzes data mining practices under AI-driven surveillance capitalism not as isolated technical processes, but as interdependent elements within a larger digital ecosystem. This perspective considers how these practices are influenced and shaped by social, political, and economic forces, understanding them as organisms interacting in a natural environment, and draws parallels between the controlled, propagandistic ecosystem of the DMZ and that of the Internet. Ultimately, this research demonstrates how protective boundaries disguise mechanisms of control and surveillance, advocating for a decolonial approach to both physical and digital spaces in order to dismantle the hidden power dynamics that shape our understanding and experience of security.

**Preface**I have not personally experienced war, yet I have lived in South Korea, a nation that has maintained an armistice for 70 years. From the ruins of conflict, Korea achieved rapid economic growth, but the division-induced tensions between North and South persist. I believe this is not solely Korea's issue but an existential dilemma faced by all beings that inherently establish boundaries and confront each other to survive. My inquiry stems from this 'paradoxical identity of living peacefully on a precarious boundary.' With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and the growing influence of the internet, the world is now intertwined into a vast network, blurring the lines between people more than ever. Consequently, this writing naturally leads to an interest in today's 'boundaries.' On one hand, I was born within the national boundary of Korea and have personally felt its reality; on the other, I live as an individual within a transnational network led by the internet and big tech. This piece is a record of my questions and the search for answers. Through this writing, which directly touches upon my identity, I aim to clearly recognize and actively address my inner anxieties, crafting a sort of 'personal manifesto.' Furthermore, I hope this endeavor transcends individual effort, becoming a fragment of interpretation that serves as a 'call to action' for contemporaries who share the experience of living on ambiguous boundaries—especially those who feel anxieties similar to mine. How we piece together the scattered clues in the world will shape the fragments of the future.

**Introduction**

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| Boundaries are often depicted as walls, but in truth they are far more intricate. A boundary is not simply a line or barrier; it marks where I end and someone else begins. At once, it performs contradictory functions: protection and separation, connection and disconnection. Within this ambiguous duality, we experience both the sense of security that boundaries confer and the anxiety they inevitably generate. Such a dual state of mind formed the backdrop to my upbringing in Seoul—the capital of the world’s last divided nation—at the tail end of the Cold War in the 1990s. In everyday life, the calm and the unease brought about by boundaries would unexpectedly intersect time and again. Here, I want to delve into the truth behind these boundaries.  In Korean society, the existence of boundaries is sharply illustrated by the Military Demarcation Line that cuts the peninsula into two. After the Korean War ended in 1945, negotiations established a buffer zone two kilometers to the north and two kilometers to the south of this line, creating what is known as the Demilitarized Zone (United Nations Command et al., 1953, Article 1)[[1]](#endnote-2).The mix of security and anxiety surrounding this boundary goes beyond the mere geographical space of the DMZ and reflects broader political and social circumstances in Korea (Park, 1997)[[2]](#endnote-3). In fact, the DMZ carries two faces: the notion of stability and peace, promoted as a “pristine ecological treasure,” and the specter of threat and conflict, manifested by ongoing military tension and rigorous surveillance (Song, 2022.). As fears of nuclear armament and armed clashes intensify, the DMZ’s “peaceful and ecological” image paradoxically becomes more prominent. Yet behind this green curtain lies the undeniable legacy of war, with layers of remnants and scars accumulated over decades.  I encountered this green curtain—long dormant in my subconscious—quite unexpectedly during a morning stroll in park in The Hague, Netherlands. Amid the greenery path barely visible through the dense fog, a tall stiff stem rising from the ground with its tip slightly bowed heads out; trying to blend in among real plants mimicking their appearance. This drooping thing turned out to be an unused fiber-optic internet cable. Ironically, however, it was far more ubiquitous than any actual vegetation covering the entire globe internationally.  In the Netherlands, fiber-optic cables sprawl beneath the ground like roots of a vast living organism. These multi-colored cables reflect government policies that assign specific colors to certain internet service providers on each street[[3]](#footnote-2).Following these roots to their underground hub, one eventually reaches massive data centers housing super-computing machines that emit intense heat. Because these centers handle sensitive tasks of classifying and analyzing data, they remain highly confidential, with even company employees often unaware of their precise locations or identities.  For some thirty years now, the Internet’s “warm blessing” has become so integral to our lives that it might as well join sunlight and water as a basic component of our being. On average, people spend over 70% of their day online, though they often do so without even realizing it. Shoshana Zuboff (2019) warns that this deep digital dependence has spawned a new power dynamic known as “surveillance capitalism,” which collects and commercializes human behavior and data without restraint, rapidly Infringing on the entire world through virtual, rather than physical, borders (Zuboff, 2019, p. 21)[[4]](#endnote-4). The Internet may appear to unify the globe, yet in practice it is perpetually segmented by national laws, corporate algorithms, and data regulations (Nissenbaum, 2010)[[5]](#endnote-5). These “digital boundaries” not only determine who has control over personal data but can also restrict access itself for some users.  Ultimately, the DMZ as a physical boundary and the Internet as a digital boundary share an underlying pattern: on one hand, they offer safety or convenience; on the other, they obscure a subtle infiltration of power. Just as the Korean government and media promote the DMZ as a “pure, untouched ecosystem,” big tech corporations market their platforms as open, participatory spaces. Yet the more concealed a domain is, the more deftly power weaves its influence (Foucault, 1979) **[[6]](#footnote-3)[[7]](#endnote-6)**. The process by which governments and big tech firms craft specific narratives that citizens or users then “voluntarily” embrace aligns with Michel Foucault’s concept of “governmentality.” In much the same way the DMZ never fully escaped the debris of war or its surveillance apparatus, our supposedly boundless Internet similarly harvests consumer data as a vast resource for control.  It is this notion of “boundaries” that anchors my investigation. Though the boundary between North and South and the boundary of Internet privacy appear to be two distinct realms, both harbor a certain ambiguity that simultaneously evoke both stability and unease. As a Korean, raised amid the tension of a national divide, and as a modern Internet user who confronts the precariousness of digital privacy each day, I want to explore these two settings in tandem. The foggy edges of these boundaries may threaten or unsettle us, yet they also open up the possibility of transformation. However, the moment we romanticize these boundaries as “pristine nature” or a “free network,” the underlying power and our shared responsibility become ever more difficult to perceive. Hence, this paper illuminates the unsettling and dual nature of boundaries, revealing the hidden workings of power behind them, while pondering how we might reconceptualize and rebuild such boundaries for ourselves.  This thesis is divided into 4 chapters. **Chapter 1** examines how the DMZ came to be recognized as both a zone of peace and a zone of war, and sheds light on the ecological system of the DMZ, where elements of "violence" - such as land mines, invasive species, and herbicides - have co-evolved with the local flora and fauna. **Chapter 2** focuses on the concept of the 'digital DMZ' and shows how the physical borders - not only Korean border but also international borders - have transformed into digital borders. **Chapter 3** examines the early days of the Internet and the evolving discourse of data on the Internet in an era of hyper-connectivity. It explores how the original vision of the Internet - as an open and decentralized space - contrasts with today's networked reality, where artificial intelligence and big data can fuel a form of "data colonialism" that turns the Internet into a revealing mechanism of surveillance and control. **Chapter 4** argues that the Internet is becoming another digital form of the DMZ in the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, which guides how people think and act, and closes with thoughts on the alternatives we might pursue. | A close-up of a pair of sticks  AI-generated content may be incorrect. A syringe with a blue handle  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  1 In the Netherlands, the cable strands growing on the streets are a by-product of households not connected to the internet cable. The cables are colour-coded for the different Internet service providers. For example, orange denotes KPN, green could be ZIGGO, pink THE MOBILE, and turquoise DELTA. Also, the number of cables gives an indication of the number of households in the building that are not connected. (Interviews with service provider KPN and Ziggo). Internet cables carry various data types. Even though the data is encrypted to protect service communications, much identifying information can be extracted from the packets, called the metadata of the data - where you're located, who you're communicating with, etc    **2** Foucault's argument posits that, within monarchies, the overt display of severe punishments and executions, driven by the pursuit of royal objectives and the consolidation of power, could engender profound revulsion and dehumanisation. This, in turn, served as a catalyst for the emergence of anti-power movements. In contemporary society, however, disciplinary power operates in a more sophisticated and discreet manner, fostering the cultivation of certain freedoms and human rights rather than their repression. (Foucault, 1979) The modus operandi of power has evolved to become less visible to the public. |

**Chapter 1  
(De)Militalized Zone**

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| A map of the south korean peninsula  Description automatically generatedA rusty sign on a post  Description automatically generated **Fig.1-2** The Military Demarcation Line within the Korean Demilitarized Zone.  Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is a heavily militarized strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula near *the 38th parallel***[[8]](#footnote-4).** It extends roughly 250 kilometers (160 miles) from east to west and spans about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) in width, dividing the peninsula nearly in half. The DMZ was established on July 27, 1953, through the Korean Armistice Agreement following three years of Korean war(1950-1953) between Soviet-backed North Korea and U.S.-backed South Korea. This agreement is an armistice rather than a formal end to the war; therefore, in practical terms, the conflict has not ended, and both parties remain in an ongoing state of hostility. As a result, large numbers of troops remain stationed along both sides of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), each side vigilantly guarding against potential aggression even after 71 years (National Archives, n.d.)[[9]](#endnote-7). Owing to the severity of the conflict and the precarious nature of the ceasefire, the MDL marks the position of the front line when the agreement was signed, making it one of the most contested sites during the Korean War. Considering such intense history of the region, it remains heavily fortified and largely off-limits to civilians even decades later. Apart from military outposts on both sides, only the Joint Security Area (JSA) and two authorized villages—Daeseong-dong, “Freedom Village” in South Korea and Kijong-dong, “Peace Village” in North Korea[[10]](#footnote-5)—are allowed within the DMZ (Indiana University Newsroom, 2015). Consequently, this buffer zone has remained largely inaccessible to the public for the past seven decades, reinforcing its mysterious aura.  A river with trees and a hill  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  Yet, in stark contrast to its heavily militarized atmosphere, the DMZ’s natural environment has flourished due to limited development and minimal human disturbance. The region functions as a transitional zone for flora from colder northern climates and those from warmer southern ecosystems. Indeed, the DMZ occupies only 1.5% of the Korean Peninsula’s total area, yet is home to 6,168 species of flora and fauna—including over 100 globally endangered species (National Instutitue of Ecology, 1974-2018)[[11]](#endnote-8). Among the 267 critically endangered species designated by South Korea’s Ministry of Environment, 102 have been confirmed in the DMZ, representing nearly 40% of the total. Seung-ho Lee, president of the DMZ Forum, refers to the region as an “accidental paradise,” marveling at how nature has reclaimed and regenerated the area over the last six decades (CNN, 2019)[[12]](#endnote-9). Such ecological recovery is even more striking when considering that, half a century ago, wartime devastation left many mountains bare, prompting children to depict hills in red rather than green. Today, global environmental organizations praise South Korea’s rapid reforestation efforts (Choi, 2022)[[13]](#endnote-10).  Over time, the DMZ has been recognized domestically and internationally for its ecological and cultural value and has been portrayed as a symbol of peace. This recognition spurred biological field research and generated numerous forms of tourism and promotional products. For instance, the South Korean government developed the DMZ “Peace Trail,” comprising eleven themed walking routes that highlight the region’s natural resources **Fig4**. Moreover, water resources flowing from North Korea’s Hantan River through the DMZ to South Korea’s Han River are bottled and sold as pure, pristine drinking water **Fig5**.    A landscape with mountains and clouds  Description automatically generated 대산문화재단 - 21세기 문학의 창 -  **Fig 5-1** Peace Road Walking Application Website.  **Fig 5-2** Ahn Gyeon’s Mongyudo-won-do (1447)  Park Jong-taek, Director of the Tourism Policy Bureau at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, stated, “We expect that the opening of this themed route will stimulate security tourism in the DMZ border regions, leading to the recovery of local economies that have been depressed by population decline and development restrictions.” Although it is clear that this project was initiated as part of local economic development efforts, these economic considerations are omitted from the photograph. Instead, the soft and warm sunlight illuminates nature, emphasizing the serene and sacred atmosphere of paradise.  Despite this image of the DMZ as an emblem of peace and untouched nature, several factors complicate the narrative. Chief among them is the lingering presence of landmines. According to one account, in 1974, landmines were dropped by helicopter and scattered across various locations—an enduring threat that deters both wildlife and researchers (Park, 2022). These conditions constrain ecological surveys, which have remained fragmented and incomplete due to the political and military tensions that limit joint research between North and South Korea. Although both government agencies and global environmental organizations believe that understanding this “accidental restoration” could offer valuable insights for damaged ecosystems worldwide, real progress in studying the DMZ’s biodiversity has been sporadic. In South Korea, piecemeal surveys began along the Civilian Control Line in the mid-1980s, and full-scale ecological studies of the DMZ’s interior did not commence until after 2008 (Park, 2022). Consequently, reliable scientific data about the region’s ecosystems remain limited.  A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated  A water bottle with a label  Description automatically generatedA close-up of water bottles on a conveyor belt  Description automatically generated  Fig 7 The purified drinkable DMZ water promotion images  Meanwhile, the DMZ’s commercial and promotional portrayals continue to emphasize peace and purity, often overlooking the realities of landmines, fragmented research, and unshared water-quality data between North and South. The water sold as pure and clean, for example, is not monitored jointly by both countries, leaving the possibility of unknown pollutants migrating downstream unacknowledged (DMZ TV, 2022)[[14]](#endnote-11). These discrepancies illustrate how the DMZ has been packaged as a place of peace and natural glory, even though its scientific and ecological truths have yet to be fully ascertained. In the end, while the DMZ’s resilient ecosystems testify to nature’s capacity for regeneration, they are also layered with unresolved military tensions and remnants of war. Examining specific species—such as endangered Asiatic black bears **반달가슴곰**, plants growing in soil affected by defoliants, the oriental white stork **저어새**, and invasive flora like Ambrosia trifida**단풍잎돼지풀**—will reveal an even more complex ecological patchwork (Choi, 2022).[[15]](#endnote-12) | A map of a country with a route  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **3 *the 38th parallel*** After World War II (1945), Korea was liberated from Japanese rule, but it was divided along the 38th parallel as part of a temporary arrangement between the United States (south) and the Soviet Union (north). This division eventually led to the Korean War, when North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to unify the peninsula under communist rule. Although the war ended in an **armistice** (not a peace treaty), the border remains roughly at the same location today, near the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).  A flag on a pole in a city  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **4** Kijeong-dong and Daeseong-dong were designated as the only civilian residential areas within DMZ to assert that the armed silence of the DMZ is not a symbol of abandonment but a measure maintained until the reunification of Korea. Situated around 800 meters apart, the villages are separated by the Imjin River. Consequently, the Imjin River once had served as a conduit for connection, has become a rigid boundary enforcing perpetual separation. The evolving relationship between these villages, serves as a poignant reflection of the broader realities of national division. A building on a hill  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Fig 3**. Under international law, a demilitarized zone is defined as “a designated area in which a state is obliged not to station military personnel or maintain military facilities.” Although it was established as a buffer zone to prevent the recurrence of war, North and South Korea continue to watch each other intently from this narrow strip of land, with tensions never fully eased. As a result, no one can cross the DMZ—it is not so much a demilitarized zone as it is a forbidden land into which no one may enter.  DMZ 평화의 길을 걷다 1 대표 이미지**Fig4 Book Cover, Walking the DMZ Peace Road.** The cover of the book *Walking the DMZ Peace Road*, which documents the DMZ as its members of the DMZ Ecotourism Association traverse each course of the walking trail they developed, refers to the DMZ in a particular way intended to recast it as a space of peace and coexistence. The caption at the bottom of the cover contains expressions such as “an ecological paradise where all plants and animals are happiest because human footsteps have not touched it” and “a place where, even 70 years later, the tragedy of fratricidal conflict remains, allowing the value of peace to be felt.” Yet, how can a place untouched by human feet be a minefield, how can one feel peace amid an ongoing tragedy, and how can flora and fauna truly be at their happiest?  **Fig 5-2****Ahn Gyeon’s *Mongyudo-won-do* (1447)** Ahn Gyeon’s *Mongyudo-won-do* represents the “ideal world (paradise)” as depicted in Korean painting. The delicate and majestic landscapes—featuring mist-enshrouded rivers and valleys along with scenes of peach tree groves—combine to create a mysterious and tranquil ambiance. The composition, divided into left, center, and right sections, rhythmically arranges mountains, water, and mist, further enhancing its dreamlike quality. This approach is similarly applied to the DMZ Peace Road, where the richness of nature and the beautiful glow of the setting sun imbue the viewer with a sense of “complete peace.” By using the motif of a dream to portray an ideal realm that transcends time and space, *Mongyudo-won-do* clearly indicates that its subject lies on the boundary between reality and unreality. In contrast, the Peace Road, through its depiction of the existing natural environment, reveals a romantic perspective on the DMZ. |

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| **The Hidden Boundary**  A fence in a forest  Description automatically generatedA smoke coming out of a building  Description automatically generatedA black and white image of a fence and smoke  Description automatically generated  **Fig 8** In October 2015, in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) near Paju in Gyeonggi Province, a "wooden-box mine" planted by North Korea with lethal intent exploded, seriously injuring two South Korean soldiers (Seoul Newspaper, 2015)[[16]](#endnote-13)  Based on the military demarcation line in the DMZ area, 1.27 million landmines are estimated to be buried in the south and 800,000 landmines in the north, and it is evaluated as the world's best in terms of burial density (Lee, 2018)[[17]](#endnote-14). Most of the DMZ mine areas in the south are unidentified mine areas without information related to burial. The Ministry of National Defense predicts that it will take 489 years to remove all mines in the DMZ with our current military technology, the process of identification and removal presenting a challenge the DMZ became a massive fear of the unpredictability of not knowing where landmines are buried (Lee, 2018)[[18]](#endnote-15). The physical border of landmines is the most authoritative mechanism that marks the DMZ ecosystem as a danger. Landmines, along with organic and invertebrates, are ecological elements that make up the soil of the DMZ. The violence buried in the soil does not spare the species living in the DMZ. Modern DMZ biological species have settled down through the process of adaptation to violence that keeps the DMZ a threat (KBS, 2013)[[19]](#endnote-16). Soldiers who worked in the DMZ say that most wild animals pass through the minefield safely because they identify landmines through their sense of smell and have their passage network(The JoongAng, 2019)[[20]](#endnote-17). In other words, they are beings designed by violence (Song, 2022)[[21]](#endnote-18). | A wild boar in a fenced in area  Description automatically generated A bird standing on snow  Description automatically generated **Fig 9-10** Wild animals injured by landmines are sometimes observed in the DMZ. The biological environment of the DMZ has settled down, adapting to violence. Although not directly observed, it is reported that medium-to-large mammals such as water deer, roe deer, and wild boar suffer injuries from landmines. (KBS Documentary, 2013) |

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| **The Orange green**  A tree stump on the side of a road  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Fig 11** The mulberry tree in the DMZ, once cut down for surveillance purposes,  has never regrown since being exposed to Agent Orange.  After the Korean War, the DMZ became a barren ridge covered in the charred remains of red blood and blackened ash(Choi, 2022). This was because most of the ground fighting during the war took place in this area. In 1962 to 1970, the US military also sprayed Agent Orange across the DMZ three to four times a month(Tak, 2021)[[22]](#endnote-19). In areas where it was used, vegetation struggled to grow, making it easier to monitor enemy movements. An example of Agent Orange use is the "Mulberry Murder Incident" at the Joint Security Area after the armistice (DMZ, 1997). In 1976, the U.S. military monitored Outpost 3 and the DMZ from Observation Post 5, but dense mulberry branches obstructed their view. While Captain Bonifas, Lt. Barrett, and their team trimmed the trees, North Korean soldiers ambushed them with axes and clubs, killing both officers and injuring others. In response, the U.S. deployed a carrier near North Korea as a show of force (German Democratic Republic Embassy in North Korea, 1976)[[23]](#endnote-20). They also cut down the mulberry trees and sprayed them with Agent Orange. This ensured that the trees would never grow back. Although an invisible border [[24]](#footnote-6)now divides the two sides, soldiers from both North and South continue to monitor each other in plain view, making the DMZ effectively a fully armed zone.  Nature as a paradisiacal ideal - the distinction between nature and civilization which implies the preconception that peaceful nature disengage with any human intervention - is a recurrent idea in the binary frameworks of human history. Again, the long-standing portrayal of the nature of the DMZ as a sanctuary free from the corruption of human intervention - a symbol of untainted peace and liberation - has shaped the public perception and has become what society still imagines the DMZ as nature to be. In the following chapters, I will allegorically manifest the pallarells between the concept of Internet structure and nature from the ground to mantle of those two. By dismantling the popular preconception, I argue that the internet become another DMZ in digital world. | A group of people playing in a park  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  **Fig.12** North Korean soldiers attack United Nations Command Personnel with axes Aug.18,1976, near checkpoint No.3 in the Joint Security Area of the demilitarized zone.  (Bride Lane Library/Popperforto/Getty Image)  A sign in the woods  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  **3, Fig.13Invisible Border** The Military Demarcation Line is a conceptual boundary on maps, not a physical barrier like fences. Instead, 1,292 markers including the mulberry tree, placed 300–500m apart, indicate the MDL, maintained by the UN, North Korean military, and Chinese forces. These markers display Korean and English on the south side and Korean and Chinese on the north. Until the 1970s, troops periodically adjusted marker positions to expand territory, leading to fatal clashes. Over time, dense vegetation has obscured most markers, leaving only a few visible to soldiers within the DMZ today (Man, 2009)[[25]](#endnote-21).  A person in a newspaper  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |

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| Chapter 2 **From War to the DMZ, from the DMZ to Cyber War**  **A diagram of a firewall  AI-generated content may be incorrect. Fig 11** The IT DMZ architecture design after the DMZ of Korea.[[26]](#footnote-7)  An American computer expert, inspired by the Demilitarized Zone of Korea, designed a network system called 'DMZ'. In this system, the internal network (intranet) is completely isolated from the external network (Internet) except for one connection segment. Through this single link, services such as shopping, securities, financial transactions, and reservations are provided to users. In cyberspace, the DMZ is a hub of extensive communication and exchange; however, once breached, internal servers and PCs are immediately compromised. With no warning or alarm, this risk can suddenly materialize. (Wikipedia, n.d.)  However, the latent dangers associated with perimeters are no longer limited to just a few of the enterprise services that use the DMZ network system. Today's DMZ is expanding beyond its original boundaries, transcending the network system and reaching into the transnational Internet, due to the constant mediation and universality of the Internet-a space unbound by time or place. In the novel DMZ (Kim, 1997), which captures the infinite expansion of boundaries from the offline to the online world, the residents of Daeseong-dong in South Korea and Gijeong-dong in North Korea are connected by the Internet and eventually meet again in the DMZ more than 60 years later. In this narrative, the Internet functions not as a medium for free communication driven by shared national sentiment, but as a battleground for attacking and defending. Cyber-hacking in the virtual realm thus becomes a means to enable bombing terrorism in the physical DMZ, further exacerbating the inter-Korean conflict **fig13**. Though they meet half a century after the separation, mistrust and persecution cloud their path to reconciliation. I believe that this novel is not merely fictional. Rather, it uses literary techniques to reveal little-known truths about how borders operate today, shifting between online and offline.  A close-up of a broken ball  AI-generated content may be incorrect.A blue wires on a stone surface  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Fig.14** (Left) a plant grow in the gap of old military helmet in DMZ Southen area.  **Fig.15 (**Right) Internet cables root from underground and stand alone. | A red wall with a white text  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  **4 The Great Fire Wall of China** Firewalla are fundamentally designed to inspect and control network traffic according to defined rules, which is a core aspect of network security. This same functionality—filtering and controlling data—can also be harnessed for censorship or content control. For example, state-level systems like the Great Firewall of China use advanced filtering techniques (including deep packet inspection, DNS blocking, etc.) to restrict access to certain foreign websites and services. In essence, while the primary goal of a firewall in many settings is to protect against malicious traffic and unauthorized access, its capabilities can also be directed towards controlling and censoring information flow.   A group of people in uniform working on computers  AI-generated content may be incorrect.  Fig. 13 **North Korean students practicing computer skills at Mangyongdae Revolutionary School.** (Korean Central News Agency)North Korea has internet access only in Pyongyang, while the rest of the country operates on a closed intranet, making it disconnected from the global online network. As a result, cyberattacks targeting North Korea are largely ineffective, whereas North Korea's cyberattacks on the world are not. According to Kim Kuk-sung, a former high-ranking North Korean official (*Unanswered Questions*, 2022), becoming a member of the Cyber Reconnaissance General Bureau and gaining unrestricted internet access abroad serves as a major motivation for many young North Koreans to study hacking. Perhaps due to this, the Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center, in its "National Cyber Power Index 2022," ranked North Korea first in the world for offensive cyber capabilities in the financial sector.  (\*)the increase f NK attack on Korea digital attact (chat GPt) |
| In 2023, more than 1.62 million hacking attempts against Korean companies and public institutions were traced back to North Korea in more than 80% of cases, according to the Korean National Intelligence Service (SBS, 2022)[[27]](#endnote-22). However, North Korea's cyber-attacks and terrorism are not confined to South Korea; its targeting of cryptocurrencies and financial exchanges is causing problems on a global scale (DailyNK, 2021)[[28]](#endnote-23). According to Svitlana Natviyenko, cyber war - which includes various incidents, tensions and conflicts arising from the development of the Internet infrastructure (often referred to as "information war" or "netwar") - is essentially a struggle for hegemony between state actors, non-state actors, companies and ad hoc groups. This war is being waged in a completely opaque manner, intertwined with massive digital mobilisations, and at the same time is emerging as a war of unprecedented ahumanity, run by the malware implantation, botnets and chatbots (Svitlana Natviyenko, 2021)[[29]](#endnote-24). The legacy of the Cold War is evident not only in the firearms carried by soldiers on the DMZ, but also in the silent codified gunfire of cyber warfare. Although armed clashes at the DMZ were frequent until the 1980s, superficial conflicts have subsided since the 1990s(\*ChatGPT answered), and with them the sense of border vigilance and division in Korean society. North Korea’s attacks have extended beyond its physical borders, infiltrating the digital realm. As territorial boundaries blur and once-visible signs of conflict fade, armistice has come to be seen as the end of war, and silence as synonymous with peace. Nature, often framed as a symbol of peace, instead serves as a facade for control in a world that has grown blind to the violence embedded in borders. Likewise, the Internet, once a force of decolonization and liberation, has become fluid and malleable—where freedom is no longer inherent but subject to regulation.In the following chapter, it draws a parallel between the Internet’s evolution and the layered structure of nature, revealing how both, despite their appearance of neutrality, are shaped by deeper mechanisms of power. By challenging the illusion of digital freedom, I allegorically depict the Internet as a digital nature of DMZ—a controlled land of peace that appears open and free yet operates within an underlying framework of control and regulation. |  |
| Chapter 3 **The Shining and Blinding Neon Green Internet**  **A screen with writing on it  AI-generated content may be incorrect.A black background with green and white spots  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**A tree with many branches  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Fig.15** Char Davies’ *Osmose* is a VR installation artwork (1991)    Since its commercialization in the 1990s, the Internet has been conceptualized as a symbol of freedom and resistance against oppressive state power (Smith, 2001). The Free Software and Open-Source Movements were visually embodied in the Linux operating system (1991), while the *Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace* (1996) proclaimed a vision of liberation (Jones, 2013). Even before these milestones, the countercultural ideals of the hippie movement—advocating a return to nature—merged with the technological possibilities of the Internet, shaping what some consider the freest space in history (Torvalds et al., 2001/2002).  Nature and the Internet share a fundamental trait: both are "green spaces" that emerged in the postwar period as alternatives born from skepticism and rebellion against centralized power. As Char Davies’ comparison of cyberspace to nature illustrates, some sought refuge in nature, while others envisioned liberation in the open, decentralized space of the Internet (Rheingold, 1993).  The color green[[30]](#footnote-8), derived from the Old English *grene*, connects both realms, symbolizing vitality, renewal, and security while evoking feelings of peace and calm (Gage, 1993). In cyberspace, however, green has taken on a distinct aesthetic, heavily influenced by science fiction—most notably in *The Matrix* (1999), where cascading neon green code against a black backdrop became an iconic visual.  Yet, green's symbolism extends beyond peace and harmony. As Gage (1993) points out, it is also associated with greed, representing the insatiable pursuit of wealth. The Internet, once envisioned as a utopian green space, has darkened over time, revealing a deeper shade of green beneath its shimmering neon surface—exposing the hidden greed embedded within digital spaces (Bogna, 2023). Green can no longer be assumed to represent tranquility.  Thirty years after Char Davies introduced the idea of cyberspace as a green forest, it is essential to revisit this vision and explore where nature and cyberspace truly converge (Jones, 2014). In *The Black Forest of the Internet*, Bogna captures how the once-soothing green Internet forest has transformed into a shadowed realm, where conspiracy and surveillance cast an unblinking gaze.    **The Internet as a dark forest**  **A bunch of tangled branches  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**  Fig.16The cable lines entangled with the roots of trees (getty image)  “The roots grow upwards, and the crown reaches downwards: wrapped around the planet, the internet circulates between satellites and underwater cables[[31]](#footnote-9). The internet is a tangible space, yes, but also a mental expanse—made for sleepwalking, for a mundane delirium. For sacrificial rituals, people get lost in it by shining light in all the wrong places, exposing too much about themselves, and communicating impulsively, recklessly. We can enter through an interface, but also through our pocket. We can enter through a screen, but we must screen something of ourselves in return. A traveler who enters the forest is never alone, with eyes wrapped around them like insulation tape (Bogna, 2020)[[32]](#endnote-25).”  In the blind forest, digitalization creeps under the skin. Can privacy exists in this forest? – In other words, Is the boundary of privacy feels under the skin as well as digitalization? As virtual reality often means cyberspace, it is virtual that almost every single action and information we transmit as data is recorded. However, what kind of data is collected and recorded, and how the collected data is analysed, is known only to a few other large organisations, not to the individuals concerned as much[[33]](#footnote-10). Hardware such as submarine cables, satellites and data centers, which form the key infrastructure that connects intercontinental internet traffic, are owned and operated by specific companies and governments. Because of their market power and influence over technical standards, Big Tech companies have inherent political and economic interests in the design and standardization of software and protocols such as TCP/IP, DNS and HTML. Furthermore, the influence of Big Tech's phantomization is also manifested in institutional arrangements and practices (Article 19, Knodel and Uhlig, 2020)[[34]](#endnote-26). The privatized components and mechanisms of the internet are touted as convenient, and their flaws are obscured by dark patterns (Dickinson, 2023)[[35]](#endnote-27). In the age of hyper-connectivity, where social activities, work, commerce and government have moved from offline to online, access to services has become inevitable, but users are excluded if they do not consent in the moment of doubt (Park, 2021)[[36]](#endnote-28). Subscription has become a survival strategy, not a choice. Every computer operating system or smartphone application comes with a jargon-laden set of terms and conditions that are difficult for non-specialists to understand. When it comes to our digital presence, we don't compromise. We click the accept button to use the service, but we have no idea what the consequences of our actions will be. Take it to further extreme, while the upward mobile web of the Internet is dependent on the deeply rooted crown below, the eradication of the data roots is the eradication of the one’s existence on world.  **Green energy extraction**  **A close-up of people in a stadium  AI-generated content may be incorrect.A view through a scope  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**  Fig.17 (Left) The conventional use of green to highlight detected objects and data. Fig.18 (Right) the reticle focused on the target in DMZ from the view of a sniper.  Since 2016, the value of data has surpassed that of oil. The world's most valuable companies, as determined by market capitalisation, are Google, Meta, Amazon, and Tesla. The primary reason for these companies' success is their exploitation of a highly valuable commodity: the data of individuals (The great hack, 2019)[[37]](#endnote-29). The practice of extracting data from individuals in exchange for services is indicative of the current status of information giants such as Google, where the liberating, positive, and productive forms of power are emerging as the new hegemony, replacing the old power of surveillance and oppression.  A person standing in front of a wall with colorful letters  AI-generated content may be incorrect. Fig.19 Google’s motto  Google's original motto, 'Don't be evil', was a self-reflexive declaration that warned against the dangers of massive power in the process of accessing, collecting, and analyzing all the world's information. Google recognizes that knowledge and power are intertwined, and states on its website that its goal is to 'organize the world's information and make it accessible to everyone' (How Google Search Works, n.d.). However, the process by which Google collects and indexes information, tailoring it to individual users, is a sophisticated mechanism of power. For example, corporate-driven search engines such as Google and its mapping system are designed to meet the needs of global and local markets, reproducing a singular and implicitly normalized perspective derived from colonialist projects (Vertical Atlas, 2022). However, these processes of categorization and mapping do not fully capture lived reality and often conflict with structures that impose universal standards. The inherent complexity of unstructured data poses significant challenges in terms of comprehension and quantification. Google's approach to categorizing and quantifying this data employs a set of rules, thereby reinforcing the arbitrariness of its algorithms. This act of power effectively marginalizes intuition and experience, relegating them to a secondary or erroneous status. This phenomenon serves to limit our perception, blinding us to alternative forms of power that might exist beyond the scope of Google's concerns (Park, 2019)[[38]](#endnote-30).  **2. Militarized Pattern of Green Internet**  **A long hallway with rows of blue lights  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**A drawing of a building  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Fig.20** The cloud Internet server consists of gigantic factories that enable exchanges and transactions worldwide **Fig.21** Jeremy Bentham’s original blueprint for the *Panopticon*, a circular prison design proposed in the late 18th century.  Dividual - Condividual - Data bias – data corruption – black box - brack forest  Mega-corporations like Google transform individuals into dividuals, measuring and modulating their behavior through vast data infrastructures. In *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, Gilles Deleuze describes a shift from shaping individuals to administering dividuals—fragmented digital selves reduced to numeric footprints stored in data banks (Deleuze, 1992). Our online behavior is continuously captured, analyzed, and deconstructed into statistical vectors, clusters, and patterns. Every click refines an ever-evolving, multi-dimensional data portrait, not as a coherent self but as a fluid, algorithmically defined entity.  This data body—consisting of millions of data points across countless dimensions—is what Deleuze terms the dividual, a human subject fragmented and reducible to data representations. The Critical Art Ensemble warns that this digital self serves corporate and state surveillance, describing it as “the fascist sibling of the virtual body.” Unlike a unified identity, the dividual is not centralized but dispersed across rhizomatic networks of data brokers and constant information exchange.  According to Marco Deseriis, the dividual is inherently interactive, easily detached and recombined with other data fragments. Matteo Pasquinelli expands this idea, suggesting that dividuals enable collective formations, giving rise to condividuals—networked, posthuman assemblages shaped by algorithmic governance. In contrast to the individual, which asserts uniqueness, the dividual is defined by its endless fluidity, recombination, and integration into broader systems of control.  **A screenshot of a computer error message  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**  **Errorneous Algolithm**  **이와같이인터넷권력의 특정한 단일 관점 설계된 데이터 트리는뿌리가편향되었다. 정보학상뿌리는상위계층하부에계속해서뿌리를내리는데,인공지능은 이뿌리에서시작해서그뿌리를점차 더깊숙히가지내림에 따라이편향된데이터트리를 강화하고있다.알고리즘에 의해 선택되고 강화되는 데이터 마이닝 과정을 통해서 패턴의패턴을 재생산하면서 기존의 편향된 구조를 더욱이 공고히 하는 결과를 이루어냈다.**  **구조와 구성의 둘 모두의 측면에서 인터넷은 예측 할 수 없는 덩어리가되었다. 데이터의 AI화에따른 자동적인 수집 분석 처리 시스템의 구축, 그리고 다시 이 데이터 분석을 바탕으로 한 새로운 통치의 전략과 실천이 마치 톱니바퀴처럼 정확히 맞물려 돌아가고 있는 상황이다. 우리가 생산하는 수많은 데이터들이 우리가 누구인지를 판단하고 예측하는 데 사용될 뿐만 아니라, 더 나아가 우리의 생각과 행동을 특정한 방향으로 이끌어 내는 기제로도 전유되고 있는 것이다. 사용자의 과거 정체성이 현재의 개별적인 데이터 패턴을 만들고 그것이 다시 고유한 알고리즘의 인도 작용을 따라 미래에 마주할 결과값으로 이어지는 자기참조적인 도식이다. “데이터를 가진 자가 통제력도 갖는다”의 문구가 의미하듯,데이터를바탕으로서비스를제공하는소프트웨어모델은 이 도식대로 수집분석된개개인의데이터를 바탕으로 적절한 알고리즘 모델을 개발 적용하여 자연스레 그 개개인이 미래에 접하게 될 정보의 성격과 방향도 규정하고있다. Bogna가지적한 대로, 우리는자유롭게스크린으로들어갈 수있지만 그대가로스크린(검열)을당해야하고, 이숲에서절연테이프로눈을가린수많은혼자가아닌존재들이 바로 이현상을말하는 것같다.**  **이러한 알고리즘의숲의어둠에서빠져나오려는 노력은 많은 비판적인 미디어 매체에서 다뤄지지만, 결국 인터넷이라는 플랫폼을 중계하고 데이터와 알고리즘을 통을 악용하는 특정 정부와 기업이 문제라는 식이다. 빠르게 변화해 가는 현재의 미디어 환경과 그안에서 이루어지는 새로운 통치의 테크놀로지를 화두로 삼으면서도 정작 그 중심에는 감시, 억압, 독재 , 음모등과 같은 지극히 오래되고 정형화된 과거 권력의 형상을 현대로 버전업 시킨채로 위치시키고 있다. 그러한 이숲에도 권력은 분명히 존재한다.하지만 권력의 불순함 자체는선명하다. 인터넷이라는 테크놀로지의 초록색아래에깔린 검은 권력의 레이어를 보지 못한다면, 인터넷공간에는 오직DMZ자연의 아름다움과 평화로움만 남는다.**  Rather than existing subjects simply using the internet according to their own intentions and plans, it is actually within the gradually opening spatiotemporal realm of the internet that new, distinctive uses emerge, followed by particular processes of subject formation. Here, the subject is no longer in the position of a cause but exists only as a specific effect of mediation. *(Anderson, 1991/2006; Benjamin, 1936/2007; Kittler)* | **Fig. 15** **Char Davies’ *Osmose*** is a VR installation artwork that reflects the cyber-utopian sentiment of the 1990s. It explores the fusion of reality and virtuality by blurring the boundaries between cyberspace and nature evoking the process of nature’s freedom. The use of somewhat hazy visuals and muted colors were to evoke a dreamlike, meditative atmosphere. However, I feels it eerie and unsettling, making it difficult to experience the intended meditation on freedom; instead, it appears to reflect the camouflaged peace and freedom of a politicized internet.           Exactly what color was the text on monochrome terminals with green-on-black  and amber-on-black screens? - Retrocomputing Stack Exchange **7** e**arly monochrome computer monitors that displayed green text on dark screens**  A close up of a dollar bill  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **7** **The reverse side of a U.S. one-dollar bill, printed in rich green ink**    A map of a city  AI-generated content may be incorrect. 7 **Submarine Cable Taps**  Almost all intercontinental internet traffic takes place underwater. A gigantic web of submarine cables facilitates our global communication. But what happens to the data that flows from continent to continent through these underwater arteries? Some of these cables are tapped by the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) through systems developed in collaboration with companies including Vodafone and BT Cable. But on what scale is this happening? The interactive website Submarine Cable Taps is an attempt to map the extent of this surveillance network.  A screenshot of a computer  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **8*Screenshot of ToS;DR showing summary ratings for Facebook, Amazon, Reddit (all Grade E: very problematic terms) and Wikipedia (Grade B: more balanced terms).***  Terms of Service; Didn’t Read(ToS;DR) is a community-driven project founded in 2012 to address the lack of transparency in online terms of service agreements. Its tagline captures the problem: *“I have read and agree to the Terms” is the biggest lie on the web*, since virtually no one actually reads these lengthy legal policies. ToS;DR tackles this by analyzing and grading the terms and privacy policies of major websites, distilling them into concise, accessible summaries for user. Volunteer contributors review each service’s terms, highlight key points (labeling them as “good,” “neutral,” “bad,” or “blocker” for very serious issues), and assign an overall grade from **A** (best) to **E** (worst) reflecting how fairly the service respects user rights.  **Fig.21** The digital panopticon extends Bentham’s concept of unseen surveillance to the modern digital age. Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish (1975)* framed the Panopticon as a metaphor for institutional control, now mirrored in internet platforms, data analytics, and pervasive monitoring. Like Bentham’s watchman, companies and governments collect data without users knowing when or how they are observed. This constant potential surveillance leads individuals to self-regulate their online behavior, much like prisoners adjusting under an unseen guard.    A close-up of a grid  AI-generated content may be incorrect. **Disnovation.org. *Online culture Wars, a cartography of online culture wars in the form of a political compass meme.* 2018-2019.** The digital public sphere is a quagmire. The culture wars raging on online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Reddit and 4chan are unstoppable. A character as Pepe the Frog, who started out as a left -wing pet frog, was rapidly appropriated as a symbol of right wing extremist thought. Who influences the dissemination and meaning of these memes? Social media are not innocent platforms for information exchange; their algorithms and bots contribute to political and phychological manipulation. Disnovation.org attempts to map how these online platforms influence political thoughts and statements by zooming in on the technological processes behind these systems. |

**3-1 Internet, the Big Brother**

3.1 DARK PATTERN AND PRIVACY SELLING

Dark pattern in Terms and Condition[[39]](#footnote-11)

How the mechanic process in system and design nudge us

2.2 ADVERTISING AND INDUCING INDIVIDUAL

1.search engine optimization . SEO—short for search engine optimization—is about helping search engines understand your content, and helping users find your site and make a decision about whether they should visit your site through a search engine.

2.Behavioral targeting is a technique used in online advertising and publishing, where data from visitor browsing habits (e.g., search terms, sites visited, purchases) is used to display relevant ads and offers and improve campaign effectiveness

**3-2 Biased AI**  
**Data Bias**  
• Data is always influenced by human choices and social contexts during its collection, refinement, and processing.  
• For example, in facial recognition technology, insufficient representation of certain races or genders in the data can lead to discriminatory outcomes.  
• Therefore, data cannot be considered completely neutral; it is often imbued with biases and value judgments.

Behind the scenes, there are numerous hidden truths that are utilized to achieve certain objectives yet cannot be disclosed under the pretext of “personal information protection” when people ask for details. We remain unaware of what is concealed. Power demarcates our boundaries for its own benefit and, at the same time, justifies undisclosed governance through those boundaries. *(Further research on this topic is needed.)*

Foucault introduced the concept of *governmentality* under disciplinary power to explain how power operates in contemporary society. Unlike the overtly violent power of the past, this form of authority works indirectly by prompting individuals to manage, optimize, and control themselves—thus transferring the burdens and risks of governance failures onto individuals. For example, we naturally walk down streets monitored by CCTV, purchase various insurance plans, and undergo regular medical checkups. While these measures ostensibly exist for our safety, they also guide our behavior in a specific direction. This reveals that the freedom we enjoy actually functions within a new framework of power relations.

Social media platforms, for instance, offer spaces for free communication and self-expression. At the same time, however, they collect user data, analyze behavior, and sometimes engage in manipulation. While users believe they are freely sharing their daily lives and interacting with others, they may be unknowingly steered toward particular consumption patterns or modes of behavior.

In modern society, the methods by which boundaries are breached via the internet have become increasingly complex and subtle. The normalization of the internet has altered not only the relationship between North and South Korea but also the boundaries in our everyday environments, which are now constantly connected to cyberspace. In a world linked by the internet, fully disconnecting is nearly impossible unless there is a power outage. Even when our devices are switched off, our data continues to be collected and circulate online. Yet our awareness of boundaries tends to be limited to what appears on the screen; if the information is unclear or difficult to read, it fails to draw attention and soon vanishes from our focus.

For example, numerous services require users to consent to personal data agreements in order to sign up and receive benefits. While users do gain certain advantages from the collected data, it is often overlooked that corporations reap far greater profits. The so-called “black box” is under the control of the companies that select and organize data. This system is described as a black box partly because we cannot know how artificial intelligence makes its choices, but it also represents the hidden grip of power that obscures what is truly happening.

With the advancement of digital technology, the ways in which power surveils and controls individuals have grown increasingly refined. Even in societies that appear to guarantee democracy and freedom, various power relations continue to operate. For example, the development of big data and artificial intelligence enables ever more precise predictions and manipulations of individual behavior. Beneath the surface of efficient social management lies a dark side: newly emerging threats to personal freedom and privacy.

**Data Management Practices**

1. **Data Ontology and Data Collection: Data About Data (Metadata)**  
   *(A Rebuttal to the Notion of “Qualitative Change” During the Transition from Structured to Unstructured Data)*

In the era of relational databases, data was neatly organized because every field was clearly defined and each field’s content was strictly formatted. However, since the late 1990s, the exponential growth of digital information—much of which does not fit neatly into database fields—has posed a challenge to this order. Such data comes from emails, webpages, images, audio files, and video files.

**Conclusion**

**The Undetactable Green boundaries at night of   
Coming out of night of green forest**   
A person looking at a plant

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Prompt: DMZ, Ecology, nature/ Generated by Midjourney/ 2024 January**

**본 논문에서는 모든 것이 연결되는 글로벌 시대에 흐릿해진 경계를 재고해보고자 거대한 유기체인 숲처럼 연결된 인터넷 환경과 한국의 DMZ의 자연환경을 살펴보고 각 공간의 경계에서 권력이 작용하는 방식에서 공통점을 발견했다. 권력은 실제 공간과는다른, 이상화된공간의개념을 투영했다. ( 표면적 평화와 평등의 상징성과 내부에 대한 제한적인 접근성과 지식위에 경계보호를 가장한 권력의 통제는 각 공간에서 다른 양상으로 그러나 유사하게 나타난다. )  
인터넷의 권력은 역사적으로 초기의 인터넷이 평등하고 자유로우며 권력에 이해타산적이지 않은 공간으로 그려진 대중적 인식의 인터넷과 실제 인터넷 공간의 취약점 사이의 틈을 교묘하게 비집고 들어서서 뿌리내렸다.  
 DMZ를 둘러싼 정부의 권력은 다양성이 존재하는 순수한 자연에 대한 대중적 인식을 바탕으로 동식물에게 천혜의 자연환경과 지상낙원을 제공하는 공간이라고 DMZ의 자연에 대한 대중적 인식을 뿌리내렸다.그러나권력에 의해형성된인식과두공간의실상은다르다. 인터넷에서데이터는 우리에게분명하게소유되고주장되기보다정보통신대기업에 의해소유되어 특정방식,형태,내용의 데이터로생산재생산되며 , DMZ의동식물은전쟁후남겨진폭력적 잔흔과함께공진화하였다. 토양의폭력성이존재하는 한, 그토양을토대로자라난데이터와동식물의 유기체들은폭력성의트라우마를가질 수밖에없다.**

**인터넷 환경이 우리의 정신과 어떻게 상호 긴밀하게 연결되어 있으며 또 어떻게 하나의 현상으로서 우리 눈앞에 현실화 되고 있는지를 분명하게 보여 준다. 언제 어디서든 연결가능한 일상적인 매개 환경의 형성과 바로 그 미디어 환경을 통한 데이터의 자동적인 수집 분석 처리 시스템의 구축, 그리고 다시 이 데이터 분석을 바탕으로 한 새로운 통치의 전략과 실천이 마치 톱니바퀴처럼 정확히 맞물려 돌아가고 있는 상황이다. 우리가 생산하는 수많은 데이터들이 우리가 누구인지를 판단하고 예측하는 데 사용될 뿐만 아니라, 더 나아가 우리의 생각과 행동을 특정한 방향으로 이끌어 내는 기제로도 전유되고 있는 것이다. 사용자의 과거 정체성이 현재의 개별적인 데이터 패턴을 만들고 그것이 다시 고유한 알고리즘의 인도 작용을 따라 미래에 마주할 결과값으로 이어지는 자기참조적인 도식이다. “데이터를 가진 자가 통제력도 갖는다”의 문구가 의미하듯이 이 도식대로라면 사용자 개개인의 데이터를 수집 분석할 수 있고 이를 바탕으로 적절한 알고리즘 모델을 개발 적용할 수 잇으면 자연스레 그 개개인이 미래에 접하게 될 정보의 성격과 방향도 규정할 수 있게 된다. 이러한 알고리즘의 검은 숲에 대해서 빠져나오려는 노력은 많은 비판적인 미디어 매체에서 다뤄지지만, 결국 인터넷이라는 플랫폼을 중계하고 데이터와 알고리즘을 통을 악용하는 특정 정부와 기업이 문제라는 식이다. 빠르게 변화해 가는 현재의 미디어 환경과 그안에서 이루어지는 새로운 통치의 테크놀로지를 화두로 삼으면서도 정작 그 중심에는 감시, 억압, 독재 , 음모등과 같은 지극히 오래되고 정형화된 과거 권력의 형상을 현대로 버전업 시킨채로 위치시키고 있다. 그러한 권력은 분명히 존재하지만 권력의 불순함 자체보다 새롭게 짜여진 권력의 판도가 어떻게 은밀하게 유인하고 착취하는지**

**Images generated by AI from the prompts of DMZ ecology. It shows not only the picturesque green nature but also public white men freely walk around and appreciating nature with no military gadgets which, in reality, not possible according to the military law. Their surrounding is very peaceful and safe with no barbed wires or military post.** �

DMZ와인터넷은 바로이러한점에서권력에 의해성공한 green washing 의사례라고 볼 수있다.따라서 본문에서는이러한사례의공통성으로자연과인터넷의녹색색조를대조하며녹색이함의하는상징의변천과함께인터넷공간을숲의생태로대입시켜allegorical 하게 살펴보았다.

그결과, The invasive internet environment naturally creates a sense of inevitability and rationality, which we accept without resistance. This has transformed the concept of nature into an absolute zone of protection and justice, one that doesn’t require verification. Anything opposing this natural state is either countered or tolerated, and we only respond to it insofar as it justifies the natural state as natural. Based on our conventional bias of viewing nature as an absolute sanctuary, power has quietly shaped the internet into a new concept of nature. However, the ideology that frames this so-called new nature, constructed by governing authorities, is inherently contradictory in that the idealized concept of nature does not align with the reality. Nature is not designed by power interests, nor is nature itself goal-driven, but the actual environment is deliberately created with clear intentions. I find this invented concept of nature quite strange. Ultimately, both the physical boundary of the DMZ and the digital boundary of the internet exhibit a common trait: while they offer safety and convenience, they also conceal the infiltration of power. Just as the government and media romanticize the DMZ’s ecology as a "clean and pure ecosystem," big tech corporations package platforms as spaces for "open communication." Yet, the less visible a space is, the more power operates within it in a subtle manner (Foucault, 1979). The process through which the government and big tech companies lead citizens/users to "voluntarily" accept a particular narrative they have generated is the essence of Foucault’s concept of "governmentality." Just as the "natural" environment of the DMZ is never fully free from the remnants of war or surveillance systems, our internet environment also uses consumer data as a raw material for massive surveillance and control beneath the surface of a "free network." This essay begins with a question about such "boundaries." While the South-North boundary and the internet privacy boundary are two different spaces, both are imbued with a dual ambiguity, and both create a simultaneous experience of stability and instability. As a Korean born in a divided country, I wish to reflect on the anxiety created by the North-South divide and the fragile boundary of digital privacy that I encounter as an internet user every day. These boundaries, which leak into our consciousness like gray fog, sometimes open doors to threats and tension, and sometimes to change and possibilities. Yet, when these boundaries are cloaked under the guise of "pure nature" or a "free network," the power behind them and our responsibility begin to fade into obscurity.

Intrusive internet environments have naturally generated a sense of inevitability and rationality, and in turn have become something we accept without resistance—akin to a form of “nature.” For us, nature is an absolute realm of protection and justice that needs no verification of its legitimacy. Anything that challenges this notion is either countered or ignored, and we only respond to what justifies preserving this “natural” state. Drawing on our habitual tendency to regard nature as an inviolable sanctuary, power has covertly shaped the internet into a new conception of nature. Yet the ideology that compels us to view our current environment through the lens of this “new nature,” as constructed by governing authorities, is inherently contradictory: the ideal concept of nature differs from the real environment. Nature is not formed by the interests of any particular power and has no inherent purpose, whereas the real environment has been clearly orchestrated with specific objectives. I sense a peculiarity in this invented notion of nature.

Ultimately, both the physical boundary of the DMZ and the digital boundary of the internet share a common pattern: on one hand, they provide safety and convenience, yet on the other, they conceal the infiltration of power behind the scenes. Just as the government and media glorify the DMZ’s nature as a “clean and pure ecosystem,” big tech companies present their platforms as spaces of “open communication.” However, in less visible realms, power often operates in more subtle and sophisticated ways (Foucault, 1979). The process whereby citizens or users “voluntarily” adopt narratives produced by governments and big tech exemplifies what Foucault termed *governmentality*. Just as the DMZ’s natural environment has not fully escaped the remnants of war and surveillance systems, so too does our internet environment utilize consumer data as raw material for large-scale monitoring and control, all behind the fade of a free network.

This essay begins by questioning such “boundaries.” Although the two spaces—the boundary between North and South Korea and the boundary of internet privacy—are fundamentally distinct, both embody an ambiguous duality that enables experiences of stability and anxiety at once. As a South Korean born in a divided nation, I aim to reflect on the unease surrounding the North-South boundary, as well as on the precarious boundary of digital privacy that I encounter daily as an internet user. These boundaries, which seep into our lives like gray fog, sometimes threaten and create tension, yet at other times offer the possibility of change. Nevertheless, when they are cloaked under the veil of “pristine nature” or a “free network,” the nature of the power at work—and our responsibility within it—grows ever more obscure.

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