THE RHETORICAL LANDSCAPE OF ITAEWON: NEGOTIATING NEW TRANSCULTURAL IDENTITIES IN SOUTH KOREA

Eun Young Lee

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Committee:

Alberto González, Advisor

Hyeyoung Bang
Graduate Faculty Representative

Radhika Gajjala

Ellen Gorsevski
Alberto González, Advisor

In contemporary scholarship, space has emerged as a significant topic. Specifically in communication studies, the critical interrogation of persuasive strategies performed by spatial locations can provide scholars with the perspectives needed to adequately attend to identity politics within built environments. Drawing on the previous scholarship on space, place, and human-built environment, I elaborate the need for and benefits of defining a landscape in rhetorical terms. While developing the concept of rhetorical landscape, which directs attention to relational matters in space, this study examines the discursive changes and shifts involved in (re)imagining South Korea amidst various intersecting forces such as 20th century Cold War geopolitics, American hegemony, modernization, Americanization, nationalism, and multiculturalism. I analyze how the urban district called Itaewon, as synecdochic of Korean society and culture, spatially communicates the ever-changing rhetoric of Korean identity-building. By understanding sectors in Itaewon – such as streets, alleys, and particular places – as metonymic of conflicting ideas at historical junctures, I illuminate both the rhetoricity Itaewon embodies and its rhetoric elaborated through the dynamics among constituents configured on the landscape. I examine Itaewon as a site that negotiates transcultural identities as it mediates political, social, and cultural forces.
This dissertation is dedicated to my parents who let me be myself.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION: RHETORIC, SPACE, AND LANDSCAPE

In contemporary scholarship, space has emerged as a significant topic. Specifically in communication studies, the critical interrogation of persuasive strategies performed by spatial locations can provide scholars with the perspectives needed to adequately attend to identity politics within built environments. In the context of urban space, for example, rhetoric scholars Victoria J. Gallagher and Margaret LaWare consider a city as a product of social practice. They argue that space is political in that it is “inseparable from the conflictual [sic] and uneven social relations that structure specific societies at specific historical moments.” In this view, urban spaces are sites of struggle, resistance, and contest. In this dissertation, I explore the political components of human built space in order to illuminate urban spaces as sites of intercultural encounters. In doing so, I contribute to discussions regarding intercultural communication and rhetorical studies by suggesting a framework for understanding the contestation and negotiation of different cultural identities within an urban rhetorical landscape.

Aristotle defines rhetoric as a faculty for observing in any given case all the available means of persuasion. Founded on his definition, I highlight rhetoric should be recognized both as a product and a process. In this view, rhetoric allows room for developing the concept of a rhetorical landscape, a site in which persuasive appeals are both given and developed. In his analysis of “the rhetorical functions of national landscapes,” Clark introduces the term rhetorical landscape in order to argue that the tourist sites of American national life provide a symbolic experience of sharing a nationality. Clark defines the American landscape as “a general material symbol of the nation.” Ultimately, such materials can provide both the symbols of identity as well as the ground on which one can produce an experience of identification. Like national parks, urban spaces are also praxis-laden rhetorical landscapes because, over time, a given urban space
imparts a particular attitude to that environment and will become both a product and enactment of vernacular cultures. For example, Darrel Enck-Wanzer analyzes East Harlem in New York City as a space through which Nuyorican agency is rhetorically enacted. In that sense, an urban space functions rhetorically by providing a cultural product that is specific to an urban space and hailing cultural performances into existence.

**Mapping Itaewon**

In the effort to develop the concept of rhetorical landscape, I investigate Itaewon, in Seoul, South Korea, an urban space that hosts enclaves for intercultural communication. I map the threads of various forces that function to generate the landscape of Itaewon, examine how rhetoric serves the formation of landscape and how landscape speaks its rhetoric spatially, and (re)contextualize political and cultural constellations affecting Itaewon. Given the geographical, social, and economic history of Itaewon, the political power dynamics need to be considered as the landscape of Itaewon embodies contests of hegemonic power ranging from Cold War ideological struggles to globalization. Given that the history of Itaewon suggests that the town has been at the core of political, social, cultural, and economic shifts of Korea, Itaewon, in this study, is analyzed as a synecdoche of Korean society and culture.

Geographically, Itaewon, a township in Seoul, South Korea, is located at the center of Seoul and is very close to the Han River. The Han River played a key role in the history of the development of Seoul because it provided crucial transportation in the past and now functions as a cultural division between the northern and southern regions of the city. Nowadays, in the city of Seoul, the area below the Han River, Gangnam, has been considered a new and modernized area that provides more highbrow and urbane culture. In contrast, the northern side of the Han River, Gangbuk, has been characterized as a relatively traditional or old-fashioned cultural zone.
among South Koreans. Therefore, Itaewon located between these two different cultural zones is a space of *kyong-ge*, a space *in-between*, a liminal space in which cultures meet, converge, and transform.

Besides the liminality of Itaewon coming from the geographical and accordingly cultural position within the city of Seoul, South Korea, many other factors have pushed Itaewon to *kyong-ge* throughout the history of the town. Victor Turner describes liminality as an “interstructural situation.”7 Turner explains that liminality is “what cannot be defined in static terms. We are not dealing with structural contradictions when we discuss liminality, but with the essentially unstructured (which is at once destructured and prestructured).”8 The liminal characteristics of Itaewon go back to early history. The name, Itaewon, originated during the Chôsun Dynasty (1392-1910), an era during which merchants operated stations where people and horses could lay over on their travels.9 For centuries, Itaewon has hosted occupying military forces.10 When Japan invaded Korea in 1882, in response to the Chôsun Dynasty’s decision to change its foreign policy unfavorably toward Japan, the Qing Dynasty, which was the last imperial dynasty of China (1644-1912), came to the Korean Peninsula to help protect Korea from the intruding Japanese forces. The Qing Dynasty’s military guard occupied Itaewon for two years, from 1882 to 1884.11 Later, in 1910, Japan invaded Korea again and the Korean Peninsula was colonized for thirty-five years until 1945. As before, the headquarters of Japan’s military forces were based in Itaewon. After World War II, the regime in the Korean Peninsula gained independence from Japan. However, during and after the Korean War (1950-1953), Itaewon had another resident, the US military, which continues to maintain a base in Itaewon.12

In modern times, the rationale for the presence of the US military forces has been the prevention of military conflict between North and South Korea. Following the Korean War,
which ended without a real resolution, the possibility of war in the Korean Peninsula was a continual source of tension and anxiety. The conflict carries the ideological baggage of the Cold War as North Korea established a communist regime, partnering with the former Soviet Union and China, while South Korea founded a US-modeled democratic government. Since the status of the Korean Peninsula is an armistice between those two ideologically opposed regimes, the US has justified a continued military presence, deemed integral to the objective of protecting the democracy in South Korea.

The presence of the US military troops has influenced Itaewon on many levels besides the very fact that the foreign military force is located at the center of the capital city of South Korea, which has for the citizens of South Korea a rhetorical power of its own. Since 1957, the US military personnel have been allowed to venture beyond their camps, a policy that has had a sizable effect on the businesses in Itaewon. The types of businesses formed around the town conspicuously reflect the influences and interests of the US military personnel. First and foremost, nearly all of the stores in Itaewon are capable of doing their business in English. With US soldiers serving as primary customers in Itaewon, a commonplace phenomenon since the Korean War, Itaewon has become a sort of comfort-town for the US military personnel. Within that context, Itaewon’s marketplaces have long served as a nexus for intercultural exchanges, a transnational characteristic that, in modern times, has intensified by the continued presence of the US military. Looking to embrace this trend, the city of Seoul assigned Itaewon special status by declaring it a “special tourism zone” in 1997. In doing so, the city hoped to revive the lackluster businesses of the area and in the city in general by reinforcing its uniqueness both as an exotic space where South Koreans could experience a taste of abroad within South Korea and as a multicultural space where anyone from any culture could be comfortable to a degree. Clearly,
the market-driven infusion of western culture shaped Itaewon, so much so, in fact, that
individuals residing in the northern and southern spheres of Seoul have come to view the cultural
nexus in the center of Seoul, Itaewon, as alien or exotic.

**Conceptualizing Landscapes as a Rhetorical Domain**

“If time unfolds as change then space unfolds as interaction. In that sense, space is the
social dimension.”13

The fundamental question embedded in considering a landscape as rhetorical involves
thinking of meaning and power spatially. This is a critical move that helps disrupt and add to
understandings of how power works. In communication studies, it is a spatial turn that started to
pay more attention to critical and cultural aspects of space through which politics and power are
manifested. While pointing out the political nature of space, given its centrality in the production,
organization, and distribution of cultural power, Shome calls for a manner of investigation that
emphasizes “the complex spatialized processes”14 of power practices. She states:

In much of our research, spatial contexts tend to function as a static, dead, taken-for-
granted category – a mere setting or an innocent background in, over, or across which
cultural activities and practices are seen to be occurring. Space is not merely a backdrop,
though, against which the communication of cultural politics occurs. Rather it needs to be
recognized as a central component in that communication. It functions as a technology –
a means and medium – of power that is socially constituted through material relations
that enable the communication of specific politics.15

For Shome, space is not static and closed. Thus, it is necessary to re-consider space as not a
passive backdrop for any given social events or phenomena because the very nature of space
evokes, “a product of relations that are themselves active and constantly changing material
practices through which it comes into being.”16 Through this approach, Shome provides an
insight for a spatial approach intended to apprehend the cultural power dynamic that is laid out
and played out on spaces. Massey also illuminates the spatiality of power that is a politics of
space while proposing space as “an ongoing production” (2005, p.55)17 that resonates with
Shome’s approach. Massey argues, “Conceptualizing space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the possibility of politics.” Understanding space in that way highlights that space is implicated in enactments of power. For example, “theorizing how the confluence of physical structures, locations, and bodies can function rhetorically for social movements,” Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook argue “place is more than just a backdrop for the rhetoric of social protest.” Endres and Senda-Cook highlight how pre-existing meanings of a particular place can influence and be re-appropriated in protest.

The approach to “the spatialities of power” assures us the benefits of a contextual and spatial focus where contexts can be apprehended as “dynamic relations of forces” whereby the spatial approach exposes rhetorical features occurring within space. Lefebvre explicates the general idea of the spatiality of power by proposing a threefold organization of spatialization: Spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. First, spatial practice is about a specific level of performance. Second, representations of space are what are conceived of space, and thus it might be thought of as discourses on space. Discourses on space are more than likely coming from the dominant/power. Thus, representations of space are what constitute the spatiality of power. Further, the spatiality of power is represented, reified, and therefore discussed as politics of space, which leads to representational spaces. Representational spaces are the discourse of space in which different discourses are conflicting and encountered one another. This aspect of space is what complicates the understanding of space since discourses arising surround a space are supposedly not identical. Various discourses could be generated based on and reflecting different materialistic circumstances. Therefore, politics of space is dialectic in its nature between discourses on space and discourses of space. Lefebvre’s
explication of the spatiality of power thus reinforces Shome’s idea of spatialized processes of power practices. Those discussions about dialectics of various forces in space found a step-stone for conceptualizing landscapes as rhetorical. To clarify how landscape operates as rhetoric, I need to further discuss two different but dialectically related approaches: symbolism and materialism, as Stormer asks, “How does one order affect the other?”26 The following discussion on the dialectic of symbolism and materialism helps extend a scope of studies on space and ultimately provides a theoretical foundation for conceptualizing landscape in rhetorical terms, that is, as a rhetorical landscape, the concept that this study aims to develop and articulate.

**Symbolism and Materialism as Dialectic**

When examining communication that is manifested in corporeal landscape, an important theoretical strand to consider is the dialectic interplay between symbolism and materialism. Stormer points out that there has been the separation of materiality and discursivity in traditional rhetorical theory.27 Likewise, scholars in rhetorical studies have adopted symbolistic principles such as semiotic and ideological approaches in illuminating communicative aspects of space with the relative lack of consideration of the other aspect, materiality.28 Stormer says:

> Whereas a long-standing premise of rhetorical theory is that rhetoric is part of humanity’s uniquely symbolic nature and, therefore, that its study begins with specific humans’ speech, critics who study architecture, rituals, monuments, genes, and so on challenge that premise. The unspoken rule that individuals articulate society through words has been confronted by another, that symbols, things, and practices articulate culture, its environment, and its people.29

Here Stormer attempts to complicate rhetorical acts and their effects by articulating various agents of rhetoric. Jeremy Packer and Stephen B. Crofts Wiley also consider “immateriality of communication”30 intrinsic to the majority of communication theories as the ontological assumption that perceives communication intangible so that it limits a multi-dimensional understanding of communicative acts, and they attempt to call attention to materiality of
communication as well. Simultaneously, they also warn a “dual ontology” in a materialist move that neglects textuality and discursiveness that construct realities. In other words, materiality of realities we live in is reification of “historically situated discursive regimes.”

For example, when Lawrence Rosenfield argues Central Park in New York City, “the first urban park expressly constructed for general public use,” functions to “celebrate institutions and ideological principles thought to be the genius of those cultures,” the materiality of Central Park is understood in the context within which the park was being constructed into a reality. McGee also clarifies how materialists and symbolists are put in different places:

*Fundamentally, materialists and symbolists pursue two different studies: The Marxian asks how the ‘givens’ of a human environment impinge on the development of political consciousness; the symbolist asks how the human symbol-using, reality-creating potential impinges on material reality, ordering it normatively, “mythically.”*  

Recognizing those two different ways of understanding does in retrospect suggest their dependent dynamics since that illustrates the dialectical relations upon which each principle functions. McGee further points out “the symbolists’ neglect of the non-symbolic environment and the consequent inability of symbolist theory to account for the impact of material phenomena on the construction of social reality.” Wander also gives an insight to incorporate those two approaches. Wander states that in “a relationship between Symbolism and Materialism, one might assume that the relationship would blossom with a Materialism acknowledging the force of ideas and realities beyond the workings of a socio-economic base.” He furthermore suggests how those two approaches could work together.

*If we can agree that the critic is not and should not be prevented from talking about the implications of or the silences in the most lyrical, self-indulgent flights of spiritualism (i.e. Heidegger, or in modernist and post-modernist literature), then the great barrier between Symbolism and Materialist falls or, more accurately, is subsumed in a larger conception of criticism. Perhaps, as ideal types, the Materialist is obliged to make errors and the Symbolist is obliged to ignore history, but we do not have to look upon criticism as a*
struggle between ideal types. In the everyday world of doing criticism, there is not contest.\textsuperscript{36}

A critical embrace of the dynamic between symbolism and materialism has significant potential to enrich and implement the spatial turn in communication since it allows “the historical analysis of the juncture of discourse and the world.”\textsuperscript{37} Therefore, to get a more nuanced understanding of spatial communication, critics need to work with those two perspectives by implementing both rather than taking them independently. James F. Klumpp and Thomas A. Hollihan also give us a hint of the dynamic relations (or, dialectic relations) between materialism and symbolism when they indicate “the notion that rhetoric and social order interpenetrate rather than reflect (the material world) demands that critics go beyond comparisons of rhetoric to materiality to focus on rhetoric converting the material world into support for the social order.”\textsuperscript{38} Upon reflection, I suggest to change the part “interpenetrate \textit{rather than} reflect” into “interpenetrate \textit{and} reflect” in order to promote a dialectical perspective toward the relationship between materialism and symbolism.

To articulate the interconnectivity of symbolism and materialism, it is necessary to elaborate materialism at play by clarifying various material aspects in spatial rhetoric. On one hand, materialism can be approached as material aspects of symbols in space. As such, it is to consider materiality as physicality.\textsuperscript{39} Kenneth S. Zagacki and Victoria J. Gallagher indicate that “the move from symbolicity to materiality involves a shift from examining representations (what does a text mean/what are the consequences beyond the persuader’s goals) to examining enactments (what does a text or artifact do/what are the consequences beyond that of the persuader’s goals).”\textsuperscript{40} Symbols are \textit{experienced} by people and thus the tangibility of symbols matters. It depends on the extent to which symbolicity is shaped and implemented by corporeal features of symbols. Showing the inter-play of symbolic and material aspects of landscape,
Cosgrove reflects this dialectic to conceptualize the idea of landscape as a social formation. He points out that the idea of landscape “derives from the active engagement of a human subject with the material objects.” Since human acts involve and produce symbolic results, his concept of landscape is therefore a social product grounded on the dynamic interaction between materials and symbols.

Landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience in a way that neither region nor area immediately suggest. Landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world.

Highlighting an epistemological aspect of landscape, he ultimately argues that a landscape is an ideological concept in that it represents a certain way of living for certain people. Thus, conceptualizing landscape requires us to have a critical recognition of the contexts in which a landscape evolved and a sensitivity to “the range and subtlety of human creativity in making and experiencing the environment.” Thus, we experience landscape as “a composition of [wo]man-made or [wo]man-modified spaces.” We live in landscapes that are socially constructed with material motivations and consequences. This observation leads me to another material aspect in spatial rhetoric, which is to identify the material as a contextual resource for spatial communication. Given the subtlety of human creativity at play in constructing it, a landscape disguises its constructedness and emphasizes its naturalized presence. However, a landscape comes to be shaped in a way that reflects a range of resources based on the contexts in which they become available. Therefore, as Clark indicates, “while [a landscape] presents itself as merely descriptive, it has the capacity to function rhetorically in ways that can be more prescriptive.” Comprehending contextual dimensions of (un)available resources in space is a key to read a prescriptive function of landscape, which is at the core of its rhetorical power. This suggests that human-made spaces laid throughout landscape could serve as an ideological
apparatus and that completes the circuit of the dialectics of symbolism and materialism in
landscape. Such is especially true given McGee’s description of ideology as mass
consciousness, a notion that helps us grasp this politics of spaces with respect to a landscape. In
a more specific sense, that ideology is about mass consciousness is therefore connected to the
concept of collective memory or public memory: how ideology presents itself within memory
made for public or in public. McGee points out that, “human beings in collectivity behave and
think differently than human beings in isolation.” This is how the concept of ideology becomes
useful to explicate collective memory. In other words, in collective memory, there is ideology
speaking through the memory. Therefore, places of those public memories become the subject of
rhetorical and ideological considerations.

**Rhetoricty of Place**

In order to discuss rhetorical aspects of place and further landscape, it is beneficial to
clarify the distinction between space and place. Endres and Senda-Cook indicate “the connection
between place and space can be described as one of particular to general.” Theresa Ann
Donofrio points out that those two words have been used interchangeably but they convey
distinct meanings in terms of their relations with physical environment. Donofrio indicates space
is what entails a geographical sense and place, on the other hand, is what space is transformed
into through embodying symbolic meanings. Space becomes place through “place-making.”

Place-making is the result of a discursive process.

There is scholarship in contemporary rhetorical theory that links and discusses
space/place to issues of power and public memory. For example, Blair, Dickinson, and Ott point
out how public memory serves the interests of the present by being derived from the past. They
indicate:
Groups tell their pasts to themselves and others as ways of understanding, valorizing, justifying, excusing, or subverting conditions or beliefs of their current moment. That is not to suggest that they concoct their pasts out of whole cloth…Rather it is to suggest that groups talk about some events of their histories more than others, glamorize some individuals more than others, and present some actions but not others as ‘instructive’ for the future. In other words, they make choices.53

Those choices are usually based on the values of the present conditions. Thereby, the chosen framework reflects the interests called for in the current situation. In other words, a collective memory is selectively constructed and thus public memory articulation is rhetorical in that “rhetorical invention is about the selectivity and/or creativity implicated in constructing a subject matter in a particular way.”54 Hence, power is masked by manifesting itself as a form of epideictic rhetoric. In essence, places of public memory become a signifier of, by means of their (primarily, epideictic) rhetoric, the “meaningful” and the “special.”

The rhetorical elements deposited in places of public memory operate as epideictic rhetoric since they “highlight certain values and experiences, making those values concrete and visible to a wide audience.”55 In other words, the places of public memory primarily found in forms of museum, monument, memorial, and the like, are for things that are chosen to be celebrated or thought to be worthwhile to be remembered. In the process, a hierarchy is created, a priority is revealed, and a marginalization is disguised. Therefore, celebration or remembrance for certain things results in implicitly neglecting the rest and also reflects power relations entrenched in a social structure. For that very reason, what is chosen and how it is represented becomes very political and rhetorical. Many examples of this come from the substantial efforts in public memory scholarship that attempt to explicate the rhetorical characteristic of places of public memory. They examine commemoration activities broadly defined and varied in material forms. For example, examining the U.S. Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial, Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci indicate that, “public commemorative monuments are rhetorical products of some
Commemorative activities represented by monuments are rhetorical in that monuments reflect a selection process that implies what is valued at that time. What is valued at that specific moment could reflect current political concerns in a form of epideictic rhetoric. Thus, it becomes an issue of who decides what. This aspect of monuments can be visible by contextualizing them within history and politics. According to Hasian, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) “has become a contested site of memory.” Hasian maintains that the museum is a medium for memorizing. In this case of the USHMM especially, the museum serves to facilitate some chosen and dominant narratives among conflicting narratives and by doing so have the preferred narratives legitimized. He also examines the architectural aspect of the museum in terms of how it invites visitors effectively into “experiencing” the museum and into being reminded of the past. Hasian states, “The architectural designs complement the discursive and photographic arguments and advance the major themes of the museum planners.”

Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki continue to discuss spaces rendering collective memory by exploring, in specific, “how visitors experience the symbolic and material dimensions of spaces such as museums.” This indicates that they presuppose the symbolic aspect of such spaces, which provides a rationale to expand the range of subjects that need to be investigated given that those subjects left without substantial explication for a moment are also operating symbolically. They also disclose that studying specific sites as rhetorical requires extra attention to their rhetorical dimension, specifically to rhetoric’s materiality and its symbolicity simultaneously. Given that the sites are where visitors are engaged, thereby their bodies are located in particular spaces in a material sense, the sites become viewed as “experiential landscapes.” In other words, the materiality of rhetoric is connected to the discussion about experience; that is, how
experiences of the places are influenced by the rhetoricity of places. Thus, the material rhetoric museum needs in attempting to generate collective memory comes through an experiential landscape. For example, they describe the experiential landscape of Yellowstone National Park with “the rhetoric of awe” designated to the specific site. Due to the rhetoric of awe, visitors are experiencing “landscape of immensity and sublimity.”

This attention to the experience of places is not totally new since Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci also indicate “bodily experiences” of visitors play a role in the rhetoric of a memorial site. Elaborating the experiential aspect of public memory place provides a ground for conceptualizing rhetorical landscape in that it helps us evolve from the notion of rhetorical place to the concept of rhetorical landscape in which it affects, shapes, is shaped by, and interacts with people.

This argument can eventually be extended to the outside of museums since “the outside of museums” is where people experience, communicate, and interact on a daily basis. That is, city landscapes, for example, can be understood as a “diffuse text” rather than a closed or fixed text. Dickinson et al. point out that, “whereas traditional objects of rhetorical study such as public speeches have relatively clear beginnings and endings, historical and cultural sites are part of the texture of larger landscapes.” Therefore, from this perspective, the subject matter of rhetorical studies of space/place can be more inclusive because such studies are focused on paying attention to the rhetoricity of landscapes, which is not one of subjects within the field in a traditional sense. After all, conceptualizing places of public memory as the process of place-making that is inherently rhetorical provides a ground for understanding of the rhetoricity of landscape in a broader sense.
Rhetorical Landscapes

Following Shome’s view that indicates politics of space and the fluidity and non-static features of space, as explained in Shome’s essay “Space Matters,” materiality and symbolicity of place become manifested in the discussion of rhetorical landscapes, a concept that is expanded as well as complicated from that of the rhetoric of place. In discussing rhetorical landscape I am envisioning, the major presupposition is to approach space “as an open ongoing production.” Therefore, it is an effort to understand space as acts of communication, or as Massey would put it “space itself is an event,” while not neglecting another feature of space as sites of communication. Specifically, previous studies regarding the rhetoric of place have focused primarily on the symbolicity of place (not all of them, but majority of them) in that they dominantly deal with the social and cultural meanings of place-making. The discussion of rhetorical landscapes, however, not only does so, but also extends its discussion to relational matters between/within spaces and places. Therefore, conceptualizing a landscape is an active attempt to take the “reconfiguration of heterogeneity” in space into serious account. The reconfigurations are manifestations of acts of space.

Conceptualizing landscape in rhetorical terms does also mean to examine the materiality of place as well. Although the studies that take the perspective of the rhetorical place do not entirely neglect any material features of places, it is the concept of material rhetoric that helps us to understand how the concept of rhetorical place needs to be extended to the rhetorical landscape because material rhetoric indicates how material aspects of place become interrupting and engaging into the whole rhetoricity of place. For example, Zagacki and Gallagher expand the discussion of the rhetoric of place while introducing material rhetoric through analyzing rhetorical enactments in the museum park, which are constituted of materiality of the park.
the term, material rhetoric, the discussion about the rhetoric of landscapes focuses on “considering the significance of a particular artifact or text’s material existence.” By focusing on the material manifestations of various social forces, it attempts to address the gap between meaning-making of symbolism and that of materialism. Therefore, with this approach, the discussion about the rhetoric of place becomes evolved to the concept of landscapes in that the newer strand within the whole discussion of the rhetoricity of place attempts to grasp a bigger picture of what is coming about in a site and how. Landscape is a reification of the social, cultural, political, and economic, and thus the concept of rhetorical landscape provides the expansive picture of the rhetoricity of place with the spatial approach to it.

Since the concept of landscape leaves more room for dealing with multiple dimensions of place or place-making, which are more than just reading discourses on place/space, the shifted focus on the rhetorical studies of place/space is therefore a more appropriate approach to investigating the practices of everyday life. This way of investigating place resonates with the idea of experiential landscape. Given that spatial practices are in the conjunctures of disciplinary forces and individuals’ appropriations of them as de Certeau claims, it is an essential theoretical move to take daily practices evolving within space into the equation for conceptualizing landscape. On the other hand, landscape also operates in a rhetorical way by forming “human perceptions toward the site where their everyday practices are occurring.” Thus, landscape is what conflates symbolicity, materiality, and individual practices communicating the symbolicity and materiality of space through experiences. This complexity of the concept enriches theoretical concerns highlighting the reasons that considerations of space matter.
Furthermore, a given landscape is experienced so that it generates its own distinct realities depending on who is experiencing it, and what interactions within a site are influences on a site. Authority is at the center of the issue. There is no single authority rather it is collective. The agency of a site is more likely coming from collectives. Also, the differently perceived and experienced realities are present differently and thus their juxtapositions and encounters “alter one another’s rhetoric substantially.” Moreover, the juxtapositions of conflicting (or incompatible) ideas and their representations are what make landscape inherently complicated and rhetorical. The presence of those is what leads us to develop the concept of rhetorical landscape. In other words, the whole terrain of discussion about rhetoric of place sheds a light on the concept of agency in elaborating the concept, rhetorical landscape.

However, the places that have been studied so far tend to be limited to a static place rather than an open space like a whole city where it becomes possible to investigate interactions or communications that could attribute to the construction and creation of the place in certain ways. The limited subjects of previous studies such as a shopping center, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the cemetery, the Plains Indian Museum, the museum park at the North Carolina Museum of Art, and Homestead National Monument of America predispose to their partial and fractured investigation. Landscape is a more contentious site than public memory places in that landscape reflects contention and interactions among (possibly but not limited only to) the presence of public memory, the vernacular memory, and all the communicative practices. Also, landscape is not merely about what is remembered there; rather conceptualizing landscape is more about discerning both what shapes landscape in a certain way and what material aspects affect/are affected by the process. Thus, the study of rhetorical place that is linked to “(collective) memory” needs to be more inclusive in terms of its spectrum of subject matter. Although this
study is not suggesting the whole or perfect investigation of space by suggesting the need to conceptualize rhetorical landscape, what needs to be considered is that the limited subjects in rhetorical studies about space/place could result in promoting the tendency to study rhetorical subjects that are deliberately so while overlooking the rhetorical subtle in its nature. The rhetorical scholarship in space/place and public/collective memory do help us develop the concept of rhetorical landscape in many levels as discussed, but at that same time that scholarship requires us to be more sensitive to the subtlety of the rhetorical and to the dialectic of various forces operating on/within/between sites.

Represented with the work of Lefebvre introduced earlier, Cultural geography works help further the discussion of rhetorical approach to space with more critical and cultural expeditions. They account for material conditions that motivate and constraint spatial practices. On that note, works of critical geographers facilitate to complicate the contingency upon which space comes to its shape. Moreover, their concerns with social injustice in space such as segregation and gentrification enrich a rhetorical studies’ exploration of ideology or hegemony operated in space. However, this should not mean a complete redirection of rhetorical studies in its spatial turn because a communicative aspect is germane to spatial practice. For example, Davis stresses the communicative feature of cities as follows:

The myriad social relationships, as well as the symbolic and material artifacts that characterize urban spaces, are constitutive and reflective of the consensual and conflicting practices, values, identities, dialogues, and places embedded within them.76

To further the discussion of spatial communication, therefore, I envision the concept of rhetorical landscape while understanding a landscape as a composition that reveals contours of relationships among space and place. Given “places exist in the interrelationship with spaces,”77 conceptualizing landscape in rhetorical terms is an attempt to provide a theoretical clarity that
would elaborate distinctive features among and dynamics between space, place, and landscape. The concept of rhetorical landscape essentially focuses on a trajectory that is formulated by negotiations occurring in space. Trajectories are shaped by constant (re)inventions that take cooperation and even contradictories into account. When Stormer argues, “Persuasion, or identification as supplement to persuasion, bridges orders of discourse and things,” he points out interactions between discursive and non-discursive meanings in space.\(^\text{78}\)

Those interactions rest on the fluidity in liminality that is germane to transitions and allows a rhetorical configuration of landscape. The idea that place is produced is intrinsic to conceptualizing and comprehending landscape in rhetorical terms.\(^\text{79}\) In apprehending landscape as the rhetorical, recognition of historical and contextual conditions is much needed since it affects spatial arrangements in landscape. DeLuca’s elucidation of “the act of linking” is insightful for elaborating the function of contingent-ness on fabricating rhetorical landscape. He argues, “the linking of elements into a temporary unity is not necessary, but rather is contingent and particular and is the result of a political and historical struggle.”\(^\text{80}\) Rhetorical landscape as discursive and material forms is a field of articulations that experiences modifications revealing negotiations and struggles over competing interests. In the same vein, as Woods, Ewalt, and Baker point out that rhetoric comes together through material, sensational, and discursive, understanding contingent-ness is to take materialistic perspective to discursiveness in space.\(^\text{81}\) It traces trajectories of how a spatial arrangement comes to presence.

Conceiving of contingent-ness within a spatial structure is also the way in which it discusses interactions of locales on landscape. What becomes a critical issue is where constituents of landscape are located or situated and how they define them contingent upon each other. Stormer points out that, “when elements are linked, they must work in conjunction and/or
disjunction, each placing conditions of possibility and impossibility on the others to a greater or lesser degree.”82 His illustration of linkages and their functions to delimit and circumscribe a range of enactments helps envision the textuality of landscape. Hence, the issue of contingency explains a structuring by which it generates a spatial arrangement. In that manner, landscape has textuality from a rhetorical perspective. When understanding landscape as a composition, it is rather as a prescriptive one because of its rhetorical effects, which are imbued with disposition on landscape. When a composition becomes dispositional, attitudes are played out in the transition.

The liminal world opens to disclose those presences only when we are rightly oriented to see them. The presence encountered is neither a subjective projection of categorical expectations onto the displayed nor is it an impartial description of the displayed but rather an agentic presence disclosed contingently through the orchestrated interplay of a mutually responsive, dialogically structured interaction.83

What Prelli illustrates as mutuality of interactions in liminal space is inspirational to identifying dynamics in spatial negotiations within landscape. His idea thus holds the importance of relations and conjunctures present in spatial constellation in order for grasping material and discursive fabrics of it. The fabric of landscape, that is, the textuality of landscape, is from the very feature of liminality that embodies spatial fluidity. The non-fixity characterizes landscape as acts of communication when it is simultaneously sites of communication. Moreover, landscape as a reification of acts and sites of communication entails tonality through spatial arrangement into landscape since it engages decisive choices. In other words, as it is rhetorical not only what you say and how you say it but also when you say it, it is rhetorical not only what is there and how it is presented but also how it is situated in landscape. For instance, presence of a certain community in space would entail its rhetorical meaning and ways in which the community is
presented in space define its rhetoric and conditions in which the community is situated articulate its rhetoric.

To illuminate the rhetoricity of landscape in further detail, it is useful to adopt rhetorical terminology such as articulation and juxtaposition, as well as to elaborate how tropes operate within them. They also help to examine “a relational politics” by providing a means for addressing and exposing (re)configurations on landscape.

First, a notion of articulation provides us a way of seeing landscapes. Stormer offers his interpretation of the term, articulation. He argues:

I want to highlight that the relation of discourse to things in different articulations of rhetoric is part of what conditions the limits of culture and, hence, nature as well within a given rhetoric and establishes historical limits on rhetorical action…For me articulation is…about historicizing different configurations of materiality and meaning (collapsed, segregated, overlapping) as conditions for the coming into being of a given form of rhetoric.

DeLuca clarifies two aspects of articulation: “Speaking forth elements and linking elements.” He says, “Though elements preexist articulations as floating signifiers, the act of linking in a particular articulation modifies their character such that they can be understood as being spoken anew.” What his remark stresses is that a modified discourse or discursivity is an indication of different sets of orders. Therefore, a discursivity articulated through a particular order entails a potential to be hegemonic because it refers to a particular linking. On landscape, which is what DeLuca might call “a social field marked by contingency instead of necessity” wherein elements conflicting and/or confirming one another reside, spatial articulations are manifested in a way that they reciprocally anchor their identities. Prelli notes that, “rhetorical displays are manifested through emphases and de-emphases that exhibit ‘orders of desire.’” Those (de)emphases are nodal points of configuration of landscape, and being either emphasized or de-emphasized is conditioned by their relations to other elements on landscape.
Furthermore, coupled with the recognition of contingency, the notion of articulation helps us conceptualize a landscape both in synchronic and diachronic way. In addition to, illuminating the conceptualization of landscape in rhetorical terms enables us to realize the possibility for de-articulation and re-articulation. That also does benefit us through questioning a particular articulation coming into presence in the first place.

Second, juxtaposition provides a way for re-elaboration of contingency described earlier. It visualizes contingent-ness since it forces us to see the configuration of landscape. Given “simultaneity of multiple trajectories” on landscape, juxtaposition is a lens to examine their spatial coexistence. More specifically, taking a lens of juxtaposition into landscape enables us to observe “dispositions or structures of material places” In other words, where it is positioned or situated exerts different effects. As such, juxtaposition on landscape is simultaneously symbolic and material, which resonates with the conceptualization of rhetorical landscape. The nature of juxtaposition, which is placement side by side, enables us to realize spatial tropes that are inherently based on some sort of relationships, such as metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. Barry Brummett explains “metonymy expresses an abstract idea in terms of something physical or material.” On landscape, abstract ideas of social hierarchy and power inequality can be reified through spatial arrangement in which one idea is foregrounded at the expense of another. Synecdoche, Brummett says, is “the trope of representation.” In urban space, a particular area could represent social, cultural, and political environment of society. Irony is “to turn the literal meaning of your expression to read it as exactly the opposite of what your words actually mean.” Irony especially can be revealed by closely interpreting a spatial placement with the frame provided by juxtaposition.
In conceptualizing a landscape in rhetorical terms, it is characterized primarily by three rhetorical features as follows: (not in priority order) constitutive, vernacular, and epideictic. First, landscape defined in rhetorical terms is inherently constitutive in its nature because it engenders dispositions in its encounters. That is to say a landscape as a composition entails disposition since it represents a certain attitude through it. Suggesting constitutive rhetoric, which serves to facilitate engendering subject of discourse, Charland indicates its ideological effects that “positions the reader towards political, social, and economic action in the material world.” therefore, constitutive rhetoric is about positioning, and the positioning enacted through landscape is its rhetorical function.\textsuperscript{94} Clark specifically examined how American landscapes engendered national identity in visitors to various national parks.\textsuperscript{95} Moreover, that a subject called upon through a constitutive rhetoric thinks and acts within a totality of the rhetoric is therefore the very ideological nature of constitutive rhetoric.

Another aspect of rhetorical landscape is vernacular. The first feature, constitutive rhetoric of landscape, is inherently vernacular since it is very much time and place specific. Constitutive rhetoric needs to incorporate specific moments within history to succeed to be constitutive. Therefore, it requires sensibility toward contingency in history and contexts from which a vernacular evolves.

One more dimension needed to understand the rhetoricity of landscape is its epideictic feature. Vernacular rhetorics celebrate what is valued in locales. A vernacular discourse values and shares from its past and it extends to the future. Therefore, some landscapes are intrinsically commemorative in their character. Prelli indicates, “Encounters with displays always are to some degree epideictic in the sense that they animate moral (of moralizing) presumptions about what constitutes the worthwhile and worthless, the praiseworthy and blameworthy, the significant and
In that sense, landscape as a rhetorical composition reflects value structures that would guide conjunctures as well as contestations in landscape. Davis defines landscapes as “embodied modes of representations, operating strategically to manipulate these qualities [the construction and celebration of identities] as means of advancing particular ideological agendas.” As Davis indicates, approaching landscape through a rhetorical perspective requires us to face its complexity and sensitivity to contingent-ness. Overall, the effort is to comprehend the spatiality of politics and politics of the spatial. In doing so, the concept of rhetorical landscape suggested here enables us to approach them from a vantage point thereby we are able to get much more nuanced understanding of social, cultural, and political threads undergirding the site of our living.

**Methodology: Ideological Rhetorical Criticism**

Ideological rhetorical criticism provides a means to analyze the power structure embedded in the landscape. The power structure entails the political and economic, and whereby they are reflected through the cultural and social. Since the approach of ideological rhetorical criticism is beneficial for articulating why a landscape is rhetorical, this study takes it as the choice methodological perspective.

In order to elaborate the role ideology plays in rhetorical criticism, I go back to the question, “what is the significance of criticism?” That question is asking what the reasons would be to have criticism, in other words. To answer to that question, I position myself with Campbell who provokes a role of critic and criticism as more of evaluation and judgment. Therefore, as ideological concerns are what matters for me and they are unavoidable questions as regards my definition of criticism, I should ask and try to provide some social knowledge about ideology for the public. Thus, to me, ideological criticism is not merely a method; rather, it is more like an
attitude a critic takes when facing social discourses. Ideological inquiries give a critic a perspective, which complicates a simplified or naturalized social discourse. In so doing, although ideology is not a method by itself, it guides a process of criticism in that it helps a critic set a purpose of critical practices. After all, critical process is about un-naturalizing the naturalized. It clarifies the hierarchies of the power (the dominant) and the dominated, and hence reveals the social consequences of them, which is represented, for instance, in a manner of division between the included and the excluded.

Thus, ideological criticism extends the question of criticism from “how a person persuades others” to “why she/he does (or attempts to, at least) so.” Answering to the “why” question requires a critic to be careful and sensitive to a bigger picture of contexts in which a discourse occurs. So, ideological criticism does eventually intend to reveal answers regarding whose interest is at stake, on one hand, and whose interest is served by a certain discourse, on the other hand. I argue that a landscape is a site of claiming ideological interests.

Procedure

In his study of memory, identity, and space, Gregg Dickinson analyzes Old Pasadena, a shopping district in Los Angeles, in order to investigate how the site evokes nostalgic memories in visitors and rhetorically functions to evolve and reinforce identity. In doing so, Dickinson provides an apt model for the present study of Itaewon. According to Dickinson, “as rhetorical places or loci, landscapes draw together a wide range of cultural and historical resources,” therefore “an analysis of landscapes must begin by tracing the lines of these cultural resources.” By mapping the cultural contours of Old Pasadena’s rhetorical landscape, Dickinson pulls together various artifacts that operate to rhetorically reproduce identity through the cultivation of nostalgia. Focusing on “memories encoded by inscriptions, signs, and legends,”
Dickinson begins by identifying various artifacts capable of illuminating the rhetorical fragments of the cityscape. Like Dickinson, Lindlof and Taylor agree that analyzing material culture is a process for producing data in qualitative research. Making material culture visible is available through observations in various sites. Furthermore, “the multiplicity of artifacts” indicates that the rhetoricty of site is formed simultaneously by various types of resources such as texts, discourses, and artifacts.

Therefore, for this study I conducted fieldwork in order to generate a text from the landscape of Itaewon. I visited streets and alleys of Itaewon numerous times to record them as texts. I also visited the War Memorial of Korea several times to gather artifacts from the museum. In the process, I engaged in observations to unearth nuanced histories of Itaewon and South Korea embedded in material artifacts in the city site. By recording the kinds of rhetorical acts occurring throughout the landscape of Itaewon, I constructed a text capable of fostering a critical analysis that illuminated the transnational and transcultural negotiations of identities in South Korea that were reflected upon throughout the Itaewon landscape. Specifically, I aimed to elucidate the rhetoricity of the landscape of Itaewon by searching for (key) symbolic components embedded in the cityscape. In the following chapters, I described what those look like, where those come from, how they interact, influence, and communicate with one another. The process of historicizing and contextualizing was necessary in order to illustrate and critique how Itaewon works, in the moment, as a rhetorical text. It was also through understanding those interactions, influences, and communications among constituents that generate the rhetoricity of the site. Those understandings provided an insight regarding the rhetorical appeals and strategies of Itaewon landscapes. In his work analyzing Old Pasadena as a footstone for visitors to reconstitute their fractured identities in postmodern society, Dickinson insists that “a careful
analysis of the formal structure will point to its gaps and inconsistences (sic).” By focusing on formal structure, then, Dickinson identifies “cultural structures and aesthetic forms, or, better, moves between the cultural and the formal.” He explored significant signs, buildings, and stores at Old Pasadena, which are materials encoding the rhetorics of the site in the site. This kind of ethnographic approach for analyzing a space or a city is also used by Williams when he returned to Belmar, the neighborhood in Pittsburgh, and described what he observed: decayed houses, lots full of debris, drug streets, and etc. Therefore it was a critical part of this study to explore “the formal details of the site” in order to point to consistency or inconsistency on the landscape of Itaewon.

Through fieldwork, I was able to produce the space, Itaewon, as a text to be analyzed. Doing fieldwork was beneficial especially for this study since the landscape of the city site is the subject of the study, which necessitated a researcher to explore it to grasp the site as a text. That is, fieldwork was a means of “production of written account” of the subject of this research. During fieldwork, a researcher yields fieldnotes, which are inscriptions that “reflect conventions for transforming witnessed events, persons, and places into words on paper.” Observations conducted within the site were essential to examine how identities of the site are rhetorically generated and constructed in the site, and how various identities in the site are contested and negotiated.

Employing that approach, the observation method, accomplished two goals for this study. On one hand, observation enabled a researcher to come up with the site as a text by exploring material aspects in the site, Itaewon. On the other hand, observation added nuanced understandings of those that were observed, which helped comprehend why they matter and how.

Fieldwork for this study was conducted throughout summer 2013. In exploring the components
of Itaewon, I consistently visited the site and collected data by transforming what was seen to what was written or taken (in photos). While doing so, transcribing fieldnotes also included activities of evaluating, analyzing, and criticizing those findings in terms of how they interact and influence one another. Furthermore, fieldnotes also reflected how constituents in space influence each other on the landscape of Itaewon and what the implications of those interactions are on the rhetorical landscape.

Lindlof and Taylor explain that a schematic understanding of forms, contexts, and meanings of a research subject is required to understand another culture and ultimately to clarify meanings in a specific culture. What Enos illustrates as rhetorical archaeology serves the equivalent purpose with that of Lindlof and Taylor as Enos argues “we must reconstruct not only the discourse and the cultural context but also the mentalities that are indigenous to the period.” To enrich the understanding of rhetoric of Itaewon landscape, I contextualized the mentalities surrounding Itaewon and South Korea within specific times in the history of South Korea. In addition, as Dickinson indicates “this analysis of the (always provisional) relations between specific formal details and cultural discourses facilitates comprehension of the cultural problems that are negotiated at a site,” my ethnographic fieldwork and observation were for investigating formal structures of the site in which the discourses rooted in its historical, cultural, and political backgrounds are embedded. In doing so, I examined both how the site reflects those discourses as well as how the site employs the discourses on the site. As Jolanta A. Drzewiecka and Thomas K. Nakayama stress, a city and the society generated in the city are the outcome of various forces including the political, economic, and cultural. Those forces are contingent on time and space, and those contingent forces are what constitute a context in which a city is evolving. That perspective led this research to locate a stratum of discourse, the array of
historical, cultural, and political resources that construct identities of Itaewon and simultaneously put them in contestations. The process of analyzing the stratum of discourses enriched the understanding of rhetoricity the landscape of Itaewon embodies.

In order to situate the landscape of Itaewon within discursive practices, this study first and foremost contextualized Itaewon by examining discourses about the town. In doing so, this study aimed to illuminate how that landscape—through its history and design—conveys meanings that are generated by its interrelating components within the larger field of discursive structures. In this study, South Korean newspaper articles and cultural products were examined to gather bits and pieces of discourses surrounding Itaewon. Reading newspaper articles on Itaewon from 1920s throughout 2010s was beneficial to grasp where Itaewon has been positioned within Korean society, culture, and politics, and how Itaewon’ positionality has been shifted. Also, as cultural products, this study collected popular cultural artifacts such as books, movies, and pop-music that speak about Itaewon. Those social documents helped the researcher read Itaewon within the circumstances of South Korean history and culture.

Additionally, in order to uncover the transsocial context, Government-Archives related to military conversations between the South Korean government and the US (or UN: United Nations), specifically concerning Itaewon, were also examined in this study. Champagne explains that, “transsocial context refers to geopolitical relations, world-system relations, and global cultural and normative interchanges.” Given that Itaewon has been the site sensitive to geopolitical changes and globalization shifts, understanding the societal implications of local history on the international grid provided a better comprehension of the culture and its rhetorics displayed throughout the landscape of Itaewon. Since the US and UN military forces have been engaged in Koran conflicts between South Korea and North Korea, the foreign forces have
heavily influenced on Korean society, especially on its democratization and modernization processes. As stated earlier, the influences of the foreign forces are geographically evident in Itaewon since the US military camps (the eighth United States Army) have been stationed right next to Itaewon. Even in 2013, the continued presence of the US Army remains a controversial subject in South Korea. Itaewon is sensitive to the decisions regarding the US Army and the geography of the town was impacted by such decisions. Therefore, researching military archives that store the history between South Korea and foreign forces represented by the US was beneficial for this study since it gave a contextualized perspective to understand Itaewon within the history of geopolitics critical to the changes of the town. The archives were accessed through the Seoul History Library run by Seoul Museum of history. They store old documents from World War II and the Korean War periods.

**Research Question**

While developing the concept of rhetorical landscape, this study examines the discursive changes and shifts involved in (re)imagining South Korea amidst the nexus of various forces. In doing so, I analyze how Itaewon, as synecdochic of Korean society and culture, spatially communicates the ever-changing rhetoric of Korean identity-building. By understanding sectors in Itaewon – such as streets, alleys, and particular places – as metonymic of conflicting ideas at historical junctures, this study articulates both the rhetoricity Itaewon embodies and its rhetoric elaborated through the dynamics among constituents configured on the landscape. By analyzing the configuration of the landscape, I intend to cast a light upon Itaewon as a site of negotiating transcultural identities as it mediates political, social, and cultural forces.
Overview of Chapters

To accomplish this task, the following chapters are constructed to articulate the grid of rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. To do so, each chapter intends to illuminate sectors that together generate a particular contour on the landscape of Itaewon. It is aimed, throughout exploring various sectors in following chapters, to offer a critical analysis on how they produce the landscape of Itaewon as the rhetorical.

The second chapter, “The Identity of Space: Itaewon, a Little America in South Korea,” focuses on the Americanization of Itaewon, the process which has an enormous influence on the landscape of Itaewon materially and symbolically. Understanding the US military base in the town as a pivotal force inducing the distinctive characteristics of Itaewon, I aim to elucidate the intersection between Americanization of Itaewon with modernization of South Korea. It is an effort to illustrate a convoluted feeling South Koreans experience in perceiving modernization and further illuminate a possible origin of such a conflicting sentiment shared by them. In doing so, this chapter becomes a foundational chapter for other chapters following in that it historicizes the liminality of Itaewon and contextualizes ideologies embedded in the space. Specifically, this chapter elaborates why Americanization needs to be understood as ideological by analyzing its cultural and social consequences that are found in the space of Itaewon such as Hooker Hill and Antique Street.

The third chapter, “National Identity Spoken through the War Memorial of Korea,” is an extended discussion from the previous chapter since it continues to investigate the influences of the US forces on site. Specifically, in this chapter, the examination gears toward its impact on national identity of South Korea within the larger discourse of geopolitics. Therefore, this chapter deals with ideology supported on a national level and intends to unveil its connection to
the Cold War geopolitics that the US was deeply involved in. It is critical to investigate this sector of Itaewon in order to fully understand the rhetoricity of the landscape because it is where another contour of Itaewon landscape is formed and ultimately elaborates its rhetoric. I contend the placement of the War Memorial of Korea (WMK) in the particular location of Itaewon is a political choice while articulating that the juxtaposition of the WMK with the US military camps re-assures the ideological empowerment South Korea is looking for. Within the context, I analyze exhibitions in the WMK and suggest a main objective of the museum is to define what it means to be South Korean. To illuminate that point, it is important to examine the contexts within which the museum was constructed and the particular themes were emerged. Such an investigation offers a picture for interlocking nodes among nationalism, place, and commemorated history. As such, this chapter exemplifies and concretizes ideological themes addressed in the previous chapter by moving the focus of examination to the sector of intersection between the WMK and the US military bases in Itaewon.

The fourth chapter discusses social Others who founded their places in Itaewon. Given that Itaewon has been considered as the place of others in South Korean history, I attempt to illuminate how the liminality of Itaewon space works as possibilities for socio-culturally marginalized people to have their own places to speak for themselves. In doing so, I also examine who are defined as social others in South Korea and discuss the social implications of such relationships and identities. I imply that it is by investigating who become Others in society that one can understand the power structure of the society that is constructed and reinforced through cultures. In Itaewon, the district where the rhetoric of national identity has its axis in one sector and the discourse of multiculturalism has been evolved around other sectors at the same time, there are places of social minorities of the South Korean society such as Muslims and
homosexuals. I examine their places as a means for them to speak their vernaculars thereby they can sustain or even generate their identities that have been marginalized from the mainstream. With their vernaculars, the rhetoric of Others generated through the space of Itaewon, therefore, complicates the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. Comprehending their vernaculars ultimately helps us understand space/place as “powerful forms of communication that help construct narratives of identity and belonging.” Through critical analyses of Muslim and LGBTQ communities in Itaewon, I intend to suggest a potential for intercultural community in Itaewon.

The last chapter is the conclusion. Reviewing previous chapters, I explicate the interlocking natures of analyses of subjects for each chapter. Reiterating the inter-connectedness of each sector analyzed in each chapter is ultimately to clarify the concept, rhetorical landscape, which I attempt to develop throughout this research. I explain how the concept of rhetorical landscape is introduced, developed and refined through the analyses conducted in this research and indicate theoretical contributions the concept provides to the studies of space and place. While explaining the political and social implications of this study, I propose a potential benefit to critical intercultural research from directing the notion of the rhetorical landscape to other global cities.
Notes


3 Gregory Clack, Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 9.

4 Ibid., 147.


6 Gangnam, the southern region of the city of Seoul recently got famous with the South Korean signer, PSY, and his world-wide hit song, Gangnam style, in 2012.


8 Ibid., 97-98.


12 Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization.’”


15 Ibid., 40.

16 Ibid., 41.

17 Massey, *For Space*, 55.

18 Ibid., 59.


21 Ibid., 54.


24 With respect to this discussion, museums, monuments, and the like become ideological apparatus.


27 Ibid.


Ibid., 3.


Ibid., 203.


42 Ibid., 13.

43 Ibid., 13.

44 Ibid., 16.

45 Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes*, 36.

46 Ibid., 39.


48 Ibid., 2.

49 Later on, McGee clearly indicates “vocabulary of ideographs that define a particular collectivity.” It might even be possible to call museum, monument, and the like ‘ideographs’ that are materially reified. A word <museum> is an ideograph by itself in that museum implies there is something there that deserves being preserved (for whatever reasons). See, McGee, “The Ideograph,” 11.

50 Endres and Senda-Cook, “Location Matters,” 259.


53 Ibid., 6-7.

54 Ibid., 13.

55 Gallagher and LaWare, “Sparring with Public Memory,” 89.


57 Hasian, Jr. “Remembering and Forgetting the “Final Solution,”” 65.

58 Ibid., 77.


60 Ibid., 29.

61 Ibid., 32.

62 Ibid., 32.


64 Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting,” 29.

65 Emphasized by author of this essay.


67 Massey, *For Space*, 55.

68 Ibid., 55.

69 Ibid., 61.

71 Ibid., 172.


75 Dickinson, ”Memories for Sale”; Hasian, Jr., “Remembering and Forgetting the ‘Final Solution’”; Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting”; Zagacki and Gallagher, “Rhetoric and Materiality.”;


84 Massey, *For Space*, 61.

85 Stormer, “Articulation,” 260; 261.


87 Ibid, 37.


89 Massey, *For Space*, 61.


92 Ibid., 87.

93 Ibid., 90.


95 Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes*.


100 Ibid., 7.


107 Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 9.


CHAPTER II. THE IDENTITY OF THE SPACE: ITAEWON AS LITTLE AMERICA IN THE CITY OF SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA.

Itaewon Freedom, the shiny lights, oh oh oh.
Itaewon Freedom, where it is full of youth.
Let’s dance here, let’s dream here all together, let’s love here, let’s sing. Itaewon Freedom.

- Itaewon Freedom¹

Chapter Two focuses on the Americanization of Itaewon, the process which has an enormous influence on the material and symbolic landscape of Itaewon. Itaewon is understood metonymically, as the town of Little America, a nom de plume signifying the town’s geographical location within the city of Seoul, South Korea, as well as the high propensity for the district to court and attract foreigners.² When compared with the larger landscape of South Korea, the visible difference of Itaewon marks the district as a liminal space.³ As Victor Turner explains, liminal space functions to produce the kind of spontaneous play capable of infusing new possibilities into the cultural traditions and rituals of a community.⁴ As a liminal space, Itaewon can therefore be seen as a stage capable of cultivating the “in-between-ness” needed to sustain hybridity, ambivalence, and dynamic. In that sense, Americanization brought a liberating climate into the arguably more conventional culture of South Korea, a culture dominantly framed by Confucian thought, tradition, and hierarchy.

When viewed against the contrasting backdrop of Confucian society within the larger South Korean society, it becomes easy to see how the song, “Itaewon Freedom,” cited above,⁵ can resonate within Korean society. In 2011, the song went viral in South Korean pop music scene. Itaewon Freedom reflects how Itaewon has been perceived in South Korea, singing the liberating atmosphere of Itaewon. As an Americanized place which visibly hosts more foreigners and tourists than any other place in Korea, Itaewon invites Koreans to imagine a place of
liberation and freedom. American culture was enticing to Koreans who discerned greater freedoms in it compared to social and cultural restrictions they felt in Confucianism. In that circumstance, Itaewon garners a reputation as a cultural asylum in which transgression is tolerated or even condoned.

The liminality of Itaewon is rooted in the long history of presences of foreigners in the town, which goes back to as early as Chôsun Dynasty, which is the previous regime of Korea. However, the most critical period of the foreigners’ presence in Itaewon began with the Japanese colonization of Korea in 1910. Following the next thirty-five years of military occupation, during which Itaewon was an important place for the Japanese colonial forces, the US military occupied the same lot, establishing a military base on the Korean Peninsula in the years after Allied Forces liberated Korea from Japanese imperialism in 1945. Those periods of time played a crucial role in the sociocultural construction of Itaewon, contributing heavily to the westernized identity the district now maintains. Furthermore, those exterior forces were the carriers of the new concept, modernity, to Korea. With the influx of western cultures during the colonization and postcolonial periods, Korea experienced modernization in western terms. For Tani E. Barlow, the colonial construction of modernity in East Asia, during and after Japanese colonization makes it necessary to understand Korea’s transition from pre-modern society as an example of colonial modernity. For Hyungjung Lee and Younghan Cho, Barlow’s term is useful “as an analytic concept” which can highlight the link between colonialism and modernity and therefore “help to explicate the course of both colonization and modernization.” Hyungjung Lee and Younghan Cho further explain the continuing colonial modernity during postcolonial time period.

Colonial modernity first emerged from the contexts of the inter-war period, particularly the 1920s and the 1930s. The immediate replacement of the Japanese Empire by the USA and subsequent cold war tensions have resuscitated the colonial condition, however (in both military and ideological contexts). Despite the region’s relatively successful
economic development and its postwar achievements, East Asian desires to emulate America or the West have consistently reproduced the prison of coloniality.⁸

As Lee and Cho point out, in the postcolonial era, *Americanism* became conflated with *modernism*, eventually to the point that the term *Americanism* replaced *modernization* in East Asian countries. Upon contextualizing the colonial modernity in the case of South Korea, JongHwa Lee, Min Wha Han, and Raymie McKerrow extended this line of thinking with the concept, “American modernity.”⁹ Therefore, the power structure in the Americanization of South Korea, which is epitomized through Itaewon, is political and more explicitly ideological. As Raka Shome and Radha S. Hedge point out “America’s neocolonial relation”¹⁰ with Korea after World War II, the US politics and the US military force have largely operated in South Korea in a way that it is repressive to South Korean politics and culture while largely led the modernization. Conflation of *Americanization* with *modernization* remains a point of contention and struggle in South Korea. According to Lee and Cho, “As America in the early twentieth century stood as the ultimate model of modernity, the superior ‘Other’,”¹¹ the US played a substantial role in the transition of South Korea. In order to understand what American modernity means politically, socially, and culturally in South Korea, I next investigate Itaewon, original and continued space of Americanization in South Korea.

Provided that the modernization process of South Korea is overlain on the trajectories of effects of Americanization during the postcolonial period of South Korea, in this chapter, I aim to elaborate on reasons why Americanization in South Korea should be understood as ideological by analyzing the cultural and social consequences of Americanization in respect to American imperialism. By engaging in a spatial turn in communication studies, this chapter focuses on a discursive and spatial analysis of Americanization in South Korea through primarily investigating Itaewon. I examine how Americanization is spatially reified at various sites in
Itaewon where it has been a primary entry-point of American forces (both military and cultural forces). Tracing back American modernity in South Korea, this study examines the US military base in Yongsan, Seoul, South Korea, as a pivotal force of Americanization of South Korea, and Itaewon, which is adjacent to the US military base, is analyzed to illuminate the reification of American modernity. In doing so, I argue that a spatial arrangement is the major feature that imparts rhetoricity to the Itaewon landscape. Parallel to Itaewon is the US military base, “a symbol of the ongoing Cold War,”12 which manifests the geopolitics that continually influence and deeply involve South Korea. Particularly, as a spatial structure, these side-by-side entities contain the geopolitical inequality between two agencies, the US and South Korea, coexisting in the space.

In analyzing this landscape, I also attempt to take into account an analytic principle of temporality,13 in order to better comprehend the hegemony enabled by the conflation of Americanization and modernization within South Korea. Since Americanization is closely tied to the notion of modernization in South Korea, investigating Americanization necessitates situating the discourse into a nexus of temporality which plays a critical role in structuring certain power relations. I contend that the Itaewon landscape enunciates the inequality between the two states by drawing attention to the spatial contrasts between what each agent occupies. Therefore, in examining this landscape as constitutive, it is important to remember that the meaning produced within and through the scene is contingent upon the dialogic arrangement of these two dominant markers. In other words, one must examine these spaces together in order to comprehend what the space is actually speaking to us. Additionally, it is critical to investigate contours on the landscape, which are emerging through relations and interactions among the constituents, in order to better understand the conflicting interests which are in on-going negotiations.
In the following sections, I first contextualize the position of the US military base adjacent to Itaewon, pointing out its influences on the Americanization of the town. Furthermore, I explicate Americanization at the juncture of modernization of South Korea through illuminating its bearing on modernizing South Korea. In doing so, I analyze the Main Street of Itaewon and the Antique Street. Furthermore, I elaborate the complex structure of sentiment South Koreans share for American(ization), while examining how the complex sentiment has been laid out on the Itaewon landscape, specifically through an examination of Hooker Hill.

A Brief History of the US Military Settlement in South Korea

Chôsun was colonized under the Japanese imperialism for thirty-five years, starting in 1910. As Japan was involved in World War II against the United States, the defeat of Japan in World War II also resulted in the evacuation of Japanese imperialists from the Korean Peninsula in 1945. It was, yet, a little early to declare the restoration of independence of Chôsun since the Korean Peninsula was soon put under another military administration, which was of the US. Additionally, in 1953, the Korean Peninsula was divided by north and south of the latitude 38 reflecting the ideological struggle of the World War II. The northern part of the Korean Peninsula, now known as North Korea, was allied with the Soviet Union and its political perspective referring to as communism. On the contrary, the southern part of the peninsula, later becoming the Republic of Korea (South Korea), was allied with the UN. Throughout the modern history of Korea, the US was closely involved in the situations of the Korean Peninsula and the scope of the involvements is illustrated chronologically in following.

First of all, roughly one month after Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration in August of 1945, bringing an end to the World War II, the US military force arrived at the Korean Peninsula. Taking the Cairo Declaration (1943) in action, the arrival of the US military forces in Korea was
justified as a trusteeship since the independence of Korea was called for in due course.\textsuperscript{14} The US also had their own political purposes to send their military to the Korean Peninsula given that the north half of Korea at the 38th parallel was under the Soviet’s occupation.\textsuperscript{15} The US military force was deployed both to rearrange the aftermath of the Japanese imperialism in the peninsula and to keep the South part of the peninsula as a UN’s political ally in Northeast Asia.

With the Pacific Proclaim No. 3 by U.S. Army Forces, it was another beginning of the era of dependence of Korea.\textsuperscript{16} The lack of independence for Korea, even after decolonization from Japan, became clear in that Korea did not have the sovereignty to make any decisions about the future of the state.\textsuperscript{17} Instead, the US Army Force settled into the military facility located in Yongsan previously occupied by Japan during its colonization period.\textsuperscript{18} It is ironic that the Cold War had just begun more severe in the Korean Peninsula when the Cold War seemed to be ended in the global scale since the Korean Peninsula became the nest of the two disputing ideologies of the Cold War: democracy and communism.

During the four years of the US military administration (1945-1949), the US was deeply involved in the establishment of the South Korean government. Disregarding the People’s Republic, established by the Korean Establishment Preparation Board prior to the arrival of the US military administration, the US began to express their political perspective on a Korean government. From 1945 to 1948, there was a continuous dispute between the political right and left within Korean politics. Meanwhile, there were periodic attempts by the US, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union to establish a government that united the North and South. The effort, however, was not fruitful as the Soviet Union eventually refused to collaborate on the issue. Also, in 1947, the US launched the containment policy, which aimed to prevent communism spreading into the Southern Peninsula.\textsuperscript{19} In 1948, the UN finally called for the first presidential elections,
but the election was only conducted in the South, which means the government was only for the 
South politically excluding the North. In August of 1948, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was 
founded. Syngman Rhee was elected President of the ROK. Rhee was a political ally of the US 
with his right-wing political perspective. Since the first republic under the Syngman Rhee regime 
in the South still had political fissures especially on the issue of its legitimacy to speak for 
Koreans, there were undergoing activities like the coalition conference between political leaders 
from both the South and the North to discuss any possible means to unify the two zones into 
under one government. Meanwhile, in 1949, the US military largely withdrew from the Korean 
Peninsula, leaving behind approximately 500 military personnel.

The establishment of the ROK consequently meant another individual government of the North. In 1948, following the establishment of the Republic of Korea, the Soviet Union helped 
the North launch its own government, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Split 
into two ideologically oppositional states, the Korean Peninsula once again faced the chance of 
war. On June 25th, in 1950, the Korean War was ignited by the North Korean attack on the South. The intention behind the war was for a coalition of the North and the South. Regardless of the 
intention for reunification, the war carried the intense cold war ideology, given that the Soviet 
Union was overshadowing DPRK, which made the Soviet Union practically a controlling power 
over the North Korea. The Korean War, therefore, was taken seriously by the US provided that 
the containment policy, explicated by President Truman, was in act since 1947. In other words, 
the reaction of the US to the invasion of the North to the South in the Korean Peninsula was 
primarily based on their interpretation of the invasion as the Soviet’s attempt to re-ignite the 
unresolved ideological war. As the Korean Peninsula was a pivotal region in the geopolitics of 
the cold war era, the US sent their military forces to the Korean Peninsula to support the ROK as
a part of the United Nation troops in 1950, and the 8th US Army situated its base in Daegu. In other words, because of the Korean War, which was a civil war of Korea but was simultaneously characterized as an ideological war of the geopolitics, the US re-entered the Korean Peninsula only about one year after they pulled out their military.

The Korean War continued for the next three years until the truce agreement was signed between North Korea, China, and the US on July 1953. Here the US was acting as a representative of South Korea. The South Korean government, however, originally did not sign, maintaining an unyielding hope for the unification of Korea. The resistance, however, could not hold for long. President Rhee, the first president of South Korea (1948-1960), eventually agreed to the cease-fire. The armistice resulted in the concrete separation of the North and the South, and the 38th parallel has been a ceasefire line between two Koreas since 1953.

Since the Korea War, the US military has been staying in South Korea. The US 8th Army relocated from Daegu to Seoul at Jongno, and then to Yongsan, in Seoul, on August 1953, the space in which the US military is currently placed. Slightly later that year, South Korea and the US signed the Mutual Defense Treaty on October 1953. Consisting of six articles, the Treaty indicates that the parties have agreed on the said treaty, “Desiring further to strengthen their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security…in the Pacific area.” This shows the geopolitical importance of the Korean Peninsula beyond it as well as the Northeastern Asia. The political situation in the Korean Peninsula could have a significant impact on the pacific region that ultimately includes the US. Therefore, the Mutual Defense Treaty came as a very important means for the US to restrain another opposing political force. Moreover, the Treaty also shows the disparity in power, that is, unequal juridical power, between
two countries involved. Specifically, the article IV and VI on the Treaty are critical to foresee those two countries’ political relationship that has been lasting to the 21 century.

ARTICLE IV
The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE VI
This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.28

This Treaty provides a legal foundation for the US to place its military force in the Korean Peninsula. With the placement of the military troops in South Korea, the US was granted operation command authority over the Korean land. The inequalities of the treaty are seen simply enough by the fact that South Korea did not have command authority until 1994; hence, it is clear the Treaty did not presuppose an equal relationship between both countries. Another crucial clause in the Mutual Defense Treaty imposes the potential infinity of the Treaty unless either party takes an active action. In other words, the clause supports an arguably permanent status of the US military force in South Korea.

Furthermore, in 1966, the US and South Korea signed another agreement, unofficially known as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The official title of SOFA is “Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Korea: Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.” When SOFA came to its shape, article IV of the Mutual Defense Treaty especially became to function as a cornerstone of SOFA, which justifies the needs for SOFA. Hence, the rationale for launching SOFA was to implement the Treaty. On the Agreement, the two countries enunciate:

The United States of America and the Republic of Korea, in order to strengthen the close bonds of mutual interest between their two countries, have entered into this Agreement regarding facilities and areas and the status of Unites States armed forces in the Republic of Korea in terms as set forth below (SOFA, 1966).29
Consisted of thirty one articles with the additions of Agreed Minutes, Agreed Understandings, and Exchange of Letters, the Agreement specifies the US’s rights over the uses of facilities and areas in South Korean territories. Having been revised twice, respectively in 1991 and in 2001, SOFA has functioned as a key foundation of the relationship of the US and South Korea.

There have been plans, and some of them were operated for real, to withdraw the US military forces from the Korean Peninsula since the Nixon Doctrine in 1969. Twenty-thousand military forces were pulled out of South Korea by 1971. In 1977, President, Jimmy Carter announced plans to completely withdraw US military forces from South Korea by 1982. With the detailed three-step plan for pullout, thirty-four hundreds were withdrawn by 1978. The master plan, however, ended up being canceled due to opposition from the South Korean government in 1979. In the 1990s, another similar plan for withdrawal was submitted by the US Department of Defense in “A Strategic Framework for the Asia Pacific Rim: Looking for the 21st Century,” but this one was also put off only after the pullout of seven thousands in 1992. In order to keep the suspected North Korean attempts to build nuclear power in check, the alliance between the US and South Korea continued and consolidated at times since 1990s.

Along with the continuously changing situation in terms of the alliance between those two countries, another issue that has provoked so much discussion between those said countries, as well as among Koreans, regards the relocation of the US 8th military camp currently located across from Itaewon in Yongsan. The US operates approximately 90 military camps throughout South Korea. The four representative US military bases in South Korea are located in Daegu, Pyeongtaek (Humphreys), Uijeongbu (Red Cloud), and Yongsan. The Yongsan base is located right next to Itaewon, in the center of Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, and has played a key role in the military networks of South Korea since it was the first base, as well as a headquarters
of the US military force, since the end of the Korean War. Responding to the changed situations in which South Korea has achieved much economic and military development coupled with the weakened threat of communism following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the discussion about the relocation plan for the Yongsan base, so-called the *Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP)*, has accelerated in South Korea since it was first mentioned in 1988. The US and South Korea came to the agreement on YRP at the summit in 2003 with the plan for relocating the US 8th military force from *Yongsan* to *Pyeongtack*.33

Currently, the Yongsan military base, approximately 637 acres, situates the main post in the north side in which the headquarter of the US Armed forces in Korea, the headquarter of the US 8th military force, and the ROK-US Combined Forces Command reside, and the south post where it has residency areas, a school, and the DragonHill Hotel.34

The Yongsan base is taking a considerable portion of the land of *Yongsan-gu*.35 Although some parts that were originally used by the US military force have been returned to the city, the presence of the military force is still very conspicuous in *Yongsan-gu*.

On the map (Figure-1), the yellow-colored area is *Yongsan-gu* and the green-colored area is where the military base is currently located.38 On the map of Seoul (Figure-2), the red-dotted area is *Yongsan-gu*. As the map of the Figure-2 shows, *Yongsan-gu* is located approximately at
the center of the city of Seoul, which puts more weights on the public opinion of Koreans that ask the US military base to be moved.

As of 2014, YRP is still under way. The YRP initially indicated that it would be completed by 2008; however after a couple of postponements, it is now expected to be done by 2017.39 The completion of YRP however does not seem to mean that the entire US Armed Forces will withdraw from South Korea. It simply calls for “relocations” of military bases on the Korean Peninsula. The Mutual Defense Treaty and SOFA are also still in action. South Korea does not have an authority over Operational Control in war time, yet it is in hands of the US until the end of 2015, which was postponed from the original plan for 2010. In the meantime, in 2013, the US and South Korea celebrated sixty years of alliance.40

Main Street: Examining Liminality in Americanization of Itaewon

Due to the geographical location of the the US military base and the consequent cultural influences from Americans, Itaewon, has evolved into a Little America within the city of Seoul. Upon walking down Itaewon-ro from the US military base, one encounters the downtown area of Itaewon. On the picture of the area map, the road between the two green colored areas (the US military bases) is Itaewon-ro, a road that goes through the US military base and reaches the Main Street of Itaewon. The residents of the US military forces in the town substantially changed the landscape of Itaewon Main Street, leading to the establishment of the first Taco Bell in South Korea, as well as a McDonalds, an Itaewon landmark, and Korea’s very first Pizza Hut. The list can go on and on. As suggested by the presence these fast food restaurants, a dietary staple for Americans abroad, the main street of Itaewon provides a familiar feel to international travelers.

As represented by those (imported) stores described above, Itaewon has been a ground for cultural-collision, specifically between American and Korean cultures. Itaewon, slightly
alienated from larger South Korean society, due to occupancies by various foreign entities from throughout history, embodies liminality. The in-between-ness of Itaewon as liminal space means it is a porous textile, into which non-Korean cultures or imported cultures, can seep. The direct and indirect influence of American culture pivoting around the US military base in Yongsan is especially difficult to ignore since the US functioned as a key window for South Korean exposure to western cultures. In that sense, Itaewon reified the idea that Americanization was modernization. Particularly, the Main Street of Itaewon was a metonymic representation of Americanization, displaying American culture that included American restaurants and Jazz bars. The abstract idea of modernization was presented before the eyes of Koreans on Main Street in the tangible forms of American things. Meanwhile, Americanization of Itaewon meant a creation of Itaewon as a liminal space through which different cultures were transitioning.

That Itaewon is adjacent to the US 8th Army base therefore played a key role in creating a more foreigner-friendly atmosphere in Itaewon when South Korea was still not too open to other races defined as foreigners. Likewise, the US military base in Yongsan influenced South Korean culture and especially Itaewon in many and direct ways. The most enduring influence is that the occupancy of the US military force gradually made Itaewon a military camp town. The presence of internationals primarily Americans from 1950s throughout the late 1990s created the demands for markets for essential living goods that were not available from local Korean stores. Therefore, around the military base in Yongsan, trades and businesses for the newer market were started, and the major staging area was Itaewon given proximity to the military base. Influenced by and responding to the needs of Americans in the military base, Itaewon was rather organically formed as a military camp town. Within this circumstance, refurbished as Gigi-chon, Itaewon had provided various types of services for Americans, largely the US military personnel,
especially until the late 1990s. Hence, one of the major functions of Itaewon as a military town was to provide services such as the western-oriented stores. Those very western-oriented businesses burgeoning in Itaewon gradually changed the landscape of the town.

One of the daily problems Americans faced in South Korea was finding clothing that fit them. The existing Korean stores did not carry products that would work for Americans’ different body type, a body type that is generally larger than size of traditional Koreans. The market formulated at Itaewon responded to that need, thereby shops for so-called ‘big-size,’ which were mostly targeting Americans, became dominantly visible on the street. Itaewon started being known as the market where bigger sized attires are available, which was and still is a very restricted market in South Korea. Although, throughout time, they have expanded the scope of their target-customers as ranging from American military personnel to internationals, such businesses evidently remain in existence on the Main Street of Itaewon. All of their signboards are written in English. Names of such stores illustrate their American orientation: MVP, Miracle, Hollywood, Tigers, SOHO, and so on. Although it is not surprising to see signboards written in English in Seoul nowadays any more, it was a very distinctive feature of Itaewon back in the mid-1900s. Furthermore, Itaewon has been a place where English can be used as a common language in communication because businesses in Itaewon were primarily serving English-speaking Americans. That itself enforced the liminality of Itaewon, and therefore Itaewon is still an English-speaking zone in South Korea.

Along with the primary businesses evolving in the town, seeing various ethnicities on the streets of Itaewon became commonplace. For Koreans, the presence of foreigners created an exotic atmosphere providing a westernized ambiance which could not often be experienced in any other places within Seoul. For that feature distinguishable from the rest of the city, Itaewon
was demarcated as American town separated from other conventional towns of South Korea. The town was a territory of South Korea, but it embodied the Western. Itaewon was created as a liminal space with Americanization.

Liminality is the cultural consequence of American influences on Itaewon and South Korea. The Main Street of Itaewon serves for westerners including Americans until nowadays. However, liminality in Itaewon needs to be understood differently from how it is discussed in transnational context that postcolonial studies address. In those scholarships, liminality is what characterizes diasporic groups who moved from their native land to another. However, in Itaewon, liminality is emerged out of the culture of the power that moved to a foreign land of Korea from America. Therefore, liminality of Itaewon possesses different kinds of struggles and possibilities. In the next section, I analyze another street of Itaewon, Antique Street, in order to illuminate the different kind of struggle and possibility in the liminal space of Itaewon: Colonial modernity.

**Antique Street: Examining Colonial Modernity**

Modernity in South Korea should be understood within the context of the discussion of colonialism and postcolonialism the Korean society has experienced. Cumings indicates “Korea’s march to modernity coincided with imperial aggression and colonial exploitation.” As he points out, while looking closely at the emergence of modernity in South Korea, we would be able to see the colonial anteriority of modernity. Noting the areas in which modernity played a major role in changes encompass a wide range of matters from cultures to politics, it is arguably said that the modernization of Korea was approximately from 1930s. During that time, Korea was colonized under the Japanese imperialism. It was about ten years or so until Korea regained its independence back from the imperialist in 1945. That means the modernization of Korea had
begun under the colonial regime. Taking modernity through the colonizer seeded an ironic attitude toward modernism in Korea. For Koreans, understanding modernism or modernity was dealing with the dynamics arising between colonialism and modernization. Those two concepts became to some degree conflated that it became hard for Koreans to think them totally separately. That constructed the thought that modernism could entail intrusions of the foreign that are not a part of Koreans. In other words, experiencing the process of modernization which was mainly introduced by its colonizer happened to plant the conflicted feelings towards modernity among Koreans.

With the emergent needs of building and developing the modern sense of nation, the conflicted attitude towards modernity could not be resolved even after the Japanese colonization was over. The involvement of an external force in the modernization of Korea was continued, but this time, it was by the new global hegemonic power, the US. During the postcolonial period after the Korean War, the US became to play very influential power on the Korea Peninsula, more specifically on South Korea. The felt need for development among Koreans accordingly responded to the power. With the enormous influences of the US in the history of modernization of South Korea, the modern has become equal to the Western. The conflation even more complicates the conflicted feelings towards modernity. Jin-Song Kim provides the chains of thoughts in the conflicted and ironic attitude many Koreans have had in terms of colonialism, modernism, and the Western.45

The Western = industrialized = urbanized = developed = the great
The Eastern = non-industrialized = rural = undeveloped = the bad
National = traditional = sovereign = precious = the good
Westernized = modernized = non-sovereign = vulgar = the bad46

Those flows of thought reflected experiences of modernity through imperialistic powers.

Especially in the US, as the rising power in the global politics and economy in the early 1900s
acted its imperialistic power upon the Korean Peninsula when the US was deeply involved into the Korean politics during and after the Korean War. The imperialistic power the US performed primarily came from the ideas underlying modernism that became broadly shared and accepted in South Korea.

On that note, Massey’s perspective is very worth taking. According to Massey, “One of the effects of modernity was the establishment of a particular power/knowledge relation which was mirrored in a geography that was also a geography of power (the colonial powers/ the colonized spaces).” If any of those cultural hybrids described in the previous section on the Main Street of Itaewon were only mere tangible outcomes from the evident presence of the US military as well as Americans coming along, what is less corporeal but more substantial would be mental miscegenation influenced from the West, the US, on the South Korean psychological soil.

One of the most enduring lessons of recent postcolonial thinking has been the proper suspicion of the Western hermeneutics of ‘progress’ and ‘rationality’ in both imperialist and nationalist discourses which, though profoundly opposed to each other ideologically, are often cut from the same philosophical cloth. First of all, given that the notion of nation is the very western and modern idea in its origin, nationalist discourse inherently entails a conversation of modernism. In the case of South Korea, building a nation, Republic of Korea (ROK), as a political community in the modern sense has been significantly influenced by the Western ideas of progress. Along with the fact that a notion of nation is a very western concept, what would be taken as progress, was ultimately defined in western terms. Achieving the progresses that suit to the western definition was taken as a requisite task for South Korea in order to consolidate its status in the global network of politics. South Korea needed to present itself as a political entity to the global community. In that circumstance, the ideas about what ought to be understood as the “progressed” or “developed”
originated from the West and were translated into another sphere, South Korea, within which a supposedly different set of ideas about time and progress had been operating. South Korea then needed to adjust its system to accommodate the western sense of progress. Therefore, another dimension of modernization as a political project is in its practice of the temporal, which conceals “the multiplicity of time.”\textsuperscript{49} Time, thought of as continuity, becomes a parameter of progress. Going back to the beginning of this section, those two words, progress and rationality, are representatives of the idea of modernity, specifically the Western- (even more specifically American- in a particular case of South Korea) modernity. Progress presupposes temporality in a linear way. There are, therefore, two types of movements: forward and backward. In addition to, rationality operates with a rule that decrees what is not achieved becomes an object of desire, which is not reached yet, for instance, the future. In this way, what is rational is to progress, and to progress is to be rational. This western rule was imposed on South Korea which was yet to be stabilized as a well-performing political entity after the materially and politically cruel civil war, the Korean War. With that profoundly influential logic, the direction to follow seemed obvious for South Korea: modernization of the country. Put differently, with the compression of time and space\textsuperscript{50} embedded in the western logic of the modern, the East, for example the Korean Peninsula, was objectified to be civilized, enlightened, and finally modernized. Thus, the modernization in Korea was neither activated nor cultivated by, but rather was given to Korea. The said exterior impulse to modernization unavoidably planted discordant bearings in Koreans towards the modernization as well as American since the US was in the front line of the exterior force. In other words, the conflicting attitude is the by-product of the modernization process reflecting that was in a great deal not led by its own people and ideas of Koreans.
Along with pointing out that the political power the US was playing through its hands-on to the Korean Peninsula politics, which evidently reflects the geopolitics and tensions of that time being, a spatial approach to the modernization of South Korea enables us to understand the positionality (of any entities involved) embedded in the idea of modernity. Itaewon’s Antique Street is where the conflation of modernization and westernization and therefore colonial modernity is most visible. The street filled with the western style of furniture and other various home goods serves to re-enunciate Western superiority that was present on the Main Street. On the Main Street, it has been operated in a way that Americans’ interest has been served in their convenience, which reflects the priority given to them over Koreans. On the Antique Street, on the other hand, Western superiority is more directly represented since the street is a reification of desire of Koreans for western goods. Formed in the process of modernization of South Korea, Western superiority puts comparatively higher-value on westerners’ living goods since they have become desirable by Koreans. On that note, the Antique Street mirrors the conflation of Westernization, Americanization, and modernity, which is responsible for Koreans’ conflicting attitude toward them. Retrospectively, the Antique Street where Western possessions are cherished and traded in at high prices re-anchors the concept of American modernity, which is represented on the Main Street in Itaewon.

Located several blocks away to north from the Main Street of Itaewon, the Antique Street, where a flock of antique and vintage shops happen to gather, has been renowned for its rarity and expertise on western antiques as Itaewon is getting more popularized among Koreans. The origin of the street goes back to 1950s when the US military bases came into the town and the ebbs and flows of American military personnel started. In 1950s through 1970s when South Korea was still struggling with their economic underdevelopment, any resources for everyday living became
equivalent to currency. Specifically with the lack of reasonably valuable living goods, what Americans, mostly left behind by military personnel from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, was seen by Koreans as a marketable potential for economic gain. At the beginning, it was a few Koreans started picking up household items Americans did not bother to take with them when leaving South Korea. Those dealers managed to meet the demand from some Koreans who were able to afford those western goods. The leftover household stuff was sold at high prices because of the paucity in the Korean market at that time. In addition, the demand for those American goods was not fading away, but rather soared up. American goods varying from electronic devices to furniture and to silver wares were treated as high-end products, which legitimized the trading of living commodities collected from Americans departing from South Korea. This is how the Antique Street came to life in Itaewon.

In the turmoil of the newly introduced concept of nationalism, which emerged after being thirty-five years of colonization by Japanese imperialist, and the influx of the West, it was not too odd to find the western sense of progress taken as an essential principle for South Korea in order to build its nationalism. In other words, in the name of modernity, which became interchangeably used with the word Western, South Korea necessarily needed to embrace the western definitions of progress. Because of the very conflation of modernity with the Western notion of progress, the so-called (Western) antiques became valuable commodities. In other words, primarily owing to their representation of the modern therefore the progressed, those old Western possessions have enjoyed the status of high-end goods since the underdevelopment time of South Korea up to date. The past of (mostly) Americans’ became the future of Koreans. Americans’ past was desired by Koreans because what Americans’ past had was not reached yet by Koreans. It was especially the case in 1950s through 80s when South Korea was still
undergoing its major developments. The leftover of Americans’ possessions became the
synecdoche of the modern, the progressed, and therefore the better. They are still beloved by
many Koreans suggesting their habituated affection or desire for the Western. The prosperity of
the western Antique businesses on the blocks of Itaewon, therefore, reflects Occidentalism
intermingled with Koreans’ understanding of the modern.

Until the early 2000s, there was no such thing the Antique Street as it is now in 2014 in
Itaewon. The street, evolved into the currently full-blown form of the Antique Street, initially
started with a few dealers who carried the western antiques and vintage commodities in 1950s. It
was also several years after the dawn of the 2000s when the street started to pick up bigger
crowds visiting those stores. Up to that point, a handful of stores was placed on that block of
Itaewon. Since there are not many other places to access (Western) antiques items in South
Korea, this street in Itaewon became famous and popular among antiques collectors and regular
walk-in.51

Boosted with the appeal to the desire for the western and modern, which turns western
commodities including antique into the wanted objects, the street is now home for ninety five
stores varying from antique shops to vintage shops. Supporting and invigorating the streets, the
Itaewon Antique Furniture Association embarked in 2003.52 The mural of Itaewon Antique
Street at the intersection with the Main Street lets visitors and walkers know that they are about
to enter into the extravaganza of the good ole days of the West. The stores’ names on the street
are conspicuously indicating the heavy influence of American cultures on Itaewon. Besides the
fact that most of the stores’ signboards are written in English, many of them are anglicized. For
example, lots of them have common English names such as Anne, Marie, Michel, Thomas, and
the list goes on. The western-style chairs displayed on the street, right in front of those stores,
brings an exotic ambience to the city block. Stores display objects that Koreans would see in the western movies including the road sign, “Interstate California 5,” a wooden rocking horse named “Shelton,” western style furniture, and small home decoration items. Exotic-ness is what makes Itaewon distinctive from the rest of the city. Since those exhibited commodities are not frequently seen in other places in South Korea, they disrupt the flow of ordinary view in the city and generate the idiosyncrasy that becomes the attraction. The Antique Street therefore contributes to the fabric of environmental atmosphere of the town. In other words, the street is one of the constituents in threads of Itaewon. On the contour of Itaewon, the Antique Street as a vitalizing business sector is a witness of enduring western influences on Korean indigenous cultures. The street evidently demonstrates layers of exterior forces instilled into Korean native cultures.

Scrutinizing how modernity was introduced to and how it has been perceived in South Korea helps reveal several critical points in the modernization of South Korea. First and foremost, I have explicated the cultural influences from the external framed by a discourse of modernism in western terms on South Korean terrain. Further, dispensing modernism defined by the West to South Korea inevitably generated a series of convoluted feelings towards the West, and by extension, modernity, from Koreans. For Koreans, the West, specifically the US, has become the object not only to be awed and desired at least for their more advanced economic status but also to be loathed as an intruder. When understanding the modernization of South Korea, it should not be overlooked the complex layers of feelings that are immersive to their experiences of modernism and Americanism. More specifically, when considering the implication of discursiveness of modernism, what needs to be problematized is its enduring effect on keeping the geopolitics that locates the US as a hegemonic power. Therefore, the most
critical consequence is that the imperial tenor of ideas, which define the modernism deeply underpinning western-oriented thought, continues to reinforce the existing structures and power relations around the globe. Ultimately, such relations allow the US to live on its legacy as a global hegemonic power whereby it produces non-Western others who would not be able to define themselves in their own terms. In that sense, the idea of imperialism embedded in colonial modernity, more specifically, American modernity, is much more subtly and culturally operating in daily experiences. Because of the immersive-ness of the imperiality that has been enacted throughout the modernization of South Korea, analytically approaching and critically reading the Antique Street in Itaewon has provided an imperative insight that enables us to recognize the lasting hegemonic power of Americanism on South Korea. This understanding of modernization within South Korea, in terms of what it meant and entailed regarding to the western (or synonymously American) gaze, enables us to acknowledge the intricate layers of conceptions and feelings with which Koreans have lived. Since Itaewon was the primary outlet through which the inflow of the Western/American came and was introduced, the same kind of conflicting attitude has evolved around Itaewon as well. In the following section, I illuminate the conflicting attitude toward American(ism) shared by South Koreans by examining another street of Itaewon, Hooker Hill.

**Hooker Hill: Living Experiences of Social-Injustice and Anti-American Sentiment**

Until the Korea War was over, Itaewon did not appear to be a military comfort-town, although the area had been occupied by other militaries like Japanese military forces. It was after the Korea War that a red-light district developed in Itaewon, particularly to serve the US military personnel. When taking into account the location of that particular type of business in relation to stores for essential living goods, “big-size” shops, the term, *Gigi-chon*, carries weight with a
comfort-town. Therefore, the nuanced meaning of the term, *Gigi-chon*, roots back to another major business, prostitution, which were thriving since the US military base settled in Yongsan throughout 1970s and even until 80s. Being shaped as a business district primarily for the US military base also meant that prostitution was another major service organized in and around Itaewon in service of the US military personnel. Although transitioning into a comfort town once American military bases came in to a town is not too unusual as we can also find the similarities in cases of Japan and Germany, the prosperity of the particular business in Itaewon also reflects the social circumstances of South Korea of that time being. Even if the Chŏsun Dynasty ended in 1910, and was then followed by thirty-five years of Japanese colonization, Confucianism, the dominant thought the dynasty was founded upon, was still deeply rooted in the social and cultural practices in South Korea. Therefore, even though the modern sense of nation, namely the Republic of Korea, was instituted in 1948, modern institutions had not yet settled upon Korea.

For the post-war Korean society had a mental baggage of the past institutions, it was still a very patriarchal and feudal society that manifested a deeply embedded Confucianism in social activities. Those institutions limited women’s social activities. Therefore, gender inequality was one of primary residues of Confucianism related to its patriarchal norms in Koran society. Inequality between men and women in South Korea meant less chance for women to get adequate education. A Korean family tended to direct their economic fortunes to their son rather than daughter (daughters were usually expected to focus on their brother’s education before their own). That is because the social notion of preferring a son to a daughter, which is greatly rooted in Confucianism that values a family tree. The socially constructed inequality resulted in giving fewer opportunities for respected jobs to women in South Korea. In other words, in the mid-twentieth century, very few types of jobs, in which women could earn a decent income plus
deference, were available given their lack of education. Therefore, in the post-war country economically struggling just after getting through two severe wars, including a part of World War II and then the Korean War, prostitution became a predominant means for impoverished women.\textsuperscript{54} And Itaewon afforded women and men the avenue in which to conduct such an enterprise.

In addition to, the abolition of a licensed prostitution was also another cause of ironically vitalizing prostitution in Itaewon. The US military government repealed a licensed prostitution in South Korea completely in 1948.\textsuperscript{55} The end of licensed prostitution era, however, was followed by the prosperity of brothel. Especially,\textit{ Haebang-chon},\textsuperscript{56} located on the northern edge of Itaewon and the US military camp, became one of the primary hubs for prostitution in Seoul. Itaewon had a sort of advantage for prostitutes since they could earn their income in US dollars, worth more than the Korean currency (\textit{won}) according to the economy status of Korea at that time. On one hand, the number of women, who were so desperate to support their family that they were flowing into the fleshpots around the US military base, kept increasing.\textsuperscript{57} For example, in a horrific economic status of South Korea after several severe wars, without much of resources to make a living, war orphans and widows rushed into the area around the US military base hoping to find anything to make money.\textsuperscript{58} Another reason for the growing number of prostitutes in Itaewon was that some Korean women wanted both to make easy money and to meet Americans who usually happened to be US military personnel. Americans were believed to have a more affluent life and thus they would be able to provide one for Koreans. With the myth, a number of Korean women flocked to the prostitution scene of Itaewon.

With the expansion of prostitution, Itaewon gained fame for its night culture. On one hand, the town became known and popular for western-influenced entertainment such as clubs
and western bars. Such is related to the entrenchment of Confucianism, as Confucian thoughts taught that it is very important to practice and exercise particular manners such as self-control, abstinence, temperance, well-bearing, and etc. in daily life. Though those ideas were taken as such, a well-established social norm and thus a well-respected and valued system, those ideas were understood to be oppressive. In that cultural climate, for Koreans, the whole set of western ways of entertainment was perceived as if it was control-free. In Itaewon, therefore, Koreans felt the sense of freedom from the restraining Confucian thinking placed upon their daily lives. As Elisabeth Schober describes Itaewon as “a quasi-carnivalesque territory of make-believe that lies outside of the social, geographical and temporal parameters of ‘Korean proper’”, the liberating atmosphere growing in Itaewon was therefore appealing to Koreans in terms of that they were not pressured to keep up with their pious behaviors. That kind of liberated attitude extended to broader ideas about daily life was experienced and adopted as the modern by Koreans.

On the other hand, the night culture of Itaewon was also seen as a problematic exercise of hedonism. For some, the revelry taking place in Itaewon seemed notorious. While (the more or better sense of) freedom was desired and the sense of freedom hinted in the western culture was adored, that did not prevent many weary eyes from criticizing hedonistic self-indulgence. Given that the night-time entertainment scene of Itaewon was initially evolved around prostitution, some activities of the said night culture provoked some concerns. It is that kind of sentiment that obscured the structure of feelings towards the western, that is, the modern, in Koreans afterward.

Prostitution in Itaewon including Haebang-chon area has significantly diminished over the past thirty years. Those illegal activities seem much more restrained by the more rigorous restriction policy through the later 1980s and 90s. The progress in South Korean economy also played a role in the downfall of the foreigner-targeted prostitution business once thrived in
Itaewon. However, the formerly booming affair was very deeply permeated into the town so that
the remnants of the prostitution business are still present in Itaewon. While prostitution is still
outlawed in South Korea, and, at first glance, these former prostitute villages now appear to be
legitimate entertainment districts, a deeper look at Itaewon illuminates the continued, but
transformed, practice of prostitution. Also, the US military personnel continue to be the chief
customers of these formerly seedy Itaewon locales, highly visible in the nightspots every day of
the week. This small alley, colloquially named *Hooker Hill*, especially remains the red-light
district.

In Itaewon, Hooker Hill is the alley where the senses of inequity and liberation came to
play together in dialectics. Hooker Hill is located one block away to east side from the center of
the downtown Itaewon, where it is represented with the Hamilton Hotel and Itaewon subway
stop, and also one block behind from the Main Street (*Itaewon-ro*). The entertainment quarters
developed around Hooker Hill is right behind the Itaewon Fire Department and also close to the
Itaewon Police office located on the main street right off the subway station. The sign, “restricted
for under 21,” on the street ground is the entryway to Hooker Hill. On this about 360 feet long
alleyway, there are bars and taverns, glaringly obvious outdated exterior looking, with their aged
signboards such as *Moon Shine*, *Sweet Heart*, *Eve*, *Honey moon*, *Grand Ole Opry*, *Laura*, and so
on. As some of those names of bars suggest, their main targets were males, American male
soldiers. This street of prostitution is thus an un-neglectable sector that sexualized, more
specifically masculinized the space of Itaewon. Hooker Hill is the site where the colossal
influence of American culture largely through its military forces (G.I. Culture) on the indigenous
Korean soil becomes apparent. In that sense, Hooker Hill representatively, but Itaewon in a
broad scope, is militarized as well.
In parts, as a mecca of entertainments, Hooker Hill was a haven of night-culture or party culture that was largely foreign yet to Korean-Confucius culture. Compared to the Confucian culture that entails oppressions and restrictions on various aspects of life, the American night culture seemed much carefree and thus liberating or almost hedonistic for Koreans. However, Hooker Hill was also the site in which the sense of disparity was bred. It was where Koreans were exposed to contacts with Americans who were seemingly privileged over them. That meant any number of possibilities for Koreans to interface some sort of involvements with those privileged westerners. Since Hooker Hill was in the entertainment district, which also included other prostitution activities, the manners of involvements of the two nationals appeared to fall under the misdemeanor or felony penal codes. Unfortunately, legal inequities exist between the USA national and South Korean national. These legal inequities and tense relationships that have undergirded the history of Itaewon played a key role in generating a negative image of Itaewon for Koreans. In other words, clearly unanswered cases of misdemeanor crimes between Korean pedestrians and American soldiers, from time to time, were interpreted as an indication of the unequal power structure germane to the relationship between two countries. That the US military personnel are not subject to the South Korean legal system, which is backed by the loopholes in SOFA, eventually works favorably for them. In this context, when a conflict occurs between a South Korean and a member of the US military, the South Korean law system could not hold the authority that is needed to serve for its citizens. That has been one of the major causes for spawning the impression that Itaewon is unsafe for Koreans. Leaving it aside whether or not the relationship between Americans and the citizens of South Korea is systemically unjust, a perception of injustice is present and therefore the concern affects how Koreans deem Itaewon.
This street has the semblance of the old prostitution business as the street name itself, Hooker Hill, though unofficial, suggests. The name and the types of bars located on the alley force us not to forget Korean (primarily) women’s sex-labors provided in the town. Those women who were working as prostitutes in Itaewon, which implied that they were primarily targeting American military personnel, were called Yanggongju.\textsuperscript{61} The Korean word, Yanggongju, refers to foreigner-targeting prostitutes, which means, directly translated, “princess for Westerners.” The term nonetheless connotes the troubled attitude Koreans grudge against that unpleasant (from Koreans’ standpoint) situation in which those Korean women had not many other options, and therefore turned to exploiting their bodies to survive the poverty the nation was struggling through at that time. However, besides the pity for those women, the term is quite a demeaning word to call them, but it was publicly used anyway. Regardless of the factual meaning of the word, which would have not be too offensive, its actual usage infers that it was simply an embellished way of calling those women foreigners’ whore. Like the layers of the term, feelings towards those women and the fact that there was such a sexual involvement of Koreans with outsiders, that is, foreigners, were very mixed and complex ones as well.

The intricate feeling was threaded in the social and economic circumstances of South Korea. First of all, their social status as prostitutes put them in a lower-class. Koreans were ashamed of their means of living. Additionally, in the Korean society where ethnic purity had been highly valued and cherished, the sexual involvement practiced by yanggongju did not help them be treated any better. They were treated as social others for their acts that entailed a high-possibility for tainting the ethnic purity Korea had fought for throughout their history especially including the Japanese colonization period. Having experienced the colonization period not too long time ago (until 1945), Koreans kept such a resistance to the idea of mixed ethnicities, which
equally meant the contamination of their one-ness as people of Korea. For those prostitutes working in Itaewon area embodied the likelihood of contamination in Korean-ness, they were marked as yang (western therefore not-Korean) gongju and not welcomed in the Korean society. Along with such sociocultural circumstances, the shared ill-feeling toward Americans among Koreans also reinforced prejudice toward yanggongju.

The USA, the envoy of the Western given the structure of geopolitics since the World War II, has been enjoying its power, which operates as imperialistic often times, on the Korean Peninsula since they supported the regime of South Korea to establish its government in the modern form. With the political justification to be in South Korea, where they acted upon was not only the realm of politics but also various aspects of culture: they brought in their western cultures into South Korea. Modernization, cultural toadyism, and conflicting feelings in Koreans to list just a few that were mentioned earlier in this chapter are examples that characterize how the western has gained its power and how it has been perceived in South Korea. Untangling the complex attitude toward the Western and specifically American allows us to understand the imperialistic elements in the power and therefore the sense of inequity underlying the conflicting attitude Koreans experience.

As previously emphasized in this chapter, the US military base located adjacent to Itaewon has functioned as a critical feature that defines a character of Itaewon. While the presence of the exterior military force situated at the center of the city itself causes agony to South Koreans, a stark spatial contrast between the US military base and Itaewon provokes the ill feeling to them. On the prime piece of property of the city of Seoul, inside area of the US military base looks almost idyllic compared to the busy streets with heavy traffic right outside the fence surrounding the base. As Mountford points out “material spaces can trigger the social
imaginary because of the historical and cultural freight attached to the space,\textsuperscript{62} Itaewon is where the complexity of feelings is spatially manifested since it was a gateway through which the western cultures were vigorously flowed in. The influx of different types of, mostly western, cultures created liminality and did contribute to the multiplicity of culture in Itaewon, which still attributes to the major characteristic of the town up to date. However, the in-between-ness, the intrinsic feature of liminal space, did also leave things unsettled. The perception shared among Koreans for a long time that Itaewon is a liberating but dangerous place to go is closely connected to that characteristic of the town. On one hand, the leeway, which was available in that circumstance, means the opportunity for South Koreans to take a break from conventional cultural oppressions by which Korean society and culture operate. Itaewon as a liminal space was arguably unleashed from cultural rules and social norms when compared to the rest of the city and country. That certainly provided refreshing air for some Koreans. On the other hand, being liminal space entailed as much uncertainty as the perceived freedom. The town was not only unleashed from social and cultural oppressions but also was often times unreached by Korean laws. Therefore, those two facets of the town go hand in hand. In other words, they were two sides of the same coin. Though the latter aspect caused Itaewon thought of as a dark and dangerous place, where they would not be able to be protected under their laws, for many Koreans. For them, hanging out in Itaewon seemed to require a willingness to take more or less risks that could result from various kinds of uncertainty. For many Koreans, that was not simply a matter of feeling, but was a matter.

When it comes to any disputes between the US military personnel and Korean citizens, especially, there is a legal document between the US and South Korea that has functioned to be the origin for heartily-felt inequity. The document is called the SOFA (Status of Forces
Agreement) and one of the most controversial sections in the document is especially the section regarding crime and jurisdiction. Since those sections are most directly dealing with domestic legal issues that involve the US military personnel, which also extend to their family members and any applicable others, they have been placed at the core of conversation that seemingly entails Anti-American sentiment. A sense of injustice growing out of the military agreement between those two said governments had been shared among Koreans since they witnessed a handful of occasions in which the US side was most likely getting its way.

For Koreans, it seemed that the jurisdictional agreement on SOFA between the US and South Korea was written more likely to favor American nationals over Koreans. Analyzing the SOFA document, Youngjin Jung and Jun-Shik Hwang point out “A large number of people developed the perception that an element of unfairness in the SOFA was largely responsible for what they thought was an unfair verdict.”63 The shared feeling among Koreans consequently played a big role in picturing Itaewon as a playground of Americans. Due to the inequity implicated in the legal agreement, SOFA, for quite a long time, Koreans used to avoid going to Itaewon. In other words, the sentiment of relative deprivation, which accompanies social and material consequences, resulted from the unjustly written agreement. The legal inequality and thus vulnerability Koreans sensed were after all the reflection of the power structure of geopolitics.

Therefore, there is Anti-American sentiment on the continuum of the feeling. Reflecting the perceived imperialism of the power America holds in terms of politics and cultural influences, Anti-American sentiment is a sort of window that expresses the frustration Koreans experience in living through the exterior power that reserves so much right to say about their own country. The consequent feeling rooted in the unequal power relation between the US and South Korea is
the lack of autonomy felt by Koreans. Furthermore, the lack of autonomy and the inequity become placed at the core of vulnerability Koreans share to the exterior power.

In 1966, the city of Seoul announced twenty-five areas in the city where they are banned to teenagers.\textsuperscript{64} Itaewon was one of the restricted areas. To a degree, the regulation in the 1960s of South Korea can be looked at as a response to the central way of perceiving Itaewon: the place of hedonism. So the policy could be understood as a way of disciplining teenagers. However, at the core, there exists the fear of vulnerability that was proved not to be unfounded. In 1997, the murder incident was reported in Itaewon. The so called “Itaewon murder case” involved South Korean victim who was murdered in Itaewon by the suspect who was a US military personnel. Affected by the SOFA, the investigation on South Korean end could not be sufficiently done. The initial verdict from the first trial was released. The trial is not satisfactorily concluded up to date after longer than a decade. As of 2014, it is left as unsolved. In 2009, the movie titled \textit{Itaewon Murder Case}, which is based on the crime, was released and reminded the unsolved crime.\textsuperscript{65}

The murder case strongly ingrained upon the image of Itaewon caused Itaewon to be perceived as a dangerous neighborhood.\textsuperscript{66} It is still the representative case demonstrating injustice acted upon Americans and Koreans up to this day in South Korea since the offender, a US soldier, was repatriated without resolving the case in the South Korean court. The case infuriated many Koreans who were repulsed by the idea that Itaewon was, after all, just a playground for foreigners, specifically American military personnel who seemed to have privileged power relatively to South Korean citizens. That type of tension clearly did not help Itaewon project itself as a nice and secure neighborhood in the city.
Itaewon Murder was therefore dreadfully alarming to South Koreans about their own security in their own country, which is seamlessly connected to the hearty-felt inequality between South Korea and the US. Many Koreans found their own country not doing a good deed it was believed to do for its citizens. They felt helpless in their own territory. Realizing the power hierarchy between the US and South Korea underlying the case, Koreans resented. One side of conflicting attitude towards Americans, therefore, echoes victim mentality grown out of the disparity they experienced. Koreans felt powerless as if they were subjugated to the US, and that imposed Anti-American sentiment to the structure of their feeling. That the US was the major agency who finally brought the independence of Korea from Japanese imperialism and then helped establish South Korea was followed by their military and political controls over South Korea. That was the origin of the lack of autonomy that ultimately became the base of victim mentality Koreans experience. And the incident like the Itaewon Murder inflamed Anti-American sentiment.

In 2014, Hooker Hill continues to be regarded as a place containing latent dangers. The alley is a restricted area for age under 21 since 1991.\(^67\) Whereas the area banned for age under 21 during the hours from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. was the wider vicinity of Hooker Hill (the entire region behind the Itaewon Fire Department on the main street) in 1991, it is now exclusively the alley, Hooker Hill. On the street ground of the alley, Hooker Hill, it says “no under 21” written in Korean. There is also a surveillance camera system and an emergency bell run by the city office in the alley. The surveillance system on the pole in the small alley suggests that the shorter than one mile street concealed behind the main street stays as a perilous night scene of Itaewon. In that sense, Hooker Hill is a metonymy of social injustice felt by South Koreans within the
political structure that created the space. The enduring presence of such an alley in Itaewon represents the lasting hegemonic power the US practices over South Korea.

**Conclusion: Americanization on the Rhetorical Landscape of Itaewon**

As Roxanne Mountford argued, “Spaces have heuristic power over their inhabitants and spectators by forcing them to change both their behavior (walls cause us to turn right or left; skyscrapers draw the eye up) and, sometimes, their view of themselves.” In line with Mountford’s pensive guidance, this chapter explored the streets of Itaewon, mapping the layout of this uniquely liminal district and investigating the cultural fusions inscribed along the paths. By understanding Main Street, Antique Street, and Hooker Hill as liminal territories capable of cultivating the spontaneous play needed to sustain intercultural communication. By illuminating the identity of Itaewon as space, I argued that, as a rhetorical landscape, Itaewon replicates the convoluted identity of a South Korean society struggling to move beyond the experiences of colonialism, postcolonialism, and modernization under American imperialism. Its identity is contradictory and ambivalent in itself, which is a reflection of the context within which its subjectivity has been structured.

When situated in historical contexts, the ambivalent identities based on the structure of conflicting feelings toward American(ization) are not ironic any more. By examining the Itaewon landscape and its rhetoric, I elucidated how the conflicting feelings toward American(ization) are rather blatant projections of how South Koreans experienced modernization from the colonial time throughout the postcolonial period. Therefore, the structure of Itaewon landscape is a metonymy of these conflicted eras. In this chapter, I specifically analyzed three streets in Itaewon. First, I examined the Main Street of Itaewon, illuminating Americanization conflated with modernization. Second, Antique Street was analyzed; revealing
American superiority entrenched in South Korean culture amidst its modernization. Third, Hooker Hill was investigated while unveiling American imperialism represented in a form of social injustice felt by South Koreans.

The Main Street of Itaewon and Hooker Hill have developed along different paths for last years. The Main Street, on the front side of the town, has been serving to celebrate Americanization while evolving with the continuing influx of newer western cultures. On the contrary, Hooker Hill left behind the scene is the representation of the past, the past of Itaewon that lives on in the present of Itaewon due to the lasting material condition of the town being a military town. It is when they are put in relation to each other that the identity of Itaewon is unmistakably enunciated. On one hand, those streets, put in parallel, represent the light and shade of influences of the West on South Korea. Juxtaposition of those streets on the Itaewon landscape reveals the conflicting responses to American(ization) and further unveils a cause for Anti-Americanism in South Korea. On the other hand, they together represent the deeply entrenched Americanization in various aspects of South Korean society and culture. Those Itaewon streets as metonymic of Americanization, which continues to play a major role in characterizing Itaewon as a liminal space in the city of Seoul, reify the idea of modernism conflated with Americanism in the particularity of South Korea.

Itaewon performs the rhetoric of its identity spatially through Main Street, Antique Street, Hooker Hill, and other small districts that constitute the town. When those streets are interpreted together the rhetoric of Itaewon landscape emerges. Hence, the spatial rhetoric of Itaewon is manifested through the layers of environmental structure that create its distinctive ambience. Those layers are reifications of exigency in which the historical, the political, and the cultural were experienced in Itaewon. Itaewon is where the ideology of the 20th century is still alive and
manifested throughout its landscape. Itaewon is where the structure of geopolitics from the 20th century to 21st century is witnessed. Finally, it is where the exterior forces found their place in the contingent indigenous culture of South Korea. In the rhetoric spatially conceived, Itaewon as a liminal space is speaking the subaltern-ness of South Koreans in their own country. Therefore, the spatial rhetoric of the Itaewon landscape ultimately functions as a consistent reminder for the agency Koreans should (re)gain with continual reflexivity in negotiating their transcultural identities.
Notes

1 The lyrics of the song translated from Korean into English by the author. Itaewon Freedom is South Korean pop song by UV, the South Korean band with two men, SaeYoon Yoo and Yongwoon Lee (stage name, Muzie).

2 Eun-Shi Kim, “Itaewon as an Alien Space within the Nation-State and a Place in the Globalization Era.” *Korea Journal* 44, no. 3 (2004): 34-64.


5 The music video of the song was also very popular as the song spoke to many Koreans. The music video is homage to London Boys’ “Harlem Desire” as UV indicates that they love “Harlem Desire” in the ending credits of their music video. The Itaewon Freedom music video is a replica of Harlem Desire. While keeping the format of the stage setting similar to the one in Harlem Desire, the Itaewon Freedom music video, however, adds signboards of landmarks of Itaewon such as the Hamilton Hotel, McDonalds, and UV Club. UV club, the band’s namesake, is a witty reminder of the UN Club that has been in Itaewon for a long time. Besides those landmarks of Itaewon, there are additional representations of Itaewon in the music video as well. For example, there are two English-speaking characters, presumably Americans, one of which is an African American male and the other is a White American female. The presence of those two decisively serves to anchor Itaewon as the Americanized sector of the city and so does a short conversation⁵ in English at the beginning of the music video.


9 JongHwa Lee, Min Wha Han, and Raymie E. McKerrow, “English or Perish: How Contemporary South Korea Received, Accommodated, and Internalized English and American Modernity,” *Language and Intercultural Communication* 10, no. 4 (2010): 345.


15 Ibid.


17 Steinberg, *The Republic of Korea*. 


20 Steinberg, *The Republic of Korea*

21 Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’”

22 Steinberg, *The Republic of Korea*

23 Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’”

24 Steinberg, *The Republic of Korea*


26 “Itaewon, Space and Life,” (Seoul: Seoul History Museum, 2010).


28 Ibid.


30 From the website of *Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea*. [www.mnd.go.kr](http://www.mnd.go.kr)

31 Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization.’”

32 [www.usfk.mil/](http://www.usfk.mil/)

34 Ibid.

35 Gu is a unit that consists of the city. In the city of Seoul, there are twenty-five Gus, and Yongsan-gu is one of them. An address, for example, goes like Itaewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, City of Seoul.

36 On the website of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport of South Korea.

37 Retrieved from the official website of Seoul Metropolitan Government

38 Itaewon is on the right side of the base on the map.

39 “42% completed on process of YRP…it will be done by 2017,” Seoul Newspaper (Seoul, South Korea), May.26.2014. Retrieved on June 24, 2014.

40 In Korean, a word, hwan-gab, which means sixty years old, connotes longevity that is worth celebrating.

41 This avenue becomes the part of Main Street around the downtown of Itaewon.

42 The first jazz bar in South Korea, All That Jazz, was located on the Main Street for 35 years since 1976 until it relocated it on the World Food Street in 2011.

43 Shome and Hegde, “Postcolonial Approaches to Communication,” 249-270.
84


47 Massey, *For Space,* 64.


49 Sharma, “It Changes Space and Time!,” 66.

50 For more details, see *Doreen* Massey.

51 I remember, walking down the street in 1990s and early 2000s, those few stores filled with exotic stuff always caught my eyes. It was such an interesting walk to me who did not have first-hand experiences with the Western at that point since everything in the other side of the window of those stores looked different and somehow more modern than what I knew as ordinary Korean commodities.

52 The website for the *Itaewon Antique Furniture Association*; http://www.itaewonantique.com/

53 Oh, *Korea: Democracy on Trial*

54 Many times, those women were working as a prostitute to feed her whole family due to the very limited income sources for many households in the yet underdeveloped economy of South Korea after Wars.
“Itaewon, Space and Life” (Seoul: Seoul History Museum, 2010).

Haebang-chon means the village of emancipation. The name came after the fact that the village came to be shaped with people, many of them from North Korea, moving in to the area after the end of the Korean War while looking for a cheap land. The area was not used for residency until then, so people cultivated the area where it was a hillside of Nam-san, the mountain adjacent to the village, when they moved in. Therefore, Haebang-chon’s geographical proximity to the US military base and cheap price for housing made it a suitable place for prostitution.

“Why did they protest?” Donga Ilbo (Seoul, South Korea), October 27, 1960.


Kang (2009) describes the SOFA has been perceived unreasonable by South Koreans in her article “Coming to Terms with ‘Unreasonable’ Global Power: The 2002 South Korean Candlelight Vigils” (2009).

“Yanggongju, the special product of the ten years of independence,” Donga Ilbo (Seoul, South Korea), August 08, 1955; “The women of night,” Donga Ilbo (Seoul, South Korea), August 14, 1962.


“25 areas in Seoul restricted to teenagers,” *Kyunghyang Sinmun* (Seoul, South Korea), December 24, 1966.

On a movie poster of *Itaewon Murder Case*, it says in Korean “It is just one dead Korean…” That line suggests the relative deprivation South Koreans feel comparing themselves to Americans in terms of political and accordingly social powers they possess. To a degree, the line connotes their realization of themselves as the power-less in the power structure between Koreans and Americans.

http://blog.naver.com/free2vent/140125706

Located on the Main Street of Itaewon, the building of the crime scene was *Burger King* restaurant in 1997. Later, it is replaced to other stores.


CHAPTER III. NATIONAL IDENTITY SPOKEN THROUGH THE WAR MEMORIAL OF KOREA

“The locus of yesterday’s acts becomes that of today’s.”

“How can one conceive the idea ‘people’ in a way which accounts for the rhetorical function of ‘the people’ in arguments designed to warrant social action, even society itself?”

This chapter extends the discussion from the previous chapter by investigating the constitutive ideological orientation of the Post-World War II relationship between the United States and South Korea. I elucidated in the previous chapter how Americanization functions as a driving impetus for modernization in South Korea by examining the social and cultural milieu of South Korea. This chapter focuses upon a political scene within which South Korea cultivated a sense of ethnic nationalism in response to the historical need for nation-building and national identity of South Korea. The question above, posed by Michael Calvin McGee, was the very question Korea faced when it gained independence from Japan in 1945. Five years later, South Korea faced a similar question when it was divided against North Korea after the Korean War. Since the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was a relatively young political entity, the invention of national identity was necessary. As described in chapter two, America exerted significant and substantial influence on Korean society and culture. Especially when it was building itself as a modern state, US political involvement in Korea was considerable. There is no doubt that South Korean national identity is reflective of US geopolitics, as embodied throughout the history of South Korea.

This chapter investigates the spatial reification of the ideology that heavily affected the construction of nationalism in South Korea. In order to understand the way landscape is constitutive of ideology, I focus my critical lens on the War Memorial of Korea (WMK), a memorial plaza containing statues, exhibits, and museums dedicated to Korea’s wartime history.
Billed as “the largest [memorial] of its kind in the world,” the WMK is located in an important sector of Itaewon, built on the former “headquarters of the Korean Infantry.” In this analysis, I identify the WMK with a rhetoric of institutional devotion, a constitutive space responsible for generating and securing a definition of South Korean character. The museum is one of the spaces where the South Korean government exhibits its circumscribed idea of national identity, a projection tied to the post-Cold War ideology.

By analyzing the WMK as a rhetorical space, I am able to understand the way the WMK functions as the ideological axis of South Korean national identity. This chapter, therefore, examines the institutional supports for nationalism that are tightly intermingled within the post-Cold War ideology that continues to exercise significant power on the Korean Peninsula. To understand the rhetorical functions of the WMK, I analyze the nationality of South Korea as contingent upon the constellation of geopolitics surrounding the Korean Peninsula. In doing so, I illuminate the ideological and material consequences of the contingent geopolitical atmosphere, consequences which are dialectically formative for South Korean national identity.

Taking a spatial approach to the emplacement of the WMK is beneficial for understanding the complex geopolitics operating within the national identity of South Korea. Adjacent to the US military bases and across the street from the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, the WMK serves as a primary ideological apparatus that corresponds to the lasting Cold War ideology, reassured through various exhibits in the museum. In other words, the spatial bounding of the WMK with the US military bases symbolically and materially functions to establish and further reinforce the ground for each other.

In approaching the spatiality of politics as described above, I maintain the premise that the production of space is never completed; rather it is an ongoing project. Due to the continual
transformation that characterizes the production of space, understanding the rhetorical influence of spatially communicative acts demands, what James Hay calls, “mapping the historical complexity.” Therefore, reading Itaewon by focusing on the particular thread in national ideology becomes a more complicated task given that the neighborhood is characterized as supposedly one of the least Korean-like districts due to the discernible Americanization of the area, as is described in the previous chapter. Along with the influx of various influences beyond the geographical boundaries of the country throughout its history, Itaewon has been a site of transformation for cultures, a transformation that involves changing ideas about the traditions of South Korea. Given the distinctive features that strongly characterize Itaewon, the nationalism and patriotism encouraged through Itaewon reveal the intricate fabric of the town. That is, the multifaceted contingent-ness upon which Itaewon is positioned complicates the spatial texture of Itaewon. Conjunctures within the contradictory phenomena are threaded onto the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. While the larger population of South Korea maintains a distinct separation from Itaewon, the district is nonetheless a site anchoring the national identity of South Korea. The celebration of nationalism and the invention of national identity upon a landscape that also symbolizes cultural diversity in a way that is unlike any other district in the city of Seoul, highlights the layered complexity of this spatial texture. Within this complexity exists irony and paradox as South Korean national identity—which is largely founded on its racial, ethnic, and cultural homogeneity—is anchored in the WMK, a memorial surrounded by the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversities of Itaewon.

Given this context, the placement of the WMK in Itaewon needs to be approached as a political choice. The museum is charged with the national project to provoke a shared political consciousness among South Koreans. It should be understood as a political effort to create South
Korean identity, providing an exigency that emerged after the Korean War. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the WMK with the US military base empowers the articulation of identity and consolidating the rhetorical functions and effects of the museum. Therefore, as a rhetorical means for maintaining authority, the rhetorical telos of the WMK can be revealed only through examining it as contingent upon the historical and political circumstances that necessitated the discourse of nationalism in South Korea. Much like the museums studied by communication scholar Patricia Davis, the WMK functions as a “product of meaningful negotiation” through which South Korean identity is formed in relationship to the political complexities of the country’s past and present. Such negotiations privilege the WMK as a space upon which the South Korean nationalism is perpetuated and naturalized.

Situated in Itaewon, a town created through twentieth-century geopolitics, the WMK works to thread the politics of the Korean Peninsula, largely reflecting the geopolitics of the 20th century, more specifically that of the post-World War II. In this chapter, I will illuminate ideological premises of Americanization that affect South Korean national identity of South Korea by analyzing the commemoration in the WMK. To do so, I focus my critical analysis on the following questions: (1) What are unquestioned and ultimately naturalized ways of perceiving political contentions such as the Korean War and the division of Korea? (2) What are the discursive motifs perpetuated throughout the WMK that reflect emplaced ideologies in the national identity of South Korea? In order to answer those questions, I examine the rhetoric of the WMK that defines South Korea not only as a representative of Korea, the sovereign nation prior to the Korean War, but also as South Korea, the independent state ideologically separated from North Korea after the war.
The Constitutive Rhetoric of the War Memorial of Korea: The Past through its Present

“Telling the moving story of the people of Korea.”

The Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea initiated the establishment of the War Memorial of Korea in 1964. The plan was proposed during the presidency of President Park Chung-hee, the third President of South Korea who succeeded President Lee Seung-man (1948-1960), and President Choi Bo-sun (1960-1962). President Park served five consecutive terms from 1963 to 1979 when he was assassinated. Although he is still a controversial figure in South Korea in terms of various political tactics such as his military government and changes of the election law in order to extend his terms, he does have a reputation for strengthening the economy and shrewdly manipulating political processes. In 1988, President Roh Tae-woo ordered work to begin on the museum. In 1994, the War Memorial of Korea opened under President Kim Young-sam. In 2010, the War Memorial stopped charging admission, and the number of visitors reached 1.5 million per year. The stated objectives of the War Memorial of Korea are both to prevent any future wars “with the lessons from previous wars fought for protecting the independence of our minjok” and “to accomplish the peaceful unification of the nation.” As such, the WMK came to its existence with clearly political motives. In that sense, the War Memorial of Korea resonates with Clifford Geertz’s description of “cultural devices.”

As Geertz explains,

> The images, metaphors, and rhetorical turns from which nationalist ideologies are built are essentially devices, cultural devices designed to render one or another aspect of the broad process of collective self-redefinition explicit. 

Geertz’s illustration of cultural devices deployed for prompting national ideology provides a critical ground for us to approach the WMK as an ideological state apparatus. In the WMK, the concept of people as a collective-self, or nation, is articulated through a series of museum
exhibitions that serve as a reservoir of cultural devices varying from images of the Korean War to monuments for fallen troops, each metonymically depicting Korean identity and constituting the sense of Korea(ness). Such constitutions are necessary for persuasion because, as Ronald Walter Greene explains, “one must be constituted as a subject before one can be persuaded to act in one way or another.” In her analysis of Black History museums, Davis describes specifically how museums are capable of enunciating an identity-consciousness:

Museums, in general, function as more than just repositories of objects. They also function as reflections of how societies define themselves. As such, they are dynamic, acquiring new meanings as the societies in which they are located seek to contest and redefine their identities.

Coupled with Geertz’s understanding of cultural devices, Davis’s observation of the utility of museums is helpful particularly to comprehend a potential for the constitutive rhetoric museums are able to deploy in a way that it supports a political project of the nation. As Davis illuminates the rhetorical effect of museums, one of the political projects accomplished by the WMK is the articulation of the notion of (South) Korean.

In comprehending the political material carried by the state institution, it is important to follow Amy Levin’s suggestion and clarify “the institution’s past and present relationship to dominant group.” As the history of the establishment of the WMK previously described shows, the museum is clearly the political project of the South Korean government from its initiative. Given the circumstance from which the initiative of the WMK was brought to the table, it is reasonable to deduce that structuring who (South) Koreans are is the telos of the museum, a goal reached through constitutive rhetoric. In other words, the museum was deployed as a vehicle for what Alissa Sklar might call “the fixation of the identity.”

Within the contingent and contentious moments that mark the history of Korea, moments such as independence from the Japan and the experience of the Korean War, the cultivation of a
collective identity for Koreans to hold on to was an urgent need. After thirty-five years of Japanese colonization, for example, the meaning of Korean identity needed to be refined. Shortly after the identity exigencies stemming from Japanese colonialism came the Korean War, an ongoing conflict dividing the North and the South. Each state strived to craft a valid and justifiable foundation for its own regime. As Sklar indicates that the nationhood, the concept of the people, “may require material and symbolic resources to sustain it,” hence the launch of the War Memorial of Korea started being discussed exactly in such a precarious circumstance in which Koreans were struggling with the lack of identity after the Korean War. In pointing out the effectiveness museums and memorials have as ideological apparatuses, Davis explains that

> [unlike more traditional media forms, such as film, novels, and school textbooks, museums and other memorials are uniquely positioned to effect social change because of the experience of visiting and the perception of them as objective, trustworthy sources.]

As Davis indicates, museums embody both materialistic and symbolic aspects as an institutional medium to impart a vision for the future to visitors/viewers. The “on-going signifying practice” is reified materially and symbolically through the space of the WMK, which is situated adjacent to the US military base in the neighborhood of Itaewon. Therefore, visiting the WMK has, on one hand, visitors experience the museum as well as the US military base surrounding the museum and further the relations between the two. Such a simultaneous experience provides a compelling premise to discourse engendered and maintained through the WMK.

On the other hand, the WMK as a discursive practice of national identity-building with its perceived authority as an institutional agent provides the space through which the sense of nationhood becomes rhetorically constructed. In their analysis of the Nebraska History Museum, Carly S. Woods, Joshua P. Ewalt, and Sara J. Baker argue that the discourses engendered through the museum function both to identify and create “a desirable regional identity” for the
Nebraskans. People become subjects of the exhibit while moving through it. Similarly, visitors to the WMK become the subjects of the national identity of South Korea desired by the South Korean regime, which is rooted back in the particular historical moment, and evoked and promoted in the exhibitions of the museum. Such is the function of memorializing, as is suggested by Olson, Finnegan, and Hope who explain that “acts of remembering and memorializing invite audiences to remember certain historical events and persons (and forget others), to remember them in specific ways, and to memorialize them in particular forms.”19 As the following discussion will show, the rhetoric of the WMK directs, re-directs, and ultimately invites people to the subjectivity constituted for them. The ideological consequence of all those possible ways of constituting a subject is that the WMK disciplines a subject in the certain way that buttresses the ethos of the regime. Therefore, South Korean-ness is intrinsically ideological in that it becomes concretized and thus tangible through othering: Othering races and ethnicities as well as othering the North (Korea). In the following section, I contextualize the rhetorical strategies of the WMK within historical and political circumstances. To do so, I first explain the birth of the nation, Korea, and then the Republic of Korea shortly after. In doing so, I introduce the concept of ethnic nationalism, a term characterizing the nationalism of (South) Korea.

**Nation-Building: Korea in the Modern Concept of Nation**

“Premodern Korea,” according to Gi-Wook Shin, “had no such conception of nation as a categorical identity.”20 Shin’s observation is supported by Benedict Anderson’s contention that the mere idea of nation is a western invention:

The 1860s...for by then, in dominant Europe, the “national community” had been coming into its own for half a century, in both popular and official versions. In effect, self-defense could be fashioned along lines and in accordance with what were coming to be “international norms.”21
As Anderson indicates, the imagined political community, as captured in the concept of *nation* started in Europe and functioned to depict the community “as both inherently limited and sovereign.”\(^{22}\) Identifying the essence of any community as what is to be distinguished “by the style in which they are imagined,” Anderson points out revolutions since World War II were characterized in *national* terms. Korea was one of the sixty-six countries that regained political independence from colonial rules between 1945 and 1968.\(^{23}\) Specifically, Republic of Korea, which was born out of World War II followed by the Korean civil war, I contend, was not an exception in striving nationhood. Transitioning from the colonized to the sovereign nation-state, it is no surprise that Korea was experiencing turbulence in defining itself in national terms.

Geertz speaks to the difficulty of generating identity within such circumstances:

> Now that there is a local state rather than a mere dream of one, the task of nationalist ideologizing radically changes. It no longer consists in stimulating popular alienation from a foreign-dominated political order, nor with orchestrating a mass celebration of that order’s demise. It consists in defining, or trying to define, a collective subject to whom the actions of the state can be internally connected, in creating, or trying to create, an exceptional “we” from whose will the activities of government seems spontaneously to flow.\(^{24}\)

Geertz illustrates the process of generating nationalism that the newly liberated countries from the colonial subjugation proceed with. The construction of Korean nationalism was evoked exactly in that said circumstance. The concept of nation and the notion of nationalism were in urgent need for Korea whose experience of transitioning into the sovereign nation-state was also mixed with a transformation into modernity. The previous forms of Korea were in part controlled by the Chôsun Dynasty followed by Taehan Empire, whose fundamental legitimacy, Anderson would say, “had nothing to do with nationalness.”\(^{25}\) Both regimes had maintained geographical continuity throughout the Korean Peninsula even during the Japanese colonization period there was a unified Korean Peninsula. However it would be hard to imagine that 35 years of
colonization had no impact on their conception of community. Moreover, the Korean civil war occurred a few years after the end of the World War II and complicated how to conceptualize Korea for Korean people.

Amidst the havoc of the Korean War, from 1948 until the ceasefire, the Republic of Korea was the only government acknowledged by the UN on the Korean Peninsula. The birth of the Republic of Korea was the political outcome of the active effort to adopt the modern sense of nation. With the exigency contingent both upon de-colonization from the Japanese imperialism and the subsequent division of Korea into two states, South and North, a set of ideas that would speak to people of South Korea and could resonate with them was necessary for the regime of South Korea to assert its sovereignty as well as establish legitimacy as the sole political entity, Republic of Korea. The political power in South Korea could not afford to wait until the sense of nationalism would emerge naturally. Hence, the Republic of Korea commenced with the project of nation-building, a project that embraced Anderson’s description of nation, a modern usage that “became something capable of being consciously aspired to from early on, rather than a slowly sharpening frame of vision.”

Shin identifies a dialectical relationship between the embrace of nationalism and the emergence of modernity, suggesting that “the genesis and growth of nationalism are closely associated with the arrival of modernity,” connected via “the interactive nature of modernity and nationalism.” Republic of Korea experienced modernity particularly under the foreign force, the US, majorly through the US Military occupancy in South Korea since the Korean independence from the Japanese imperial power up to date. The particular circumstance in which modernism was introduced to Korea left Koreans ambivalent, simultaneously clinging to the primitive idea of country as community based on the conservative notion of one ethnicity while
progressively re-building their country by adopting the modern concept of *nation* and the accompanying modernist technology needed to rebuild. Such a convoluted way of imagining the nation accordingly fixes nationalism in Korea. Geertz describes nationalism as “the major collective passion,” a passion which is “amorphous, uncertainly focused, half-articulated, but for all that highly inflammable.” In Korean nationalism, a certain idea was selected and evoked at the expense of other possibilities, and that idea has evolved in accordance with the passion and pride for the unity, more specifically the ethnic unity.

**Ethnic Nationalism in Korea**

The modern concept of nation was understood in Korea with a heavy emphasis on the concept of *minjok*. The historical experience had Koreans grabbing onto the idea that retaining the succession of their ethnicity was crucial to keeping their country secure and divine. Such a way of imagining the nation is deeply rooted in the international struggles the nation has undergone. The history of subjugation to colonialism demonstrated the necessity of maintaining “their people,” which became the foundation of their affirmative identity, in order to sustain their country. The people who were suffering from the colonizer could be weakened otherwise. Such is the locus of ethnic nationalism: a response to colonialism and drawn out of the long history of ethnic unity in Korea.

Ethnic homogeneity is one of the distinctive features of Korea. A sense of ethnic unity has been employed by various interests throughout the Korean history. Korea’s ethnic nationalism is therefore rooted in and very much intertwined with historical and political events occurred in the Korean history. In other words, the historical circumstances are arguably responsible for the ethnic nationalism that is based on the myth of one ethnicity, a myth that Korea has adhered to for a long time. Shin explains,
Due to the historical conditions of imperialism, colonialism, and national division that produced a sense of threat and urgency in collective survival...Organic, ethnic, and collectivistic nationalism came to dominate civic, liberal, and individualistic nationalism, even at the risk of constraining individual freedoms and civic rights. The poverty of liberalism was the price individual Koreans paid for the dominance of ethnic nationalism in their society and politics. This is a painful legacy of Japanese colonialism and a consequence of prolonged national division. Even the democratic movements of the 1980s did not effectively uproot the ethnic, collectivistic, organic notion of the Korean nation.31

As suggested above, conceptualizing nation in regards to ethnicity has a long history in Korea since it came to place as a means for Koreans to advocate their sovereignty from the Japanese imperialism (1910-1945). Resisting the cultural assimilation policy deployed by the Japanese emperor in order to perpetuate imperialism on the colonized, it was crucial for Koreans to actively maintain their own heritage and culture. It was a conscious struggle not to give up on their country since being assimilated to the colonizer meant for Koreans that the independence of their home country would be eventually given away to the imperial oppressor. Again, in the circumstance of colonialism overshadowing Korea, Koreans needed a means to tie people altogether. In doing so, their identity was based on the shared ethnicity. Given the value Koreans put onto their bloodline throughout history, especially along with the history of the Confucian idea of family, it was not too unexpected of a route for them to take. The collectiveness based on the very concept of minjok, which is a compound Korean term to refer to nation, ethnic, and/or race, was vigorously incited in the Korean independence movement in order to overcome the colonial power.

The term, minjok originated from and is used interchangeably with gyeore, which is another loaded word that resonates with the national mentality shared by people in perceiving themselves as Korean. Gyeore means a (sense of) community built around the bloodline. The word suggests that the nation is for Koreans an extended community that shares the same
bloodline, Korean ethnicity. In other words, as the synonymous term minjok insinuates, the ideas of nation and race/ethnicity are so conflated that for Koreans a nation means a community that consists of one ethnicity. In sum, the concept of minjok, which inevitably seeded ethnic nationalism in Korea, has been deployed as a national defense mechanism whenever the country faces hard times.

Koreans’ national struggles vary from colonialism to neocolonialism, to postcolonialism to list a few politically significant shifts in their contemporary history. Following the independence from the Japanese imperial force, the occupancy of the US military forces in the Korean Peninsula did not help diminish the particular way of defining Korea in a national term that ties exclusively to the ethnic majority that consists of the nation. In addition to, the US military forces that play a big power on Korea seeded among Koreans Anti-American sentiment, which represents antagonism towards foreigners who are also defined as outsiders in South Korea. Such an unfavorable sentiment toward foreigners continues to exist in a form of racism and discrimination on social minorities including racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities in South Korea later on, which retrospectively serves to reinforce the idea of ethnic nationalism. Although the conversation about racism and discrimination on social others will be continued in the next chapter, Social Others in Korea, with a greater detail, it is worth pointing out that ethnicity plays such a big part in defining the nation, Korea, since it has been intermingled with the particular understanding of the Korean history and emotional responses to it shared by people of Korea.

Colonialism to Postcolonialism: The Transition in Korea

While adopting the modern concept of nation amidst the penetration of Western, Japan had the sense of nation as political community before its annexation of Korea. However, the process of Japan transforming into a nation from the prior system of dynasty reflected that of
European countries, which formed an imperialistic model while expanding their powers outside Europe. Self-consciously adopting the model of those European countries, Japan pursued “Japanification” throughout East and South Asia regions including Korea.

Because discursive action plays a pivotal role in the manifestation and maintenance of colonialism, communication is widely considered to be of central importance to cultural and postcolonial scholarship. As Homi Bhabah explains, “The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual.” Discursive tactics were used against Koreans during Japanese imperialism, as the imperialists deployed a binary differentiation that attempted to separate Koreans from Japanese, subjugating the former as colonized bodies. In doing so, the colonizer aimed to articulate reasons justifying Korean subjugation, providing arguments about the need for Koreans to be controlled by the Japanese emperor. Later on in the colonization period, Japan imperialism also adopted cultural assimilation policies to justify their colonizing power over Korea. However, that did not mean that the Japanese imperial power started to consider Koreans as equals. Rather, Koreans were framed as the inferior to Japanese and therefore Koreans in need of governance, paternal care afforded by the Japanese emperor. Therefore, under the cultural imperialism policy, the status of Koreans was definitely still subjugated to the Japanese imperialism. In that sense, the assimilation plan was raised right at “the moment of colonial discourse.” Under the manner in which the colonial power operated, Koreans were situated to fortify their sense of unity based on what they were called out, Korean.

On the surface, the transition out of colonialism was abrupt, occurring as a result of the Allied victory in World War II, which brought an independence from the Japanese colonization of Korea. As time would demonstrate, however, the end of this deeply ingrained colonization did
not necessarily mean Koreans could obtain absolute governmental autonomy from external forces immediately. On one hand, it was a transitional period for Korea, shifting from the colonized to a politically independent entity within the realm of global politics. But, on the other hand, it was also another transitional period for South Korea to enter into the new era of postcolonialism while undergoing the division of their previous form of the nation, Korea, into two states, the north and south.

Post-1945, the Korean Peninsula can be described as the era of the end of Japanese colonialism and simultaneously the beginning of postcolonial period managed by the US force. Although it was postcolonialism time, the residues of Japanese colonialism seemed to be carried over by the new external force, the US. There were few amendments in institutions such as the military and government bureaucracy. The old systems under Japanese colonization were re-used without alterations. “Whether it was in the military, the bureaucracy, or the polity,” Cumings explains, “Americans during the Occupation found themselves playing midwife to a Japanese gestation, rather than bringing forth their own Korean progeny.”

The US military forces’ residency in South Korea differed from the colonialism operated under the Japanese imperialism to the extent to which it was more implicit and subtle imperialism. Clifford Geertz speaks to the subtle ways in which colonialism was not eradicated but transformed, sometimes in ways relieving strictures and sometimes in ways reinforcing and creating them:

The realization that the power imbalance between the new states and the West [during the postrevolutionary period] has not only been corrected by the destruction of colonialism, but has in some respects increased, while at the same time the buffer colonial rule provided against the direct impact of that imbalance has been removed, leaving fledgling states to fend for themselves against stronger, more practiced, established states, renders nationalist sensitivity to “outside interference” just that much more intense and that much more general.
The nationalistic mentality toward external interference described by Geertz was intensified further during and after the Korean War, the civil war between the North and the South from 1950 to 1953, which ended with two states of Korea without resolution. The North as a political ally of the Soviet Union and the South as that of the US have left deep political conflicts between the two Koreas as well as with any entities involved since the armistice in 1953. Particularly in the South, the US was operating its power most visibly through its military forces settled in throughout the South part of the Korean Peninsula. For Cumings, there is a parallel here connecting America and Japan: “After all, the period of heavy American involvement in Korea now matches the entire tenure of Japanese colonialism (36 year).”\textsuperscript{38} Given that Cumings’s article was published in 1984, one could assume that, perhaps Cumings was prescient. That brings the concern about, what a variety of scholars have identified as “modern colonialism.”\textsuperscript{39} The concept is primarily based on the binary distinction between the West and Non-West, which has imperialistic influences on the Non-West. Slater explains,

This couplet [the West/non-West] has been deployed in a way that grounds a primary identity for the West, as the self, and a secondary identity for the non-Western other. Traditionally, ‘the West’ has been constructed as a model and measure of social progress for the world as a whole. It has been and remains much more a driving idea than a fact of geography.\textsuperscript{40}

The way modern colonialism operates is through perpetuating the imperialism of knowledge, ideas, and conceptualizations. The West defines terms whereby they function to frame meanings of modernization and accordingly the modern sense of nation. Within this context, this binary distinction which is politically and ideologically laden becomes problematic since it “turns differences into a hierarchy of self and other and helps reproduce asymmetrical power relations.” The idea intrinsic to the binary is that Western primacy that carries an imperialistic power relative to the rest of the world.
For South Korea, the US as the agent of the West functioned to serve as a guiding force in defining them. The division, the aftermath of the Korean civil war, complicated the construction of nationalism of South Korea due to the two states’ struggles over their political legitimacy. Two states shared the same goal that was to establish its nationality but only for one state over the other. The desired nationalities of both parts of the Korean Peninsula, the north and the south, were therefore ideologically driven. What they were striving to accomplish is “to transform the symbolic framework through which people experienced social reality.” Geertz calls it an “effort to revise the frames of self-perception.” That is, both states needed new identities that ratify them as nation. The US and the political stance they hold provided the terms for the regime of South Korea to refine itself as the individual sovereign state separated from the North very successfully. South Korea adopted the democratic system based upon the US model, and maintained a close political relationship with the United States ever since.

**Identity Construction of the War Memorial of Korea: Who Are the People?**

Having contextualized Korea and South Korea within the history of the nation and the larger 20th century geopolitics, in this section, I describe and analyze the exhibitions of the WMK, demonstrating how the nationalism discourse of the WMK elicits the people of Korea and further South-Korean-ness. In doing so, I also indicate that the discourse of the WNK pervaded into the Itaewon landscape. The museum charges the landscape with ideologies resonating with the political needs of the country. When identifying a space both as an outcome of discursive act, on which social relations are reflected, as well as a means, by which social relations in need within historical particularity and complexities are molded, spatial communication Itaewon practices is not merely the representation of the present but also the medium to set a tone for the future. Establishing a tone and cultivating an attitude toward the past is the very real rhetorical power of
landscape. As Davis explains, “Once particular sets of memories are fixed upon a landscape, they become part of the official memory of the community, be it local, regional, or national.”

As Davis’s statement implied, one set of memories presupposes possibly another set of memories that is yet uncast a light on so that it is left behind history. A set of memories emphasized over and other therefore acquires symbolic and political importance: the former is presented as a lesson about what ought to be remembered over the latter. As the following discussion will demonstrate, this epideictic feature, whereby the past is remembered through the perspective of the present, holds a foundational degree of importance for constitutive rhetoric deployed within and practiced by the WMK. Moreover, following discussion will also illuminate that the constrained memory projected through the museum helps the power sustain their mythologies through deliberately angled interpretations of the war and the history concretized in various types of exhibitions in the WMK.

The past told to us by the present implies the future envisioned from the present. In this terrain of thoughts, the discourses verbally and spatially generated through the WMK are epideictic in that they guide what ought to be celebrated and what is less or not. They are also constitutive since what is performed by the WMK is to provide a lens to deem and digest the past that in the end functions to shape the understanding of people of Korea on their political and cultural heritage and ultimately their identity. In other words, the epideictic rhetoric revealed in such a commemorated history is prominently connected to the national identity actively and deliberately constructed in the WMK. Therefore, the (hi)story created through the WMK is political. In the following sections, I analyze first, how the WMK constructs rhetorical identity of Korea, and second, how South Korean identity came to place within the political context through examining exhibitions of the WMK.


Defining Korean-ness: We are One-Minjok

“Symbolizing the image of a bronze sword and a tree of life. The bronze sword represents the time-honored history and warrior spirit. The tree of life symbolizes the prosperity and peace of the Korean people.”

-Tower of Korean War (6.25 Tower)

Walking into the main gate to the front yard of the WMK, the very first monument a visitor can see is the Korean War Monument. Located at the most front side of the building of the WMK, the monument exhibits the devotion of the WMK to assure a firm nationalism that is tied to the concept of minjok, standing for the Korean people, when stressing the root of the nation. Among other myths that have been preserved by the museum, the myth of the nation of one ethnicity successfully sustains its legacy through the repeated idea of saving “our minjok.” The Korean War Monument, the set of monuments consisted of Tower of Korean War, Stone Bowl, Statues Defending the Fatherland, Stone Wall, and Allied-Nations Memorial, is arguably the most prominent artifact in the museum in terms of its location and size. LaWare argues that “pictures can make an argument for community development, calling attention to unique cultural characteristics and historical events that have shaped a community’s progress,” and in this analysis I contend statues and monuments as other forms of visual artifacts also have a similar capability to be rhetorical means. The Korean War Monument as a visual artifact functions to shape the Korean identity by accentuating the particular historical moment of Korea when the minjok was in struggle but overcame.

The monument is located on the main entry of the museum, which is at the right front side of the main building of the museum. The enormity of the monument guarantees the visibility that grabs eyes even from outside of the museum since it is right next to the main road (Itaewon-ro) that passes by the museum. However, what make the monuments more prominent are the messages they are meant to deliver. Tower of Korean War, one of the components that consist of
the Korean War Monuments, is also called 6.25 Tower in Korean because June 25th is the date when the Korean War was started in 1950. The description of this monument, which is inserted at the beginning of this section, clearly indicates the concept of minjok strongly implanted in the Korean identity. In describing the sword that is the shape of the monument, connecting “the time-honored history” and “the tree of life” underlies how Korean nationality has been conceptualized. Koreans are very proud of the longevity of the country and furthermore the tree of life, which can connote the bloodline of their people, has been at core of rebutting the long history. On the description, they even precisely name “the Korean people.” On the Korean panel for the monument, “the Korean people” is translated to “han-minjok.” The term could have two interpretations. One is one-ness (here, han means one) or the unity of people of Korea. In that case, han-minjok means one kind of compatriot, the Korean. Another is Han people, which refer to the ethnic ancestor of Koreans. The latter interpretation reveals that ethnicity locates at the core of the nationhood of Korea. Either way, the tower stands for the Korean people who share the same ancestor. Therefore, this tower shows the concept of Korean nationalism much embedded in their ethnic consciousness.

As a means for providing affirmative and concrete ideas about what Korea is and who Koreans are, the WMK, more specifically those monuments function metonymically. They fix the abstract idea about Korea in a form of modern nation on the concept of minjok who live through and overcome struggles. The fixed idea of Korea helps Koreans hold their identity throughout the changes in forms and manners of country. The WMK as a metonymy to express the idea of Korea, therefore, entails constitutive rhetoric precisely in that it imparts a particular way of conceiving Korea to Koreans. Charland explains how identity is rhetorically constructed as follow: “Rhetorical identity must be an ideological fiction, even though…this fiction becomes
historically material and of consequence as persons live it.” As Charland points out, identity is constructed through a rhetorical discourse and thus it is an inherently ideological product. Illuminating an ideological aspect of both identity-building and a built-identity leads us to acknowledge the political attributes to and consequences of the process.

When the idea of identity-building as such is discussed accordingly in (post)colonial circumstances, the political consequences of a built-identity become not only more complex but also perilous. Bhabha indicates “An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of ‘fixity’ in the ideological construction of otherness.” During the period of Japanese colonization of Korea, what the Japanese colonizer deployed to solidify their imperial power over Koreans, the colonized, was founded on the very idea of otherness. The colonizer created the discourse that Koreans are the people with less ability and less civilization who therefore needed to be taken care of by the better people, the Japanese emperor. This way of constructing otherness was also employed by Koreans exactly the other way around. Advocating their own identity as Korean against the Japanese imperialism subjugating Koreans through “the process of subjectification,” the strategy the Korean independence movements deployed was exactly grounded on the same logic: othering. In the case of the Korean independence movement striving for the way to have the sense of collectiveness resisting to the colonial power together, the Korean identity was called for and constructed around the history-long idea that Koreans have had the unity as one-ethnic group as long as the Korean history goes back. The Korean identity, which was evoked with the clearly ideological purpose, was therefore embedded strongly in the ethnically exclusive concept of nationhood. Defining people of the nation as such has a continuous influence on the Korean society and culture. As Pai and Tangherlini point out “Frequently, Korean identity has been defined in opposition to outside influences, most notably
Chinese, Japanese, and recently, Americans. In other words, focusing on the one-ness in terms of ethnicity has brought about inevitable exclusions of others socially and politically defined otherwise in the Korean society onwards. They are marked as people who do not share the origin in the Korean history that is what makes Koreans Korean.

Such a way to conceptualize the Korean identity by connecting it back to the root of the country is also applied to *the Monument of King Gwanggaeto the Great*. This monument displayed in the front yard of the museum serves to connect the modern Korea back to the heritage that goes back to Goguryeo (B.C. 37-668). The emplacement of the monument in the WMK is therefore strategic to anchor the national identity called for the nation in the heritage that has accumulated up to the modern form of nation, Korea. It stabilizes the concept of Korean, which retrospectively strengthens the sense of *minjok*, the Korean nationhood. The message this monument is telling is the firm identity of what Koreans are meant to be based on the robust history that brought the modern Korea into the life. *Minjok* becomes to be something that neither should nor could be replaced by anything else in defining Korea.

Along with the emplacements of those monuments in the front yard of the WMK, *the Statue of Brothers* is another monumental piece that emphasizes the concept of *minjok* and now what it means in the divided Koreas. The statues “depicts a real-life story about two brothers who fought in the Korean War on opposite sides and accidentally reunited on the battlefield, and symbolizes the Koreans’ wish for national peace, reconciliation, and reunification.” On the premise set by other surrounding monuments, the statue represents the mourning for the separation of country and the hope for reunification of Korea. That expression of the hope for the reunification of two Koreas is only reasonable because they are one *minjok* and ironically stabilizes the Korean-ness in the status of the division since the hope for the fix is stated.
Upon experiencing waves of colonialism, as well as the prophetic dualism Wander (1984) coined in order to identify the U.S. stance in the Cold War,\textsuperscript{52} South Koreans developed a minjok identity of ethnic nationalism, a mythology concretized by the WMK. Of course, nationality is not so concreted.

**Defining South Korea**

The order of exhibitions in the WMK creates a particular narrative of the Korean history, more specifically the South Korean history. As Hay argues that a public museum “whose spatial rationalization of exhibits and patrons’ movements was integral to its civic and ‘governmental’ mission –enlightening, cultivation, and civilizing’ citizens,”\textsuperscript{53} the rhetoric of the WMK intends to civilize the public on its end, which results in invigorating the national ideology as it is envisioned by the power. Spatial movements facilitated by the layout of the WMK construct the narrative of story the museum wants to tell its visitors. As Aiello and Dickinson contend, that spatial movements “constrain our subjectivities in particular ways, which are shaped by the very ideological aims and assumptions,”\textsuperscript{54} the orderly spatial configuration espouses the underlying ideology of the WMK. Walking through the museum as directed, visitors follow the flow of its development of argument. In doing so, visitors gain experiential knowledge that is particularly suasive. After all, according to Gregory Clark, “the rhetorical power of a national culture is wielded not only by public discourse, but also by public experiences.”\textsuperscript{55} The WMK structures its experiential narrative of the history of South Korea in a way that moves bodies through exhibitions. Primacy within an arrangement is certainly significant and, in the WMK, the first exhibit is held in the *War History Room 1*, featuring war history prior to the Korean War. Continued to the next exhibition rooms, most of which are about the war history of South Korea, the exhibition put in that delicate order serves to provide South Korea with the ownership over
the history of Korea that is supposedly shared with the North Korea. As a result, the exhibition of
the war history that is previous the Korean War in the WMK’s narrative of the Korean history
alludes the legitimacy of the South as the heir of the previous forms of Korea. Anchoring in the
Korean heritage, which is one of means for building the legitimacy of South Korean regime as
the one who continues the previous form of Korea. Making the history of the South the history of
Korea annihilates the legitimacy of the North. The order is therefore a means of reasoning. As
Beer argues, “Reason is concretely bound by particular actors in a specific discourse that sets
limits on possibility, that constrains and forces an amorphous reality into a specific, defined
shape.” The WMK provides visitors with a very specifically defined reality for South Korea
reasoned through the configuration of the past in its exhibitions. The reality structured in the
WMK can be understood as what Davis called “hegemonic memory” since the history as the
narrative structured by the power whose perspective is pertained to the WMK is used to define
the identity of South Korea after the Korean War. In that sense, the WMK functions as a means
to engender the South Korean-ness by disciplining “the political potency of public
remembrance.” The WMK structures the discourse through which it manufactures a particular
kind of Korean, a South Korean. The story told in the WMK constructs and positions the
protagonist South Korean as being on the continuation of Koreans, related to but differentiated
from Koreans in the North. In doing so, the discourse of the WMK aims to rationalize the South
by irrationalizing the North. In the discourse, the Cold War ideology is pivotal to the identity-
construction for South Korean. On that note, the reason provided by the WMK is more
specifically what Beer terms “political reason”:

Political reason thus both includes and excludes the chaos of infinite possibility, the abyss
of shapelessness, meaninglessness. It provides us with, and helps us escape from,
fluctuation between possible worlds, from oscillation and instability into equilibrium.
The resulting equilibrium was what South Korea needed in order to be a separated country, distinct from North Korea after the Korean War. In order to stabilize the newer nation that was just divided up by two states, the nationalist discourse in the WMK, first, sets South Korea as the heir of the minjok. The concept of minjok not only succeeds to anchor the nation in the heritage of the previous forms of Korea but also serves as a means for building the legitimacy of South Korean regime as the one who continues the previous form of Korea.

**Defining the South by Othering the North**

Although the museum is named as the War Memorial of Korea, the most of its exhibitions are devoted to the Korean War. What follows right after the exhibition, *The nation’s ordeal and restoration*, which is about Taehan empire, the previous form of Korea until the Korean War, is the exhibition room named 6.25 Room 1. The Korean War focused exhibitions include 6.25 Room 2 and 3 and the special exhibition that was open for 60 years anniversary of the Korean War in 2013. Those exhibitions ordered right after the brief history of wars before the Korean War is to solidify the legitimacy of the South Korea regime who is the successor of the minjok. In addition, those exhibitions, in that particular order, work to justify the stance of South Korea and thus to articulate “who the South are” that should be distinguished from the North. As King pointed out that “museums feature selected fragments from the past, and thus are divested of the complexities of history,”\(^{60}\) the story told in the WMK does reflect the perspective of the authority of the political power. In order to constitute the sense of the South that is distinguishable from the North, it is necessary to shift the meaning of Korean, to alter what it means to be Korean after the Korean War and in the new era of the post-Cold War.

As Sklar argues “Central to the issues of identity are what is excluded, what falls outside the parameters and margins of selected discourses, for these strategic absences prove definitive
by the choice implied,”61 it was integral to the South to identify them by being defined by the presence of the North. In that sense, the North functioned as a key (and not absent) element in constructing the South Korean identity. Thus, calling for the South as a distinct notion of the Korean people is “the very act of addressing”62 in a way that attempts to make the South a synecdoche for the whole Korea ideologically. This is critical for the South regime to legitimize its sovereignty. Thus, Korean transforming into the South Korean is through what Charland calls “the tautological logic of constitutive rhetoric.”63 The South Korean, as a collective identity which functions as a basis of rhetorical strategy of the Korean War Memorial Museum, is a rhetorical maneuver that is highly dependent upon landscape. As Hall contends, “Space is understood as a structuring context for identity negotiation with consequential implications for how culture comes to be constituted and reconstituted.”64 Such constitutions motivate new cultural productions, even if these constitutions are little more than ideological projections. Hence, if the South Korean people exist, it is only in ideology. In the process of positioning the South Korean, its constitutive rhetoric provided them with newer perspectives to resolve their experienced contradiction, which was the experience of being separated from the half of Koreans who happened to be left above the 38th parallel in the Korean Peninsula. The newer perspective told to the South Koreans encouraged them to (re)define themselves as saviors who will be eventually able to unite the South and the North of Korea as it used to be and should be. In other words, given that South and North Korea are the same ethnic groups who are supposedly only temporally separated from each other, the identity of South Korea needed to be re-defined at the discursive level.

In doing so, the contingent-ness upon which South Korea was positioned heavily played the role in ideologically anchoring the newly organized nation. In order to understand the place
of South Korea in the global politics during that time, it is important to remember that the UN was deeply involved in the Korean War and their participation in the Korean War was one of the first resolutions since the organization was ratified in 1945. More specifically, the UN’s participation in the Korean War was described in the War Memorial of Korea as follows: “The UN member countries dispatched their troops, and for the first time in the history of its foundation, the measures of collective security were implemented in accordance with the Charter.” The US was the major pull in organizing the UN, which inevitably meant that the UN largely echoed the political position the US held. The resolution for the Korean War was also requested by the US to the UN in 1950. It was when President Truman was in his tenure, and the War Memorial of Korea describes his action as follows:

As the situation in the Republic of Korea got worse, Truman called up the national defense and foreign affairs staff and presided the meetings to come up with action plans. He ordered “General MacArthur to dispatch an investigation team to the Republic of Korea and provide supply materials and the US naval/air forces requested by the Republic of Korea, and to send US 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait.” In particular, he emphasized that “the US will act under the UN authority and any military action will be restricted for protection of US withdrawal.”

As the description suggests, the US was deeply involved in the situation over the Korea besides being a part of the UN. That indicates the decisive role the US played in the resolution of the UN for the Korean War, which ultimately reveals the geopolitical importance of South Korea at the beginning of the post-cold war era. On July in the same year, the United Nations Command (UNC) was established and the US was given the authority to appoint commanders. Truman indicated in his statement on June 27, 1950, which is right after the North Korean military forces crossed the 38th parallel:

The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation
of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.\textsuperscript{70}

In that circumstance, the Korean Peninsula became a critical nodal point in geopolitics since the end of Cold War. On the same vein, being the ally of the UN, the South Korean regime came to embrace the ideologically constrained identity that resonates with that of the UN, or more clearly the US.

Within the contexts, it is not an accident that anti-communism is the motif repeatedly and prominently coming back throughout the entire exhibition of the WMK. Founded on the \textit{prophetic dualism} logic that perpetuated intensely divisive dichotomies during the Cold War,\textsuperscript{71} the North and its ideological alliances such as China and the Soviet Union are treated with a wide-range of \textit{devil terms} that are used to sum up all that is regarded as bad or evil.\textsuperscript{72} From \textit{the Korean War Room 1: Invasion of the South & Counter Attack}, the first exhibition on the War in order of the WMK exhibitions, the war is labeled as the “attack” of and “invasion” from the North Korea. While the war is worded as an “illegal invasion,”\textsuperscript{73} the North Korea is called “attackers at dawn,” “enemy,” and “monster.” Whereas the alliance of the North Korea with China and the Soviet Union is phrased as “red conspiracy” and their involvements to the war is called “intervention,” the coalition of South Korea with the US and the UN is named as “defenders of freedom” and the US and the UN “joined” the war, not intervened. Those contrasting phrases to represent the North/its allies and the South/its allies serve to rationalize the South and its allies while irrationalizing the North and its allies. Therefore, those deliberate terms set a tone that the North and communist forces are who should be blamed for the Korean War.

What follows these sections is the exhibit of war refugees. This frames North Korea as the tragic villain, an image coupled with an array of civilian damage and casualty, implying that
the War, and by extension North Korea’s refusal of unification, unjustifiable. Contrasted to the image of North Korea as a villain is the portrayal of South Korea as heroic, showing acts of South Korea and its alliances as justifiable responses throughout the exhibitions of the WMK.

Whereas the phrase, “invasion of the North,” keeps coming back, an articulation of the South and the UN’s crossing the 38th parallel is euphemistically phrased as “crossing the line,” a strategy tautologically seen in terms such as “counterattack (“The ROK and UN Forces’ counterattack”)” or “defensive battle (“Battle of Jipyeong-ri”).” Counter- is an “anterior meaning shifter” that serves as pointers to meaning.” The word implies the given justification of the attack, which means that the military action conducted by ROK and UN should be taken as something reasonable thing to do as opposed to the attack initiated by NK and Chinese Communist forces.

Moreover, it is what Beer called “authoritative reason.” He explained:

A kinder, gentler reason is like a bouquet of flowers. The ribbon that ties the bouquet together says reason… We perceive the bouquet through our senses. We “see reason,” we “feel reasonable,” we may even smell or taste “sweet reason.” Beyond our senses, the symbolic meanings of the bouquet itself, and of the flowers within it, are mainly in the multiple contexts where they are a part of human relations. What is the meaning of the bouquet of reason in the contexts of politics…Authoritative reason is power. The power of reason is power over nature and power over human being.

The military actions from the South and UN are reasoned and thus justified by the authoritative power of the WMK. Therefore, their violence is being a humanitarian act that was not the choice of human beings but was the inevitable thing to do. The justification of the South and its allies continues in the exhibit, Background of the Operation to the North. The information panel for the exhibit reads:

The UN had joined the Korean War to defeat the North Korean Army, which invaded the South on June 25, 1950, and to recover the 38th parallel. President Syngman Rhee proposed that the 38th parallel should be abolished to reunify the divided Koreas. As the Incheon Landing Operation succeeded, the UN approved the operations to unify Korea on October 7. The South Korean and the UN forces broke through the line that month, advancing toward the Amnok (Yalu) River and the Tumen River.
Here, it is not phrased as “attack” or “invasion.” Instead, it is the operation that had a justification of “reunifying the divided Koreas.” This sounds more reasonable than “attack,” “invasion” or what not. In other words, when the South crossed the 38th parallel, it was for ‘reunification’ of the country whereas it was ‘illegal invasion’ when the North did the same military act. The intention of the South in the war is worded simply as the hope for reunification, the driving ideology bracketed, while that of the North is phrased as “to communize the Korean Peninsula,” which highlights only their political ambition. After all, the act of the North was not justified in the same way it was for the South.

Villanizing the North, the exhibitions downplay violence practiced by the South and the UN. This theme is pervasive and prominent throughout the exhibitions on the Korean War. For example, the exhibit, Division of Korea by Soviet Union (SV), suggests that the division was wholly because of the Soviet Union. However the UN was involved as much as Soviet Union was since the UN was one of entities who agreed to maintain the Korean Peninsula divided by the 38th parallel at the end of the Korean War. The panel also indicates that South Korean government was the only legal government. Here, SV is only one who is blamed and demonized, and the UN evades from criticism that was evolved around the Moscoba Meeting in the first place. Interestingly, that is mentioned on the Korean panel for the exhibit but not on the English panel. Also, the exhibit, the leftist guerillas, removes the controversial issue of trusteeship that was very negatively responded by many Koreans including those in the South at that time. The Korean War is framed as a war for the one person’s ambition for totalizing the Korean Peninsula rather than as the counter-act of Koreans to acquire their absolute independence from any types of trusteeship. In doing so, historical moments are transformed into historical memories that
discipline the public in a way the power seek to envision. The rhetorical potential of the process of the transformations is to legitimize the sovereignty of the South part of Korea.

The motif of the permanent exhibitions of the WMK seems hard to miss. In summer 2013, the special exhibition for celebrating 60 years anniversary of the Korean War was ongoing in the WMK and it was the exact reiteration of the main theme. Much like the motif perpetuated through the permanent exhibitions of the WMK, visitors to the special exhibition, *Lo, How can we forget!*, repeatedly encounter the discourse describing the North as the villain and the South as the good guy. The special exhibition was a contracted version of the permanent exhibitions of the WMK describing the Korean War as the tragedy caused by the North and the South as a trooper living through the tragedy and even thriving.

In addition to villainizing the North, through the exhibits of the WMK, people of the North are de-humanized as well. They are merely called North Koreans and thus their subjectivity is detached from individuals. Throughout the exhibitions, they are seen mostly with guns and weaponry. In a sharp contrast to disregarding the subjectivity of North Koreans, the people of the South and their allies are mostly identified with their names. They are presented with their photos from the war-time or from their home and personal effects such as keepsakes, journals, and letters. With those items, they are remembered as persons rather than merely as soldiers. The particular way of commemoration evokes in visitors the sense of attachment to those people existing in their names. For example, *the Monument of Killed in Action* is the pinnacle of such commemorative act. Located in the right and left wings outside of the WMK, the monument consists of several dozens of marble slabs that look like giant tombstones. The names of soldiers from the South, the UN, and the US who died in the Korean War are engraved on them. With the long list of those names on the monuments, visitors witness the massacre in
the Korean War. Over the course, those who have their names on the monuments live eternally in
mind of visitors while people of the North become what visitors are invited to remember as
villains than anything else. These exhibits strategically serve to solidify anti-communism, which
also can be extended to anti-North, as a foundational ideology defining South Korea.

These strategies are problematic because they are presented as the history that is
objective and thus correct. The story presented by the WMK as the definitive history has
authority. As King argued “Institutionalized stories have the power to control how people
remember the past,” the discourse of the WMK is empowered with authority that comes from
ethos of the institution and the authority conjures authenticity that “often legitimizes how the
past should be remembered.” On the official website of the WMK, the general director of the
WMK, Young Gye Lee, indicates its purpose as following: “The War Memorial of Korea is the
live educational center of Korean contemporary history to have a correct understanding of vivid
history which has safeguarded the free democracy including the meaning of Korean War.”

There are three things that should be pointed out in this mission statement of the WMK. First, by
indicating the objective of the museum as to deliver “a correct understanding” of history, this
claims that the information provided by the museum is correct. Such a claim can delude a
premise of the role the WMK practices. Second, democracy was a new concept imported from
the West after the end of World War II to Korea. Therefore, as the mission statement indicates,
the contemporary history of Korea primarily presented in the museum is not about the history of
Korea but the history of South Korea. Therefore, the (hi)story told in the WMK ultimately defies
the legitimacy of North Korea in its premise while legitimizing the regime of South Korea. Third,
the meaning of Korean War is the part to which the WMK devotes its effort at most. However,
again, the (hi)story told in the WMK defines what the Korean War is to South Korea but not to
the other half of Korea, North Korea. Therefore, as Biesecker argued “Reconstructions of the past function rhetorically as civic lessons,” the transformation of South Korean from Korean is to induce a cohesive identity while comforting the dismantling fact of national separation by two states. To do so, the story the WMK tells to people of the South not only provides justifications for being in the part of the war but also reasons the consequent separation of the country was not on the South but on the North. Those deliberately constructed story in the WMK thus provides South Korea with terms to define themselves as opposed to North Korea.

**New Kinship of South Koreans: The South Korea and the US Alliance**

> “The blood and sweat of the allied forces became the hope of this country.”
> - in the Korean War Room III of the WMK

*The Korean War Room III: Participation of the UN Forces* starts with the exhibit called *Our second homeland, the Republic of Korea.* Here, the narrative of the WMK shifts to the new kinship South Korea built with other allied countries at the expense of being separated from the half of their own *minjok.* This exhibition room is devoted to appreciation for the UN forces dispatching their troops to the Korean War and to celebration of the relationship between South Korea and the US and the UN. The relationship is termed as friendship, family, and love, all of which emphasize the alliance of South Korea with them. The exhibit, *The Unfinished War and Special Relationship,* in the room provides the residence of the US military forces in South Korea with the justification to be there since the war is not finished. The exhibit, at the same time, emphasizes humanitarian aspects of the UN forces with photos hung up on a wall like a family room and they are themed as *War and Family, War and Friendship,* and *War and Love.* Those themes also define South Korea’s relationship with the US and the UN. Especially in the video repeatedly being played in the exhibition booth called *Special Relationship,* stories of the Korean War veterans are presented. The video is titled as *Testimony from UN Korean War veterans:*
Unforgettable war and close ties. There are segments including *Land of blood brothers, Korea* and *Story of blood brother: encounters during the war*. In *Land of blood brothers, Korea*, one of the Korean War veterans said “We shed our blood at that land for the Korean people. So, Koreans are our blood brothers.” *Story of blood brothers: Encounters during the war* is about Ayla, a Korean war orphan, and Suleiman, a Korean War veteran who became a father for her. In the video, they met first time since the war just like a reunion of dispersed family of a war-time. Those relationships are literally defined as kinship such as brothers, fathers, and daughters. South Korea now has new families.

Along with defining the new relationships of South Korea in familial terms, the exhibitions on the Korean War in the WMK downplay the political involvement of the US in inaugurating the first president of South Korea, which was controversial since it was opposed to the public opinion in South Korea. That simplifies the political relations of the South with the US and UN. Their relations become simply a humanitarian one rather than one that involves their ideological interests. The discourse constructed in the WMK also downplays why Korea was divided by the two in the first place. In describing the division of country, the story of the WMK emphasizes the political interests of Soviet Union representing for the North Korea but not that of the US and the UN who were also involved in the decision-making over the Korean Peninsula. Ignoring those tensions present in Korea during that time, they simplify the war-time history of Korea. That eventually works in favor to the South and thus the US who is represented as a good guy fighting for justice, more specifically the justice defined by the South, the US, and UN. For instance, behind the Korean War, there was a desire of Koreans for the absolute autonomy for their own country completely without any trusteeship from any other political entities. Within the context, the military act of the North was not simply toward the South; instead, it was toward the
exterior force, that is, the US that was hovering over the South as the political authority. The WMK does not address the ongoing tensions in the South, which involved the US and the UN, during the war-time. That indicates how the WMK tells the story in favor to the US hegemony that is rooted back in the 20th century geopolitics and is pertained to the current political culture of South Korea in 21st century. “The rhetorical plasticity” of the WMK serves to provide a comforting discourse for South Korean visitors. The WMK’s rhetoric affectively justifies the involvement of the US and UN into the politics of Korea with the great emphasis on humanitarian actions. Moreover, the WMK’s rhetoric emphasizes and encourages the appreciation of the US and UN’s involvement in the Korean politics. In the meantime, the US power continuing to be present over the South is normalized.

Walking out of the indoor exhibitions of the WMK after the tour, what visitors see is the US military base surrounding the WMK. Now, the military base of the foreign force does not seem that upsetting; instead, it gives a securing sense of reassurance. The WMK’s spatiality strategically located adjacent to the US military base highlights its rationalization as an “educational and civilizing sphere.” In addition, it is the building of the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea right across the road from the museum. They are facing each other having a street between them. This spatial arrangement is a node for the telos of the WMK as a political project. In other words, the WMK’s physical location further enables it to amplify its meanings and thus its rhetorical power. The national identity of South Korea(n) formed within the conjuncture of the launch of South Korean regime with the US intervention in the post-Cold War period is advocated in the rhetoric of the WMK and is assured in the rhetorical landscape on which the WMK, the US military base, and the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea co-exist. Functioning as an educational institution, the WMK asserts the imagined national
identity of South Korea structured within the said conjuncture. Therefore, the location reflects what Davis calls “the rhetorical deployment of place,”\(^8\) which reveals and stresses the *telos* of the WMK. In other words, the intersection of the WMK with the US military bases is what completes the rhetoric of the WMK.

Material rhetorics such as museums, city skylines, or national parks are fundamental to the construction of a collective and public identity. They position visitors as subjects capable of viewing rhetorical imagery and vocabularies in precise ways, which has ramifications on our identification with larger imagined communities.\(^8\)

The existence of the US military bases surrounding the WMK helps define the purpose of the WMK and the materialistic presence of the museum, in turn, re-asserts the ethos of the military bases. The rhetorical power of this materialistic juxtaposition comes from “the specific kind of relationship between past and present”\(^8\) narrated through those constituents on the landscape. In a broader scope, the particular relationship of the present with the past would propose a relation of the present with the future as well. The latter relationship presumably sustains the prior relationship. The continuity is what characterizes the epideictic aspect of the rhetorical landscape, which stresses “the importance of place as a rhetorical tactic”\(^8\) that integrates spatially written histories into rhetorical artifacts and vice versa. Just like the relation of South Korea with the US and the UN is called a family in the exhibition in the WMK, South Korea and the US are (literally) neighbors who are sharing a fence on the landscape and now that looks natural.

**The Present South Korean National Identity Constructed through the Past in the WMK**

In order to construct the national identity of South Korea, rhetoric of the WMK is functioning by linking one thing to another in a particular order. The narrative is deliberately and sophisticatedly constructed through the order. With the ownership over the history of Korea, South Korea is granted the authority to be an heir of Korea, which means that South Korea is a more or less alleged posterity of the *minjok* with the long history. Legitimizing the regime of the
South is consequently one side of the same coin for strategically disregarding the state of the North. History goes on in South, not in North, in the Korean Peninsula.

Along with the ownership over the history of Korea, another major argument created to be reasonable in the rhetoric of the WMK is the desire for reunification of Korea even though North Korea is completely villanized in the exhibitions. At a glance, that does seem contradictory. However, the seemingly contradictory arguments the WMK presents function to provide premises for the ultimate argument of the WMK: inclusion of North Korea into South Korea. As the WMK couches the display of mourn for the separation of the country within the discourse of national security threatened by North Korea, the WMK implies that the solution is the South to save the North. This idea in the name of brotherhood, that is, minjok, is in effect a strongly argued settlement for ideological conflicts between North and South and that idea resonates with the US hegemony. That is, South Korea as a savior allied with the US and UN would be the only legitimate agent in the reunification in the Korean Peninsula, not the other way around.

The rhetoric of the WMK is ironic, contrasting, and conflicting in itself because its rhetoric is reflecting the irony South Korea has experienced as an independent state from colonial power and a separated state from the other half of Korea, that is, North Korea. South Korea does appear to hope for the union of the whole Korea because the South and North are one minjok who are currently separated sisters and brothers. At the same time, however, the discourse of the WMK seems to advocate the separation based on the national and 20th century geopolitical ideology. The analysis of the WMK exhibitions reveals the irony in the national identity of South Korea. The analysis of rhetorical strategies in the exhibitions of the WMK is not to advocate Communism but to unveil the US hegemony pertained to the identity of current
South Korea. In doing so, it is ultimately to provoke a critical need to look back the past of Korea with a clearer lens in order for South Korea to come to a politically and historically reflexive identity.

**Conclusion: South Korean National Identity on the Rhetorical Landscape of Itaewon**

The characteristics of Itaewon, a strategic military point situated between China and Japan, alongside historical trade routes, has long been home to occupying Chinese, Japanese, and US military forces throughout Korean history. In retrospect, Itaewon’s geographically strategic utility established its geopolitical value in addition to that of the Korean Peninsula. Such a history of the town painted Itaewon as a militarized and masculinized space. Today, the US military still occupies a good portion of the neighborhood. Hence, being a military town is one distinctive feature of Itaewon, a feature which was clearly influenced by the history of various military forces’ occupations, and led to the flourishing sexual labor industry. The prostitution mostly served by Korean women was the un-neglectable sector that sexualized, more specifically masculinized the space of Itaewon. In addition to, right adjacent to the military Force, the WMK carries the heavily ideological and masculine concept of nationalism in that the concept of nationalism generated through the museum is highly tied to militarism.

However, as I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, production of space is ongoing project that is always in process. The spatiality of Itaewon, which is constantly in flux, is rooted in the historical complexity of Itaewon. The very historicity played a critical role in generating the contour of masculine and militarized nationalism on Itaewon landscape. However the very complexity also becomes a node for another possibility for the space. In other words, although the sector of the WMK and the US military base is on the contours of Itaewon’s landscape, and
is militarized and masculine, the complex spatiality of Itaewon breeds possible fluctuations, promising dynamic negotiations of Itaewon’s rhetorical landscape.
Notes


3 “Introduction,” VisitKorea.or.kr, accessed on March 5, 2015 from http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_1_1_1.jsp?cid=268131


7 The War Memorial of Korean official pamphlet. Collected by author.


9 Ibid.


15 Ibid., 107.


22 Ibid., 6.


24 Ibid., 240.


26 “South Korea, the only legal government the UN recognized,” in *the War Memorial of Korea exhibition*. 


29 Ibid., 13.


32 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 98.

33 Ibid., 98.


35 Ibid., 38.


40 Ibid., 9.

41 Geertz, “After the Revolution,” 239.

42 Ibid., 239.

43 Davis, “Memoryscapes in Transition,” 111.

44 “Tower of Korean War,” in *the War Memorial of Korea exhibition*.

45 From the official website of the War Memorial of Korea.

47 Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 137.

48 Bhabha, “The Other Question,” 37.

49 Ibid., 37.


51 On the War Memorial of Korea pamphlet. Collected by author.


55 Clack, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke*, 4.


57 Davis, “Memoryscapes in Transition,” 111.


62 Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 138; emphasis in original.

63 Ibid., 141.


67 “The First Resolution of the UN Security Council,” in the War Memorial of Korea exhibition.

68 “Initial Action by President Truman,” in the War Memorial of Korea exhibition.

69 “The Resolution on Establishing the United Nations Command (UNC),” in the War Memorial of Korea exhibition.

70 “Statement by the President,” in the War Memorial of Korea exhibition.


73 Is there any legal invasion? The phrasing is a tautology to emphasize the act of the North Korea as a cruelty on the South Korea.

75 Ibid., 198.

76 Ibid., 198.

77 King, “Memory, Mythmaking, and Museums,” 240.

78 Ibid., 240.

79 The official website of the War Memorial of Korea

https://www.warmemo.or.kr/eng/sub08/sub08_01.jsp


83 Davis, “Memoryscapes in Transition,” 123.


86 Davis, “Memoryscapes in Transition,” 120.
CHAPTER IV. THE VERNACULAR RHETORIC OF OTHERS IN SOUTH KOREA: EXAMINING THE ENCLAVES OF MUSLIM AND LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

While illuminating another facet of Itaewon being a site in which intercultural community evolves, this chapter discusses social and cultural Others within South Korean contexts. As seen in previous chapters, a variety of institutions and individuals celebrate Itaewon for its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Moreover, when contrasted with the ethnic nationalism expressed within the larger country of South Korea, Itaewon is a relatively permeable space, and certainly more welcoming to the concept of difference.1 Such permeability stands in marked contrast to the larger South Korean society which, according to Gi-Wook Shin, maintains an attitude toward cultural homogeneity that is reflective of the dominant belief in the mythology of ethnic nationalism.2 Against this backdrop, however, Itaewon stands out as a place for social and cultural others.3 This study investigates not only how the space of Itaewon continues to serve for communities of others but also how the marginalized groups founded their place in Itaewon.

For critical intercultural communication scholarship, it is critical to both scrutinize marginalizing structures and also provide an enhanced perspective on those who are marginalized by such structures, those perceived as others in the society. By engaging in a contextualized discussion of social others, I am attempting to understand the social positions of the other(s) in relationship to the unique particularities of South Korean history and culture, a perspective which enhances understandings of marginalized cultural identities within South Korean social hierarchy. In other words, to understand the intercultural communication of marginalized groups in Itaewon, one must also understand social others settled in Itaewon within the historical conjunctures and political disjuncture in South Korea. Within the constellation of
such conjunctures and disjuncture, scholars can get more complicated and nuanced understandings of social dynamics within intercultural communities, such as those inhabiting places like Itaewon, in Seoul, South Korea.

Although Itaewon should be recognized as an ideologically charged space which, as discussed in chapter three, played a pivotal role in the political project of national identity building, the district also functions as a sphere for social others to engage in vernacular discourse. By drawing upon a variety of rhetorical concepts associated with critical intercultural communication, this chapter focuses on the ways in which the Muslim and LGBTQ communities within Itaewon navigate the contingencies of South Korea in order to create space and build community through vernacular discourse. While these two groups do not represent the entirety of multiculturalism represented in Itaewon, they provide representative examples for better understanding intercultural communication in Itaewon, a district providing a “cultural refuge” for the Islamic community of South Korea, as well as the “consumer and cultural spaces” needed for LGBTQ activism and culture.

In the following sections, I first unpack the critical concepts needed to understand the ways in which social others use the landscape of Itaewon to create community, challenge ethnic nationalism, and improve the status of multiculturalism in South Korea. Next, I focus my lens on the vernacular discourse of the Muslim and LGBTQ communities and draw implications to an intercultural community in Itaewon.

**Cultural Diversity and Multiculturalism in Itaewon: A Review of Critical Terminologies**

**Itaewon as a Liminal Space**

As illustrated in previous chapters, the history of Itaewon creates Itaewon as a liminal space by which the village has operated as protective enclave for cultural, ethnic, and racial
diversities in the city of Seoul, South Korea, for hundreds of years. The historic resting place for foreign travelers, merchants, and even invaders, Itaewon has provided a home to sectors of diverse cultures which, within Itaewon, worked together to thread the distinctive fabric of the space. The earlier and more immediate influences of the West, which was imported primarily through the US military force present in Itaewon, compared to the rest of the country cultivate the space where openness characterizes its environment whereby multiculturalism is not a foreign concept. The liminality of the space “reinvigorates its aspect of discrete multiplicity; for while the closed system is the foundation for the singular universal, opening that up makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of voices.” While the liminality of Itaewon is created by the multiplicity of vernacular discourses and cultures that happen to reside in it, the very feature, which contributes to the liberating disposition of the town, in return functions to relatively lower the social entry-barrier for Others thence onward. Accordingly, the disposition differentiates Itaewon from the racialized and gendered structure of South Korean society and culture and therefore has been invitational for Others. The inherent liminality provides an opportunity that otherwise would not be available for social others whereby they can speak for themselves. This distinctive feature of Itaewon has attracted various races and ethnicities ranging from Africans to Arabs who found themselves as minorities in South Korean society.

**Multiculturalism in South Korea**

As of 2014 when I am writing this, Itaewon still holds its reputation for cultural diversity that is not easily seen in any other places in South Korea. According to Yookyung Lee, with the increasing number of immigrants for various reasons such as jobs and marriages, South Korea is currently undergoing a large scale social transition. In the face of such change, various
institutions and interests are pointing toward the need for *multiculturalism* as a way of amending discomfitures inherent within the given cultural reconfiguration. Whereas institutional efforts promoting cultural diversity have increased, *multiculturalism* continues to function as a foreign concept for many South Koreans. In that circumstance, people who were marginalized maintain their status as social others and, therefore, Itaewon continues as one of the available enclaves for their community.

To grasp the potential and limitations of multiculturalism, it is critical to identify otherized groups within South Korea. Who becomes marginalized in South Korean society is at the juncture between the various power structures in the present society, structures which are constructed and reinforced through culture. Therefore, when examined on the cultural grid, Itaewon also needs to be looked at from the contextualized vantage point in order for us to comprehend its spatial politics that re-imagines an emancipatory potential for intercultural community within it.

As discussed in previous chapters, one of the prominent features of Itaewon is that it is apt to liberate sociocultural oppressions inherent within South Korean society. Within the confines of Itaewon, the suppression of unfettering ideas and attitudes toward social norms stemming from the historical homogeneity and Confucian legacy are much more pliant and ephemeral. Such pliancy becomes even clearer especially when Itaewon is parallel to the cultural geography of the rest of the country. While the continuous presence of foreigners within Itaewon instigated distrust and alienation from the rest of the country, the international presence also contributed to the generation of a liberating mood in the area. Itaewon was, over time, transformed into a site in which heterogeneity is accepted and thus grows. Mainly, the infusion of Western cultures coming from the presence of the US military camps in Itaewon functions to
spawn comparatively liberal attitudes toward alternative social norms and cultural custom, refashioning what is perceived as normative Korean behavior within the neighborhood.

What characterizes South Korean culture and society, and retrospectively demarcates Itaewon, is therefore the homogeneous and conservative quality of South Korea. First of all, the homogeneous quality of South Korea is closely tied to the homogeneity of ethnicity, that is, Korean, the ethnic majority in South Korea. Throughout the history of Korea, the nation consisted primarily of one ethnicity. The homogeneity of Korean society, believed to be predominant throughout the nation’s history, is still reflected in the various traditions, manners, and institutions of South Korea. For example, ethnic nationalism, which was primarily elucidated in the chapter three, is characterized as South Korean nationalism constructed around the idea of ethnic homogeneity. The nationalism of South Korea as such has successfully worked to bond the majority of Korean nationals, however it simultaneously restricts the idea of nation as a community merely to the said ethnicity since its premise is based on inclusion through exclusion.

Exhibiting intolerance towards differences, therefore, is the unfortunate residue of Korean history in traditional South Korean society. Lacking in the idea of diversity begets marginalization of ethnic and racial minorities in South Korea. Within that context, Itaewon becomes distinguished because it serves as an enclave for traditionally marginalized ethnic and racial groups including but not limited to the diasporic and touristic communities of South and North America, Africa, and more recently Southeast Asia. Additionally, Itaewon is also attractive for people of bicultural and biracial identity. A somewhat of byproduct of ethnic nationalism that was constructed through the experience of colonialism and neo-colonialism, tolerance of diversity is often equated with a loss of identity, producing an anxiety related to losing the pure Korean ethnicity which could threaten the prosperity, or even existence, of the
country. At this historical juncture, people of mixed-races, especially those who are half-Koreans, are implicitly and explicitly discriminated against. Such discrimination alone reflects a very limited understanding of diversity in present Korean society, and throughout Korean history. Moreover, such discrimination is signified via vernacular discourse, as many half-Koreans are thought to be the offspring of *yanggongju*, a term denoting Korean women who worked as prostitutes for non-Koreans, specifically Americans. As the case of *yanggongju* illustrates, there is a relationship between ethnic nationalism and Confucianism. Confucianism is a tremendous influence on Korean society and culture. Because Confucianism is mostly responsible for the conservative quality of South Korea, one can also imagine that Itaewon has also provided a shelter for those attempting to escape Confucius principles. As discussed in chapter two in much greater detail, Americanization is one of the main features characterizing Itaewon. Many Koreans found American ways of thinking and doing more liberating than ideas and notions rooted in Confucianism, the system of values that has undergirded their lives for a long time. Confucianism serves as the social norm that implants the fixed and constrained notions of sex and gender in South Korean culture. Besides women’s limited social activities, sex roles confined to Confucius thoughts consequently bring about intolerance to different ways of performing sex and gender, especially in regards to performances of sexuality which challenge the heteronormativity of Confucianism. Such strictures lead people, who feel culturally unwelcomed in the society, to flock to Itaewon in search of their place. With its liberating ambiance, Itaewon has become a quarantined block from the Confucianism inherent within the city at large. Therefore, Itaewon allows different ways of living to be substantially guarded from the ideas of Confucianism.
The Vernacular Discourse of Cultural Others in Itaewon

As described, the liminality, one of the most striking features of the town, enables the space to be permeable to the new and the different, thereby facilitating the emancipatory potential for Others in South Korea. As Victor Turner describes liminality as “a realm of pure possibility,” the porous quality of Itaewon bolsters the possibility for embracing socially marginalized people, providing them with a cracked and fluid space in which they can tell their alternative stories and ultimately “construct new maps of belonging.” Therefore, multiculturalism that is bred into the spatial fabric of Itaewon as such is an organically grown one in that the various groups of people have founded their own places to voice themselves throughout the time. Their striving for their own voices is emerged in concordance with the emergence of vernaculars attaching a welcoming tone to the discourse of Itaewon. In doing so, such vernaculars empower a rhetoric of multiculturalism since vernaculars of various communities ultimately expand a spectrum of discourses in Itaewon space. For instance, vernaculars from other races besides Korean promote idea of multiculturalism in Itaewon. Their vernacular rhetorics add more layers to the landscape of Itaewon and further complicate it when juxtaposed with mainstream discourses which maintain the heteronormativity of South Korean society. In other words, those multiple trajectories form the composite contours of the landscape of Itaewon. In that sense, Davis’s way to illustrate a landscape is worth pondering. As Davis says explains, “Landscapes are dynamic and contestable, shifting as people infuse them with new meanings.” The very nature of landscape, which is both an arena and a manifestation of contentions, therefore encourages us to approach a landscape as ideologically charged but simultaneously emancipatory.
The Struggle and Potential of Intercultural Community in Itaewon

Conceptualizing a landscape as a configuration in articulation demands close attention to Nathan Stormer’s call for attending to questions about “how radically different rhetorics emerge historically in the ever-churning segregation and hybridization of things and discourses.”12 Attending to Stormer’s discussion facilitates a manner for understanding and comprehending the complexity of the landscape of Itaewon. In other words, while acknowledging the potential for intercultural community Itaewon entails and enables, it is also critical to illuminate the struggle facing Itaewon as a soil for intercultural community. In this section, I examine the exigency facing intercultural community within Itaewon – specifically gentrification– as well as potentialities for intercultural communication.

Gentrification in Itaewon

The exigency facing intercultural community in Itaewon is gentrification. Recently, for instance, various state and private institutions have looked appreciatively toward the organically grown multiculturalism in Itaewon as a means for economic opportunity. The potential economic benefits stemming from multiculturalism fostered in Itaewon from corner to corner are not a new idea. In 1997, for example, the district was designated a Special Tourism Zone by the city of Seoul, the first of such zones in South Korea.13 The economic benefits of such zones have fostered both tacit and frank calls for gentrification from various governmental institutions of South Korea. Paradoxically, of course, the process of gentrification exerts new tensions within the district as gentrification generally functions to minimize the multicultural difference of a given area, a difference which, in this case, is the very feature enabling the economic opportunity.14
The gentrification of Itaewon has resulted in multicultural facades and the exclusion of lower socio-economic parties. First, the multicultural facades stemming from gentrification are exemplified by the emergence of the World Food Street, which functions today as emblematic of multiculturalism within the larger city of Seoul. Within Itaewon, the World Food Street is located one block behind the main street and is home to a wide-variety of ethnic eateries, appeasing appetites in search of dishes ranging from Bulgarian to Pakistani cuisine. Whereas the different ethnic restaurants are nicely packaged and presented on the street, their edges are cut off and their distinctiveness is watered-down to accommodate the general taste. In that sense, the World Food Street turned out to be a façade of multiculturalism, attractive and beautified on the surface, but deficient for a deep-seated dialogue about multicultural life in South Korea. Second, gentrification means no room for the different that cannot afford to be on the front, the façade. On World Food Street, for example, such individuals either moved away or were not invited, and therefore had to find another corner. Hence, the thriving World Food Street created new segregations in Itaewon while on the surface celebrating multiculturalism. To a degree, the segregations mirror a cultural hierarchy perceived by Koreans and discriminations toward ethnic, social, and cultural minorities in South Korean society. Racial segregations appeared throughout the Itaewon landscape reflect the spatialization of such hierarchy, which is an indication of an unfledged idea of diversity in South Korea.

**Enclaves of diversity**

The ethnic and cultural segregations occurring in Itaewon, nevertheless, also need to be understood as efforts to resist class and ethnic leveling in order to maintain a distinctive intercultural community. Beyond the World Food Street, which is the most customer-friendly strip, there are sectors in which marginalized communities sustain idiosyncratic cultures such as
Islamic Street, African Street, and LGBTQ Street (colloquially named Homo Hill, a slur for the strip) to name a few. The Islamic Street has been growing since 1976 when the first Masjid in South Korea opened in Itaewon. Since the Masjid functioned as a social hub for Muslims residing in South Korea, it attracted Muslims of other ethnicities in South Korea to Itaewon. A related development was the emergence of African Street which was generated primarily out of that circumstance. While residents and visitors span the countries of Africa, the majority population on African Street is made up of the Nigerian diaspora community.

Homo Hill is another enclave in Itaewon, consisting of a small alley associated with LGBTQs. Today, the LGBTQ community spans well beyond Homo Hill. Nonetheless, Homo Hill as the landmark stands as arguably the motive for the community of homosexuals in South Korea. As those names for strips suggest, each of them has its accented space on the homogeneous South Korean urban landscape. They conserve their space; they expand their presence moving through the fissures in the space, seeking out the soil on which they can (re)seed. Sometimes, a space they find is literally a fissure in the city.

While carrying on their own vernaculars through the space, what they are ultimately accomplishing is creating a relatively sustainable environment for intercultural community in Itaewon. In apprehending the potential for the intercultural community Itaewon possibly possesses, it is necessary to elucidate the relationships between those distinct communities, communities which have evolved with each other over time. In doing so, it is possible to see the relationships as constitutive. In other words, intercultural relationships thread the fabric and the ambience of the town throughout the time. In a spatial term, an arrangement can point us to clearly seeing the ongoing relationship between different cultural groups. According to Charles Kostelnick and David Donovan Roberts, “the organization of visual elements so that readers can
see their structure—how they cohere in groups, how they differ from one another, how they create layers and hierarchies.” Likewise, using the concept rhetorical landscape, which focuses on relations among components or entities on a site thereby providing an understanding of landscape in a holistic view, helps us appreciate the ultimately symbiotic relations between marginalized groups, relations which exist beyond the segregation. In other words, the imaginary boundaries among those groups are on the one hand the sign of segregation, but on the other hand serve actually to maintain interdependent relations on which they rely for continuance. Segregations, the signifier of various communities in Itaewon, therefore entail the possibility for intercultural community with the solidarity engendered among members of the groups in terms of sustaining the space in which each of them became present. The circumstance those communities in Itaewon are dealing with is then the in-between-ness of what Isaac West calls “the constraining and enabling conditions.” In other words, as the list of names that refer to zones and sectors of Itaewon such as Homo Hill, African Street, Islam Street, and so on suggest, each independent community marks its territory. However, those marks are what mark the Itaewon landscape as a safe(er) haven for intercultural community they become to constitute together. I suggest the metaphor of quilt to illuminate the essence of segregation that ultimately serves to provide them the space where the intercultural community becomes feasible. The segregations as such retain the capacity for those individual communities to be positioned dialectically, in dialogue with one another. One functions to condition another possibility for others to be present within the space.

**The Vernacular Rhetoric of Muslim and LGBTQ Communities in Itaewon: An Example**

In order to illuminate the potential for intercultural community indwelling in Itaewon, this study focuses on two communities, Muslim community and the community of homosexuals,
communities which are developed prominently in Itaewon. Both communities stand out from the
cultural geography of the rest of the country since neither of those communities prospers in any
other part of South Korea existing outside Itaewon. Therefore, the Muslim community and the
community of homosexuals emerging in Itaewon function to play a pivotal role in sustaining
marginalized cultures in South Korea, which accordingly enriches a tolerance toward the
different and thus enhances the potential for intercultural community.

**Spoken through Place: Mapping the Vernacular of Islamic Culture in Itaewon**

Among the range of cultures of social minorities that found their shelter in Itaewon, there
is Islamic culture. The Muslim community in Itaewon, anchored in the so-called Islam Street, is
arguably one of the most visible communities of the marginalized cultures who have successfully
maintained their culture that is otherwise unseen in mainstream South Korean society. Although
Islam had been present in modern South Korea since the 1950s, Itaewon became the pivotal
place to Muslims in the 1970s, following the opening of the first mosque in South Korea. In
South Korean society where Confucianism is strongly embedded, Muslims were pushed to the
social margins, a space in which they struggle with maintaining their identity. Moreover, the
ethnic nationalism of South Korea pushed the Muslim community further to the margins of
society. Therefore, the Central Masjid, built in Itaewon in 1976, played a central role in creating
a Muslim community in South Korea. Since 1976, Islamic cultures have spawned their
community in Itaewon since it is where their own place, the mosque, is. Gathering in their own
place, Muslim community members can ease themselves from prejudice towards their ethnicities
and religious orientation. The mosque provides them a means to communicate with other
Muslims and ultimately to generate Islamic community in South Korea.
Islamic culture has burgeoned in Itaewon especially through their spatial communicative acts, which, I argue, have discursive consequences. The range of spatial communicative acts reveals the vernacular of Muslims that creates an enclave for their community. This section of the chapter maps the vernacular of the Islamic community spoken through their place and contextualized by the history of Islam in South Korea. As revealed in this mapping, this group’s spatial vernacular functions as a means to create their own place, a place within which they can speak for themselves. To understand how the community speaks for themselves in and through space, I investigate forms and manners of their vernacular, which function as the rhetorical agency needed to sustain Islamic culture in a society where Muslims are highly marginalized. Also, drawing upon the concept of rhetorical landscape, I illuminate how Islam Street functioned to rearrange the structure of the built environment of Itaewon and therefore impacted the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. Ultimately, I draw implications regarding the places of Islam within the cultural geography of South Korea.

**Islam in South Korea**

To understand Islamic culture particularly in South Korean society and culture, I first locate and situate Muslims and Islamic cultures within a historical and cultural context, a step that helps to next explain the circumstances in which the Islamic community in Itaewon is situated in South Korea today. First, although the South Korean Constitution assures the right of religious freedom, it is still very rare to meet a Muslim. The estimated number of Muslims in South Korea is approximately 137,000, a population composed mostly of foreigners—about 92,000—who stay in Korea for various reasons such as works, study-abroad, and marriage. This makes the total number of Muslims less than 1% (Approx. 0.003%) of the total population of Korea, and the number of Muslims who have a Korean nationality is about 45,000, which is less
than 0.01% of total Koreans.\textsuperscript{19} Within this context, Muslims in South Korea have been struggling for their social and cultural place. On one hand, they have been placed on the margin due to their religious orientation being Islam, which is one of minority religions in South Korea. On the other hand, Arab, the primary ethnicity closely tied to the religion, is one of ethnic minorities in South Korean society. Ultimately, as Doyoung Song points out, immigrant Muslims in South Korea struggle with their national and religious identity.\textsuperscript{20} Although Muslims in Korea are still a minority in various terms, however, they have nonetheless founded their community and sustained the place in which the community has evolved and sustained.

As stated earlier, Itaewon serves as “the cultural refuge” primarily because of the district houses the Central Masjid, the first mosque in South Korea, and the only mosque in the city of Seoul.\textsuperscript{21} The origin of Seoul Central Masjid goes back to 1969. At that time, South Korea was trying to become a developed country and was in need of a good trade partner for resources like natural gas, an especially important resource given that South Korea does not have any natural resource from its own territories.\textsuperscript{22} Therefore, building and keeping good relationships with oil producing countries in the Middle East was critical to the South Korean government and its goal of economic development.\textsuperscript{23} Within this context, the South Korean government offered 5,000 square meters of land in Itaewon for construction of the Masjid and, subsequently, several Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia provided the financing to build the mosque. The Seoul Central Masjid opened in 1976. Therefore, although the presence of Islam has existed within Korea for some time, it is since the late 1970s when Itaewon became the enclave for Islamic culture.

Also, another reason for the South Korean government to seek to build better relationships with Middle Eastern countries was because they were the major markets for South
Korean heavy industry. Along with the economic plan the South Korean government had in
1970s, it was also critical for them to have good relationships with Middle Eastern countries for
their resources. Hence, the South Korean government vigorously vied to garner a positive
rapport with Middle Eastern countries, many of which are Islamic countries. In 1970s throughout
the 1980s, therefore, many Koreans went to Middle Eastern countries for jobs in heavy industrial
districts. This phenomenon consequently helped to boost the Muslim population and thus
enhanced their visibility in South Korea. That the working visa from those Middle Eastern
countries was issued only for Muslims was one reason. In addition, it was not unusual that
Korean workers exposed to Islam in those Middle Eastern countries were converted to Muslims.

In the late 1980s, however, with the decrease of the number of Korean workers who went
to Middle Eastern countries, Islam in South Korea seemed to stop flourishing. The Muslim
population was stagnant until the late 1990s when foreign workers began to flow into South
Korea. The increase continued and, by 2004, many of the incoming workers were arriving from
Islamic countries.24 This dynamic change resulted in a renewed community of Muslims, located
in Itaewon, a district which, along with a Central Masjid, provided the place needed for religious
practices and the community for Muslims in South Korea.

Vernacular Rhetoric: A Means of Place Making for Muslims

The word “vernacular” has its origins in the concept of “the local” or “home grown.”25

As I have described, the cultural traditions of Islam were rather unfamiliar idea for
Koreans. Therefore, it has been a challenging task for Muslims in Korea to maintain religious
practices, foods, and cultural values. Within Itaewon, however, the Muslim community of South
Korea could participate in a process of space-making, through which, as Lisa Flores writes in her
study of Chicana feminists, can help marginalized groups “[carve] out a space for themselves
where they can break down constraints imposed by other cultures or groups.”26 In their study of Latinidad Vernacular Discourse in Toledo, Ohio, Alberto González, Jorge M. Chávez, and Christine M. Englebrecht explain that within such spaces, marginalized groups who are “largely invisible to the mainstream engage a process of cultural production and cultural critique” through vernacular discourse.27 Vernacular discourse, as defined by Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, is both “speech that resonates within local communities” as well as “culture: the music, art, criticism, dance, and architecture of local communities. In addition to being discourse operating within local communities rather than speeches preserved in history textbooks, vernacular discourse is unique to specific communities.”28 In the remainder of this section, I first discuss vernacular discourse as spatially-informed and attentive to the concerns of visual rhetoric. Upon doing so, I conclude by introducing the ways in which Muslims in South Korea used Itaewon space to recuperate a vernacular discourse in order to sustain their Islamic culture within Korean society.

First, the exercise of power is a central concern of critics investigating vernacular discourse. In practicing Islamic culture in the non-Islamic state of South Korea, for example, Muslims use vernacular discourse to share as a way of living, a diasporic way of life which is dislocated but then reconstituted on a foreign land. Such reconstitutions involve the negotiation of power and therefore discussing vernacular discourse sheds a light on forgotten subjects and invisible subjectivities. Hence, as Ono and Sloop explain, “a critique of vernacular discourse is necessary to render power relations among subjects visible.”29 The terrain of thought afforded by the investigation of vernacular discourse30 provides important ground for discussing the vernacular discourse of the Muslim community in Itaewon. Specifically, as Lisa A. Flores explains, “the study of vernacular notes that power operates not only in top-down or juridical
ways, but also on an everyday or micropolitical operation of power,” an understanding which leads critics toward “the study of a broad range of discourse.” As such, critics are directed toward power relations vernacularly expressed through an eclectic array of discourse related to the popular culture of “kid-vids,” the modalities of digital technology, and the realm of legal discourse.

Clearly, remembering to analyze vernacular discourse expressed in a multitude of materials can help challenge dominant ideas about foreign cultures in Korean society. Given Flores’s work on boarders and space-making, it is fitting that the criticism of vernacular discourse is increasingly attentive to spaces as salient sites for the cultural production of resistance for immigrant communities. In Itaewon, space is central to the expression of vernacular discourse by Muslims striving to upheld their own cultures in spaces of the city where such cultures either did not exist, or were not previously visible. Today, such existence is dependent upon the upholding of culture by generating vernacular rhetoric through spatially communicative acts such as the mosque and Islam Street.

Second, in spatial communication, the visual image becomes a primary means of expression for vernacular discourse. As Margaret R. LaWare explains,

In order for a minority community to argue that its culture has distinct properties that sets it apart from the dominant culture, it needs to show those distinctions within cultural artifacts, including visual artifacts.

By establishing visual differences, images have a capacity to create a community identity. Hence, in order to understand the vernacular discourse of space, it is important to draw upon visual rhetoric. Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope define visual rhetoric as representative of the “symbolic actions enacted primarily through visual means,” a concept providing critics with a visual rhetorical framework that pays attention to “artifacts and other
sorts of material culture – objects which were not records of speeches.”39 In other words, since marginalized groups have not always had traditional types of rhetorical means as an option available to them, they had to take more visually-oriented means like murals. As Olson indicates, visual rhetorical scholarship has enabled a set of studies on “visible and invisible communities.”40 When coupled with insights regarding vernacular discourse, the mission of visual rhetoric is informed by scholarship on critical rhetoric. In other words, it is necessary to approach visual and spatial communication with the *telos* of critical rhetoric in order to “upend essentialisms, undermine stereotypes, and eliminate narrow representations of culture,”41 and therefore, such a criticism must strive “to avoid further marginalization of vernacular communities and to allow for a critical reading of the effects of vernacular discourse.”42

Finally, with an understanding of the relationship between vernacular discourse, spatial communication, and visual rhetoric, it is now possible to analyze the vernacular discourse of the South Korean Muslim community in Itaewon. As Ono and Sloop explain, “A critique of vernacular discourse strives to understand how a community is constructed and how that constructed community functions.”43 The emergence of Islamic culture and vernacular discourse in Itaewon is clearly related to the construction of the Seoul Central Masjid, home of the Korea Muslim federation. After being erected in 1976, the Masjid became a spatial hub for the Muslim community, creating a space of difference by spatially generating the social and cultural subjectivity of Muslims in South Korean society. In other words, the image of a place for Muslims within the civic imagination of South Koreans created the difference needed to substantiate identity within the group. As such, Muslims gained a sense of place which secured their identity and helped sustain the Muslim community.
Paralleling this act of place-creation was the emergence of vernacular discourse which, according to Ono and Sloop, affirms and articulates “a sense of community.” What they suggest, therefore, is that through the merger and division associated with borders and place-creation, vernacular discourse is a means to mold a community and to maintain identity by appreciating as well as celebrating the particular culture that helps sustain the community’s cultural heritage. In that sense, vernacular discourse can be seen to function as epideictic rhetoric. In the next section, I elaborate upon the epideictic functions of vernacular rhetoric which helps to transform the landscape of Itaewon and empower the South Korean Muslim community. In doing so, I proffer ways in which this space ultimately contributes to the potential for intercultural community and indwelling in Itaewon.

**Converting an Archetypal Korean Backstreet to Islam: Mosque and Halal**

The Masjid stands for the vernacular of Islamic culture in a visual form. Hajjar, Nagizadeh, and Aminzadehghoharrizi identify “the mosque” as “the most distinct and significant type of Islamic architecture…” Although the architectural features of mosques vary from one region to region, reflecting the fast development of Islam which appropriated vast cultures of indigenous architecture, there are characteristically Islamic features such as the dome, pillars, tile decorations, and spiral pattern. Regardless of slight regional differences, it is a commonly shared idea that mosques have long been at the core of Muslims’ lives. As Jale Nejdet Erzen indicates, “The mosque was not only a place for prayers, but, in its early phase, it also served as the communal meeting place.” This suggests that the mosque plays a vital role in the Muslim community, a place for explicit religious worship and implicit civic deliberation and cultural organization; a place that fosters communality. When positioned in South Korea, religious and civic needs change as the Seoul Central Masjid becomes the backbone of the community for a
range of religious, cultural, and discursive experiences. When the initiative for the first mosque construction came about in 1974, the Muslim community demonstrated its capacity for community engagement as it raised the capital needed for building the mosque. The construction of religious space quite literally brings about congregation. Such was true for South Korean Muslims attending the Masjid. Sitting upon the Itaewon landscape, the Masjid became a highly visible site with its distinguished architectonic features such as golden color domes, tall pillars, and colorful tile decorations, which contrasted with the South Korean architecture. Ensconced within Itaewon, the Muslim congregation marked their place upon a cityscape noted as a refuge against segregation. To more fully understand the benefits of the community, it is important to first more fully consider the ways in which a mosque is persuasive.

As Jale Neidet Erzen explains, within a city, mosques function as “urban sculptures that guide visitors through cities”\(^49\) Deliberately constructed to be seen from all directions, a mosque captures the gaze of passers-by providing the public with a notable point of reference which “directly addresses itself to our bodily and mobile sense in the city, as it connects to our sense of erectness and guides our orientation in the city.”\(^50\) Hence, the rhetoric of the landscape foregrounds the bodily experiences of the landscape. In doing so, the mosque engenders a sense of familiarity because it functions as a recognizable landmark, which can alleviate the anxiety that arises in response to an absence of recognizable landmarks. As Erzen explains, mosques are prominent components of the cityscape, providing audiences a unique artifact and architectural stature, in relation to which a person can develop an orientation to the larger city.

In Itaewon, the Seoul Central Masjid is literally built on the district’s hillside, a location that amplifies the group’s ability to create identification amongst people passing through the city, certain to take note of the once unrecognized cultural community. “Visuality,” according to
Finnegan, “frames our experience,” a statement implicating the embodied processes that empower visual rhetoric. Foregrounding the bodily experience is helpful for rhetors working to make space for their own bodies within a community. For members of the Muslim community the physical prominence the Masjid exemplifies its rhetorical emplacement and is therefore a source of an instant identification, signifying congregation. Alternatively, powerful religious imagery can also bring about segregation, especially when cultivating the embodied experiences that might generate awe in a sympathetic auditor. As a ubiquitous entity, the mosque provides direction and, overtime, familiarity. While the ubiquitously familiar will eventually become mundane, the ubiquitously unfamiliar brings about a different set of embodied responses: instead of calming familiarity and congregation, alarming anxiety and segregation. In Itaewon, however, a city in which difference is the unifying characteristic, the suasive properties of the mosque change.

The Masjid embodies the visual rhetoric of the Muslim community in South Korea, anecdotally demonstrating the rhetorical power of the monumental edifice. As a highly visible structure sitting atop the Itaewon cityscape, the mosque evades the temporal boundaries often associated with a rhetorical event. In other words, since the mosque is not only relegated to one specific time during which an individual visited the mosque, but also embedded within the landscape in a way that orients foot traffic of visitors and passers as a landmark on the cityscape, this architecture provides a bridge connecting the sacredness of worship and the civitas of public life. Similarly, while the visual modality of the mosque creates direct identification for members of the Muslim community, the amplified visual primacy of the Masjid provides a broader function for viewers with less visual literacy related to the architecture of mosques. For this latter
group, the distinctive architectural visuals are what make the community discernible for viewers regardless of their connection to the particular religion and community.

The distinctive architectural features of Masjid which secure the mosque’s visibility on the contours of Itaewon landscape bring about the abrupt visibility that marks the presence of the Islamic community because of the architectonic contrasts engendered by the monolithic landscape of South Korean architecture as well as the recalcitrantly homogeneous traditions of larger South Korean society. Second, the vernacular authenticity of the Masjid, which is consolidated with its distinctively Islamic architectonic elements such as domes and Arabic inscriptions on buildings, seems critical to the enunciation of Muslim community. In Itaewon, the Masjid preserves the cultural and architectural conventions of Islam, and the vernacular expressed in a visual form appears to evoke for Muslims the feeling of belonging that comes from the sense of familiarity. The symbolic gain is related to the rhetorical power attained from the sharedness a particular group of people. Therefore, lucidity of the vernacular ultimately evokes identification amongst Muslims.

As such, the Masjid becomes the axis of the Muslim community not only because it is where the community can practice their religion, but also because the Masjid provides a communal meeting place for the community. In that sense, the rhetorical function of the Masjid is epideictic, a reified ceremonial artifact of the Islamic culture that is simultaneously serves to sustain the culture while proffering a continuous appreciation of the cultural community. More specifically speaking, the building of the Masjid itself as a religious architecture does perform a religious ritual for the community. In other words, the presence of the mosque is a religious performance in a way of celebrating the Muslim community. Furthermore, it is at the same time the Muslim community’s performance of their identity to the broader public. The Masjid as such
functions as epideictic rhetoric of the Muslim community. On one hand, it is epideictic in a more past-oriented way in that it does hold on to Islam heritage. On the other hand, as the communal place the masjid is epideictic in a more future-oriented way since the place is deployed by the community to sustain as well as to envision their future in a territory where their existence has been socially neglected. In that sense, the Masjid is their new mecca in South Korea, a regenerative space that helps Muslims overcome their daily struggles of being a social minority.

Along with its distinct architectural features such as domes, pillars, tile decorations on walls, and spires that are representative of Islamic culture and thus locate the Masjid within the Islamic aesthetic tradition, the Masjid has been an impetus for additional acts of space creation, enabling a range of vernacular activities that contribute to the discourse of the Muslim community. For instance, within the Masjid, a preschool, Prince Sultan Islamic School, is run in order to institutionalize the practices and traditions which will serve future generations of Muslims in South Korea.

While activities inside the Masjid provide important access to tradition and discourse, outside the Masjid, the community has impacted Itaewon significantly via the establishment of Islam Street. As a pivotal place for the Muslim community, The Masjid also legitimizes the street, a terrain that was formerly included as one of the seedier backstreets of Itaewon upon which Koreans were hesitant to walk. But now the street located several blocks away from the main street of Itaewon is colored with Islamic culture, people, and shops, all of which attracts an intercultural audience from all sectors of South Korea.

Islam Street, a popular vernacular referring to the 820-feet-long route connecting the main street of Itaewon to the Seoul Central Masjid, is now one of the most well-known streets of
Itaewon among South Koreans. The popularity of Islam Street grew quickly. In fact, although the Central Masjid opened in 1976, the small population of Muslims in South Korea staved off the space-making that would eventually emerge on Islam Street during the late 1990s. However, in the mid-1990s and in 2005 when the South Korean government implemented the policy encouraging labor immigrations, the number of Muslim population was also considerably increased because most of labor immigrants were from Islamic countries. With the increased number of Muslims, the area around the Central Masjid was revitalized. The inflow of more Muslims to the area resulted in the “Islamization” of the vicinity. The most discernible change on the street was the radically augmented number of businesses for Muslims such as grocery markets, butcher’s shops, and restaurants.

Previous researches indicate that Islamic principles are perpetuated throughout daily practices that extend beyond the ceremony of religious ritual. One of the most crucial parts of Islamic culture embedded in their daily lives is *halal*. *Halal*, opposed to *Haram*, means the allowed by the God, which implies restrictions on Muslims’ daily lives on the continuum of their religious practice. For example, *halal* food is not merely an ingredient for their cuisine, but it is a type of religious practice that is integrated into Muslims’ lives. Therefore, *halal* food is not simply a matter of diet preference but is also a practice needed to sustain identity. Muslims in South Korea seem to maintain their religious practices including praying in the Mosque and consuming *halal* food. Lee and Joh’s 2013 survey of Muslim immigrants in South Korea shows that many Muslims emigrating from Islamic countries experience an enhancement of their religious faith, following the move to South Korea. Before the establishment of Islam Street, however, Muslims had difficulty accessing *halal* foods, a scarcity relieved by the organic generation of Islam Street. It was because in a traditional Korean food culture, there is no such
concept, *halal*. Providing the accessibility to *halal* foods, therefore played a critical role in generating a community among Muslims in Itaewon. Recent studies on Muslims in South Korea show that most of them go to *halal* grocery stores at least once a week and a few *halal* meat factories have been operated in South Korea since 2000. By providing accessibility to *halal* foods, what the Islam Street ultimately conveys is that Muslims possess both the means and space needed to uphold their identity. The Islam Street becomes the vein of Muslim community.

*Halal* foods are one important staple of the Muslim identity and have expanded beyond Islam Street into restaurants across Itaewon. On the Islam Street, reflecting that the ethnicities of Muslim immigrants in South Korea are mostly Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nigerian, and Indonesian, restaurants serve various types of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nigerian, and Indonesian cuisine to feed the customers but, at the same time, these restaurants make *halal* foods known for the broader public of South Koreans. Koreans regardless of their religious orientations became more familiar with the concept, *halal*, through consuming *halal* foods that did not exist in the food culture of South Korea. In 2014, about a decade after the popularization of Islam Street, restaurants serving *halal* foods are not limited to Islam Street and can now be found on Itaewon’s Main Street, as well as the highly popular World Food Street, also located in Itaewon. While Islam Street is the hub upon which Muslims in South Korea built their community, the street also provides an active diversification of Itaewon’s cultural grid. The popularity of Islam Street was bolstered through inclusion on the tourist maps of Itaewon. As Islam Street puts its presence onto the Itaewon tourist map, a project of the national tourist board, an analysis of the map reveals the way in which Itaewon is socially perceived. Such revelations are especially potent within the tourist map, provisional documents which reflect, select, and deflect the realities of Itaewon, and tend to make such decision based upon an assessment of an
area’s available cultural capital, being on the map means that the Muslim community is acknowledged and shared as one of diverse cultures of Itaewon. The community was invisible in South Korean society, but now it is on the map, which directs people to certain destinations, enabling the community spoken in their vernacular in the place to be seen.

**Islam Street on the Rhetorical Landscape of Itaewon**

The Central Seoul Masjid played a critical role in the place-making of the Muslim community in South Korea, which is represented by Islam Street. While engendering a space for the community, the mosque in Itaewon does serve to build a sense of place for the Muslim community. In the cultural geography of South Korea in which religious and ethnic minorities struggle for their social positions, the place-making of the Muslim community becomes invaluable to the potential for intercultural community in South Korea in that the place of Muslims is empowered by their own terms, that is, place is empowered by their vernacular.

The Muslim community and its place consequently change the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. The Masjid disrupts a conventional South Korean landscape with its architectural features visibly distinguishable from the rest on the urbanscape. In other words, it visibly alters the landscape of Itaewon by its presence. The mosque, as an exemplary practice of “inter-cultural symbols as they migrate across national boundaries,”66 visually agitates the conventional, which is homogeneous and thus monolithic, landscape of the city of Seoul. When altering the landscape, the community does also interrupt the conventional discursive construction of Korean-ness, another thread fabricated in Itaewon banking on the War Memorial of Korea. Islam Street became enabled to do so when it re-arranged the structure of the built-environment of Itaewon. The popularization of Islam Street contributed to opening up the backstreets of Itaewon, which Koreans used to have ill feeling against because those backstreets were primarily occupied with
entertainment businesses including prostitution in the history of Itaewon. The Islam Street, the backstreet enlivened by the Muslim community, drew more inflow of people to the backstreet, which eventually changed the movements of people in Itaewon. The flow of people began walking to the street through many other backstreets of Itaewon. The grid on which people walk in Itaewon has been restructured. Once the Islam Street got on the grid, the street has also demonstrated the possibility of community that is not restrict to a certain ethnicity or nationality but that embraces the range of differences. Therefore, the Masjid and accordingly the Islam Street augment the potential of space so as to embrace different terms to define a community that is no longer restricted only to ethnic nationalism in South Korea.

The Islam Street has ultimately changed the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon, enhancing a multicultural advocacy within the space. In that sense, the uniquely disordered landscape of Itaewon provides a symbolic landscape that allows for the fluidity of culture. The Masjid and the Islam Street are causing the landscape of Itaewon to be in a process of change that is imagined to enrich the quality of intercultural community Itaewon is able to embody.

Resisting through Space: Mapping the Korean Vernacular of Homosexuality through Itaewon’s LGBTQ Community

When the liminality of Itaewon as a social space enables the flow of multicultures relatively easier, people who are delineated as different find Itaewon less constrained by the social norms that operate to oppress them. The lower entry-barrier for the different, so to speak, has extended a potential for space to a range of people who are social minorities in South Korean society and culture for numerous reasons varying from their races, ethnicities, and nationalities to religious orientations. Similarly, Itaewon also serves as an asylum for people who are socially stigmatized and thus marginalized especially for their sexuality that does not fit into the
mainstream discourse of sex, that is, heterosexuality. Traditionally, South Korean society is unwelcoming of alternative sexual identities since it is the society in which heteronormativity is deeply embedded and operates throughout its history. To be clearer, homosexuals in South Korea had not been merely marginalized but had been deliberately overlooked and made invisible until the mid-1990s. The tradition of South Korea imposed heterosexuality on the sexual minorities so that they had been forced to mute the expression of their sexual identity and their sexuality. The oppression was so perpetuated that it was internalized to sexual minorities. Therefore they did not exist in the public discourse until the mid-1990s, which made them unable to come together in order to build a community for a long time. LGBTQ individuals were isolated from the mainstream culture as well as their own culture while living closeted lives.

In that cultural conjuncture, distinctively liberating ambience of Itaewon compared to the conservative quality of the dominant culture was enabling homosexuals to utter more about their sexual identity, the very identity they knew they had to voluntarily suppress. As discussed extensively in the second chapter, the western influences on Itaewon create the liberating mood that releases the weight of conservative quality of South Korean traditional culture. The characteristic cultural ambivalence of Itaewon is, therefore, inherently liminal, making the space of Itaewon one that is germane to the influx of cultural diversity. Further, the distinctive cultural mood of Itaewon is mostly indebted to the western culture that allows social and cultural practices that would not be necessarily tolerated within the mainstream of South Korea. Along with liminality, therefore, the liberating atmosphere distinguishes Itaewon to a great degree from the rest of the cultural geography of South Korea and thus facilitates possibilities for social others.
Whereas the influence of the western culture projected the emancipatory moments later on, another aspect of the liberating mood generated with the cultural influx into Itaewon was resonating with hedonism in that what was so-called the western culture initially then was primarily in a form of GI culture. The US Armed Forces stationed in Itaewon after the Korean War was definitely the stimuli of Americanization of the town, but it also did transform Itaewon into the entertainment district. With the increased number of adult entertainment businesses in some of which even sexual deviance was tacitly practiced, Itaewon was gaining a reputation for hedonism. That prostitution was a big portion of the entertainment business operated in Itaewon played a quite significant role in spawning hedonism overflowing in the town. Thus, hedonism, the liberating attitude generated in Itaewon expressed in an extreme manner, was interlocking with the masculinity of the GI culture, which consequently engendered Itaewon as gendered space. That “militarized masculinity” lives on in South Korean nationalism represented through the War Memorial of South Korea later built right adjacent to the US military camp and Itaewon. Given that masculinity is conceptualized and configured within the idea of traditional gender roles, gendered space is inherently reinforcing heterosexuality. Itaewon as gendered space imbued with the militarized masculinity was still embodying the ideology of heterosexuality despite its liberating attitude in general.

The liberating environment of Itaewon, however, did encourage homosexuals to come to the town and cultural activities of homosexuals in gay bars in Itaewon, which were more for foreigners than natives back then, eased an anxiety for homosexuals to find their space there. Although those gay bars and homosexual practices in Itaewon were derived more from the hedonism in the entertainment businesses, LGBTQ communities in their embryonic stage found potential for their space in Itaewon in that homosexuality was present there at least. With the
liberating vibes of Itaewon as a step stone, LGBTQs appropriated hedonism that was still deeply rooted in the dichotomous idea on sex. They resisted the heterosexuality embedded within hedonism by queering the masculinity of the space. They formed their alley, colloquially called Homo Hill, in Itaewon where openly gay bars began to gather. To be clear, LGBTQ communities are nonetheless highly invisible and, outside of Itaewon, there are not many discursive spaces for gay rights in South Korea. Many LGBTQ individuals still undergo marginalization more or less. In Itaewon, however, LGBTQs are able to afford freedom, to some degree, for expressing their sexual identities.

In order to understand the social position of LGBTQs in South Korea and how Itaewon becomes playing a critical role in LGBTQ community, I first contextualize homosexuality in South Korea, reflecting Confucius influences on Korean society and culture that operate as an oppression mechanism for sexual minorities. I also introduce the Gay Rights Movement in South Korea, addressing the changes in the discourse and pointing out momentous junctures where Itaewon became located within the discourse. I then discuss how Itaewon functions to generate the vernacular of homosexuality as the space represents the constitutive rhetoric of LGBTQ community.

**Homosexuality in South Korea**

Comprehending where homosexuality is located in social discourses of South Korea, it is critical to understand the substantial influences of Confucianism on South Korean society and culture. Confucius thoughts have functioned as the coordinate of social and cultural practices since it was adopted as the national ideology of Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910),\(^6\) which was the previous form of the modern Korea. The ideas and concepts of Confucianism were deeply permeated into the institutions of Chosun Dynasty, which were transmitted down to the later
form of the country, South Korea, in the name of traditions. Thus, Confucianism to a large extent continues to be a major force undergirding a way of living of South Koreans in a broad spectrum. In the Confucius morality system, kinship and filial duties are especially emphasized. A family tree, specifically a succession of a family tree, is taken very seriously, which accordingly reinforces orthodox sex roles. Moreover, given that Confucianism upholds paternalism, an institution of marriage is restricted to the orthodox sense of marriage through which a son fulfills his responsibility as an heir of family by reproducing the next generation who can carry on the familial name. In this patriarchal society, family is a critical unit that significantly affects its constituents. The Confucius system and collectivism, which is a cultural characteristic of South Korea, are therefore very closely intertwined.

Living as homosexuals in the Confucius society founded on heterosexuality, therefore, unfortunately puts them to invisible, muted, and thus marginalized social positions. Homosexuals completely become social others in South Korea in which homosexuality is even described as “social disease”. In the patriarchal and collectivistic society, however, struggles of homosexuals are not merely in their individual level. Dong-jin Seo keenly points out “it is not easy for Koreans to view themselves as autonomous individuals and, on this basis, advocate their own freedom and dignity outside of the context of communities such as their family and relatives.” He continues,

Most Korean homosexuals consistently see family as the biggest problem troubling them. Moreover, they see the discovery of their homosexual identity by their family as the greatest possible calamity threatening their future. More than society’s hatred and prejudice, these homosexuals fear the anxiety and stress that would result from the breaking of their familiar bond. Homosexuals in South Korea hesitate to come out even to their own family, and their situation as such results to marginalize them even more severely. Homosexuals who have no other choices
than living up two different lives reflect the severity. Oppressed by the heteronormativity institutionalized within Confucianism, many of them get married to an opposite sex while hiding their sexual identity. This socio-cultural milieu significantly hindered homosexuality from being a public discourse. With the lack of public discourse about homosexuality in South Korea, homosexuals and their being had consequently been ignored for a long time until the mid-1990s. Seo accurately indicates that homosexuals in South Korea do not seem publicly opposed not because they are treated equally to other groups of sexual orientations but because “their existence is ignored.” On that note, Seo raises critical questions:

When social discourse claims that one does not exist, or in other words, when one is coerced into remaining a non-social entity, how does one effect changes regarding homosexuality issues? If a homosexual movement is only possible on the basis of a collective subjectivity, how do homosexuals form a significant social identity? How do they form the basis for a progressive communicative situation regarding homosexuality? How do Korean lesbians, gays, and other sexual minorities create a normative foundation for a brighter future?

Resolving those issues is a quintessential and simultaneously challenging task. It is a quintessential question to be responded to since in such a circumstance, it has been difficult for homosexuals to come to public activities to voice themselves. The social structure and culture of South Korea that have effectively muted homosexuals for a long time impeded LGBTQ individuals to come together as a community. Moreover, it is also a challenging task because what homosexuals face to overcome is not merely being different but also being degraded. For example, the word, *iban*, is homosexuals’ slang to refer to themselves, and nowadays it is used by the broader public. This terminology itself reflects homosexuals’ self-consciousness as a social minority opposed to the *ilban*, which is defined as heterosexuality.

*Iban* corresponds to the word *ilban*, which is used to refer to heterosexuals. In Korean, *ilban* means “universal” or “dominant.” The homophonous word *ilban* can also be used to mean “first class.” *Iban* can likewise be used to mean “second class,” with the
implication that homosexuals are a “second class” in relationship to the dominant first-class (heterosexuals).^{76}

Since the word, *iban*, indicates that homosexuality became socially recognized in South Korea at least, it does suggest progress for its community given such a conversation did not even exist in public before. However, it should not be overlooked that the word entails struggles homosexuals have been experiencing. Those terminologies are not simply for categorizing different sexual orientations; instead, they suggest grading such categories according to social status. Therefore, when homosexuals call themselves *iban*, such self-identification is a reflection of their self-consciousness as the marginalized in South Korea.

**The Gay Rights Movement in South Korea**

The year of 1995 was the momentum for homosexuals in South Korea in that they finally came out to the public to openly form community. It was about twenty to thirty years after gay rights movements of the west. Hearing the news about gay rights movements uprising in the US, Germany, and Australia on Korean newspapers, Koreans in the 1980s to early 1990s thought it was the story of other countries not theirs. Reflecting the lack of acknowledgement, until the mid-1990s, homosexuality was still remained mostly neglected in a social discourse of South Korea.^{77} In the early-1990s, some mass media outlets started the conversation about homosexuality by shedding light on the multitude and multi-aspects of homosexuality by opposing the practice of defining homosexuality as sexual deviance. Those very initial efforts put into the mainstream cultural milieu of South Korea in order to understand homosexuality, which had been largely mystified as a sexual deviance, in a positive sense. The way homosexuality was mentioned, if there were any, in public discourse in 1980s was its danger or threat connected to AIDS since AIDS was first reported in the US during that time. The representations of homosexuality in a negative tone as such also did not help homosexuals come to a collective
subjectivity because they restrained themselves to private sectors. The mode of homosexual
communities throughout 1980s until 1995 reflects such a grueling condition homosexuals were
living through. Their communities, significantly small and a few, were operating based on
temporality. In other words, those communities were neither public nor continuous as a stable
entity that existed throughout the time in society. Gays, for example, gathered and then dispersed
at some coded places like bars that were not open to public. They saw their community existed
there, however the sense of community was only so temporal that it did not seem to exist beyond
the time and the particular places.

The 1990s were a critical decade for homosexual communities in South Korea. In 1994,
the organization called Chodonghoe, which was the first homosexual organization so far known
in South Korea, was formed by Chang who formerly studied in the US. Chodonghoe was
loosely structured with only small number of members and it lived only about a month. However,
two groups, “the gay organization, Chingusai (Between Friends), and the lesbian organization,
Kkirikkiri (Birds of a Feather),” were formed out of Chodonghoe. The attention from the public
media on homosexuality was ignited later in 1995 when the first gay student organization was
structured in a college campus in Seoul. At Yonsei University, Dong-jin Seo, who was then a
graduate student, created the organization named Come Together for gay students. Following
Come Together, several more student organizations were founded on other college campuses
including Seoul National University, one of the most prestigious universities in South Korea.
Those organizations did not have many members; nonetheless they made a significant impact on
social discourse on homosexuality by making their presence known as well as by leading the
discourse to the issue of human rights. Later, in 1995, the Korean Homosexuals Human Rights
Association was founded overseeing those several leading organizations. In 1998, the association
was changed to the Association of Korean homosexual organizations including more number of organizations of homosexuals spread over South Korea\textsuperscript{82} and has since been leading a social movement for human rights of sexual minorities.

Amidst the increased social and political activities of homosexuals with the advent of those organizations mentioned above, homosexuals also became evident in online with the expansion of Internet service in South Korea. In the virtual world, homosexuals discussed their identity and shared information, all of which ultimately helped them build a sense of community. When some of those online homosexual communities held offline meetings, they chose Itaewon as a place to meet. Although there were a few other sectors known for homosexual activities such as Nakwon-dong in the city of Seoul,\textsuperscript{83} people from online communities preferred the idea that they could open their sexual identity in Itaewon rather than hiding themselves in those concealed bars in Nakwon-dong. Itaewon gave them the idea since it was a Little America in South Korea and American culture had been thought of more liberal than that of South Korea, which was also the case for gay rights movements. That the big portion of South Korean news reports on gay rights movements ongoing in the world was on the US did fortify the idea that American culture would be more open to homosexuality. Also, in the early 1990s, several movies that were intensively about homosexuals were made by Korean directors and released in South Korea.\textsuperscript{84} Itaewon was a scene of many of those movies, which showed the understanding that homosexuals were present in Itaewon before any of those homosexual communities came to place. Therefore, Itaewon was a reasonable choice for homosexuals as a new destination, moving away from the old and identity-hidden cover-up bars. Itaewon was being located at the core of homosexuals’ lives in South Korea. As activities of homosexual communities were being vigorous in Itaewon, the place for them became generated. Gay bars and transgender bars opened
up with their rainbow flags out on a small alley of Itaewon, which became the so-called Homo Hill. The place has been playing a central role in homosexual communities since then. For example, Itaewon, more specifically Homo Hill, has been one of major sites for the Seoul Queer Films and Videos Festival since its first time in 1998. The festival was controversial at first, but it has been one of the big major events of, for, and by homosexual communities in South Korea.

Since the gay rights movements of South Korea has been only about twenty years old, there are still a lot of struggles to be resolved, challenging tasks to be tackled, and muted people to be empowered with their own voice. Jae-kyung Park, the previous president (2010-2012) of Chingusai, said that the biggest accomplishment of Korean gay rights movements for the last twenty years would be that it made the existence of homosexuals known to public in South Korea. Homosexuality is no longer a completely ignored topic in public discourse. The discussion is very sensitive and progression is slow, nevertheless, there are conversations on homosexuality and human rights for sexual minorities.

**Constructing Their Vernacular: A Means of LGBTQ Community-Building**

For a long time, the socio-cultural environment of South Korea as described earlier resulted in inducing sexual minorities to constrain themselves in private sectors where they would avoid any possibilities for social discriminations against their sexual orientations. In such a closed cultural environment, their social networking among LGBTQ individuals tended to, more often than not, take place surreptitiously. However, when Itaewon was gaining its reputation among sexual minorities in the mid to late 1990s, those places for LGBTQs in Itaewon did not veil their identity. In the South Korean social environment where the gay rights movements was in its incipient stage then, it was progressive that bars exclusively for homosexuals openly identified themselves as gay bars. Considering that a few other previously
popular regions for homosexuals in the city of Seoul mostly concealed their identity, the phenomenon in Itaewon was definitely a change.\textsuperscript{87} Itaewon became the mecca for sexual minorities since the mid-1990s and in the meantime played a critical role in creating a sense of community for them.

Located within a block away from the main street of Itaewon, the small alley colloquially called Homo Hill is where bars exclusively for LGBTQs are concentrated. On the approximately 360 feet long alleyway that marks Itaewon as the core of gay culture in South Korea, about ten bars are currently placed along the rainbow graffiti drawn on the ground. Homo Hill ultimately functions to represent the existence of another type of sexuality, namely homosexuality, in South Korea. Given “the political visibility of the gay and lesbian population in Korea remains minimal,”\textsuperscript{88} presenting their existence is an elementary but definitely essential step for their community-building. Therefore, although Homo Hill is still remained as a prominently night-scene, the alley becomes arguably the most central axis of the community of sexual minorities in terms of the substantialization of homosexuality on the cityscape, which is foundational for imagining their own vernacular in the barren environment of South Korea for sexual minorities. Sexual minorities in South Korea had been alienated from the society while being isolated from their own community as well. Thus they had not been able to present themselves in their own terms. In this circumstance, the spatial representation of their existence signifies their identity that resists to be muted any longer. They choose not to put a mask on their identity at least in the alley of Itaewon. Being their social hub, Homo Hill has played such a vital role in building the LGBTQ community. Therefore, the alley is rhetorically functioning in that it does speak for their social entity that had been neglected. In that sense, the rhetoric the place embodies is inherently
constitutive since it calls for the community that was there but it was so fragmented that it was unable to assert the social being of the community.

As it has been pointed out above, the visibility of the homosexual identity, the identity represented in their terms, is a critical function of the spatial rhetoric of Homo Hill. Providing a place where sexual minorities can afford to be themselves, the hill is the place where it is created from within the community and thus cultivates a sense of community further among sexual minorities who have been isolated from it. The visibility of the community affects the disposition of the space of Itaewon. In other words, it shifts the attitude the space embodies. With the inclusive attitude toward LGBTQs anchored in Homo Hill, Itaewon is “the one limited space in his life where he can be openly gay.” On that note, Homo Hill as the place for sexual minorities is self-emancipatory. Marking the presence of homosexuality, the alley is able to emancipate them in that it controverts heterosexuality by un-naturalizing the gendered space of Itaewon, which is not unusual for an archetypal South Korean cityscape. Itaewon became characterized as a gendered space, which was dominantly masculinized, since it was influenced by the military camp present in the town as well as the discourse of South Korean nationalism imbued with masculinity generated in the War Memorial of South Korea. In such a masculine space, heterosexuality had been naturalized. Homo Hill, however, disrupts the archetypal cityscape and functions to un-naturalize the heterosexuality with its very own presence on the cityscape. In doing so, what the alley is truly questioning is therefore heteronormativity. Walking into the alley, one of the first bars you see is asking “why not?” The signboard, why n♂t?, sets the tone of the place, reflecting upon the rainbow painting on the ground of the alley. From side to side on the small alleyway, it is a line of bars named why n♂t?, SOHO, Always Homme, Unique (UNIQ), OZ, Miracle, Genie, Trance, Queen, and EAT ME all night long. The name SOHO reminds that
Soho in New York City was one of the first places where gay rights movements were started in the US. On one of the big windows of SOHO, the rainbow flag, the flag of LGBTQs, was hung. There were pictures of people, who were assumed to be visitors to the place, on the main entrance door of SOHO. The openness of its sexual identity being homosexuality was evident. Names of other bars also allude their homosexual identity more or less and queer the norms of sexuality. When I visited the site in summer 2013, the bar UNIQ had the standing-poster of two naked men caressing each other in front of the bar in order to promote the party it was throwing for the night. The spatial rhetoric of Homo Hill overall yields the cultural atmosphere that secures the sexualities of sexual minorities who were isolated in the shade of heteronormativity.

The rhetoricity of Homo Hill has been mutually intensified with other cultural events such as the Korea Queer Culture Festival since 2000. The Hill has been one of the major sites of the festival. The after-parties, for example, have been held almost every year in the Hill. Also, in 2002, Itaewon was the main site of the Festival. Those activities helped the Hill cultivate the sense of LGBTQ community and vice versa. This shift in cultural atmosphere also alters the landscape of Itaewon. Places openly for LGBTQs are not restricted only to the Hill, but they expand out to other corners in Itaewon. This change in the landscape of Itaewon amplifies the potential for demystifying homosexuality that had been negatively framed as an immoral sexual deviance. In South Korea, the word, homo, was used more as “a term of insult by heterosexuals.”90 That was more so when homosexuality was either absent or misled in public discourse in South Korea. The term connoted degrading of the particular sexual orientation, which indicated the social discrimination against the different kinds of sexuality. The use of the term as such was a mix of ignorance about and hatred toward the non-heterosexuality then. The openness and visibility of homosexuality thus help demystify the concept, homo-sexuality. The
openness furthermore imparts to the space of Itaewon the attitude that homosexuality is not about being wrong or immoral but about being different. As such, the rhetoricity of Homo Hill rectifies the ill-perceived concept, homosexuality. There is a reason why people in the community call the strip *the Hill* instead of Homo Hill, which is usually how people identify it. The differences in naming the strip indicate that it is definitely a special place for the community. From their choice to drop “homo” in the name, we can also infer what sexual minorities hope with the place of their own. In their vernacular on the Hill, they are not a homo; they are people with homosexuality.

Coming out of a public figure did facilitate the demystification of homosexuality as well. The story of Hong Suk-Chun, a Korean actor, highlights Itaewon as a discursive space for cultivating the visibility of LGBTQ communities. For over five years, Hong Suk-Chun enjoyed a successful career as a TV actor in South Korea. In 2000, however, he publically came out as gay and he was the first South Korean public figure to do so. Following this proclamation, he was excluded from the airwaves, an implicit sanction that lasted for over a decade. During his media exile, Hong Suk-Chun sought refuge in Itaewon where he started several successful restaurants and rehabilitated, to some degree, his public identity. Considering that Itaewon became the place for homosexuals up to that point, the story of Hong Suk-Chun and his presence in Itaewon were not a coincidence. The street called the World Food Street, which is arguably one of the most popular zones in Itaewon, is also referred to as Hong Suk-Chun Street since he has eight very thriving restaurants on that street. Another restaurant, his very first one, is at the corner heading to Homo Hill from the main street of Itaewon. He recently returned to mass media, which took him about 10 years. Since his come-back in 2010, he has been enjoying his second heydays as an actor. But he is still the first and only on-screen and openly gay public figure in South Korea,
which mirrors the changing but yet conservative Korean cultural scene. Given the attitude toward alternative lifestyles in South Korea, his entrepreneurial success in Itaewon is hence quite meaningful to the LGBTQ communities in that his successes demonstrate Itaewon as a protective and hospitable enclave for the marginalized. Also, the presence of Hong Suk-Chon both on TV screen and in Itaewon helps ease the tension weighted on homosexuality in public discourse, which furthermore debunks the ill-conceptualization of homosexuality. Hong Suk-Chon on TV screen is not merely a representation of a gay but also that of a person just like any others. Cultivating the familiarity, the vernacular of LGBTQs is to advocate the acknowledgement of different kinds of sexualities other than heterosexuality.

**The Hill on the Rhetorical Landscape of Itaewon**

The liberating air brought about by “Itaewon’s intensely foreign quality” provided the critical moment of transformation for homosexuals from unseen individuals to the visible community. In other words, the liminality of the space of Itaewon entailed the flexibility to tolerate non-heterosexuality, which functioned as a spur to the formation of LGBTQ community. In the liminal space, the sexual minorities found a fissure in which they were able to afford to present their sexual identities, and the fissure became their place, the Hill. With the place, LGBTQs gained their visibility as a social entity. Through the place, LGBTQs secured their voice, the communal voice. Therefore, the Hill functioned rhetorically and its rhetoric was essentially constitutive in that homosexuality in South Korea was not yet articulated therefore so did the LGBTQ community. The Hill was the motivation and simultaneously the representation of the community. In and through the Hill, the LGBTQ community generated their vernacular. They queer the gendered space of Itaewon by resisting the dominance of heterosexuality with their presence. Questioning heteronormalativity, they overturn the masculine space of Itaewon
into another latent environment where homosexuality is able to coexist with heterosexuality. Hence, their vernacular queering the gendered space complicates the contours of the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon.

The complex contours of the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon are manifestations of the progresses for and enduring struggles of the community. As much as the community has been empowered in and through Itaewon, which indicates the progresses in South Korean society and culture toward homosexuality, the Hill juxtaposed with other constituents in the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon reveals the ongoing struggles the community faces. As such, although the existence of the Hill itself facilitates the awareness of homosexuality and LGBTQ community, its location in the configuration of the cityscape is nonetheless the reiteration of the power structure dominated by heteronormativity. Located about 330 feet behind the Main Street of Itaewon, the Hill has remained an aged backstreet. The otherness the Hill embodies is still mostly confined within the short strip, which is distanced enough from the main street, the face of celebrated Itaewon for its multicultures. Reflecting the continuing struggles of homosexuals, the Hill has been constrained out of mainstream discourse as well. Even if Itaewon is fairly well known as a cultural haven in which homosexuality is relatively more tolerated than other parts in South Korea, the obfuscation resulted from the lack of authoritative supports for the community accordingly obliterates the political agency of homosexuals. To a degree, that also serves to valorize heterosexuality as a social norm. Therefore, on the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon, the Hill represents the potential for more inclusive intercultural community; however, the configuration of streets on the landscape is a synecdoche for the ruptures in ideals for diversity and intercultural community, which in turn maintains the marginalization of homosexuals.
The Quite Yet Uncompleted: Envisioning the More Inclusive Intercultural Community

While investigating two communities developed in Itaewon, Muslim community and LGBTQ community, this chapter enriched the understanding of meanings of their presences and implications of their vernaculars in the South Korean cityscape. I highlighted the particularity of each community growing in Itaewon by contextualizing it within the social, cultural, and political circumstances it was situated. In doing so, I explicated who have become social others in the history of South Korea.

Furthermore, I have sought to articulate how those constituents engender an intercultural community in Itaewon, another thread that weaves the Itaewon landscape. The concept of rhetorical landscape helps comprehend the dynamics among entities in space, which ultimately contribute to the generation of intercultural community in Itaewon. Those two representative communities examined in this chapter, Muslim community and LGBTQ community, serve to resist arguably homogenous and conservative quality of South Korea as Endres and Senda-Cook argue that “place (re)constructions can function rhetorically to challenge dominant meanings and practices in a place.”95 Specifically, Muslim community founded its place in Itaewon counters the idea of community deeply rooted in racial and ethnic homogeneity in South Korea. The presence of LGBTQ community in Itaewon resists and challenges conservative culture ingrained in Confucianism of South Korea. Furthermore, they are able to engender the resistance not alone but together, and the empowerment comes from the dynamic they create. Juxtaposed with each other, those communities generate the distinctive attitude, the one that is liberating yet delicate, to the landscape of Itaewon. Specifically speaking, when they founded their places in Itaewon, those communities of social others are reterritorizing the space of Itaewon. In doing so, they determinantalize that of the power such as ethnic nationalism and heteronormativity. The
detrimentalization lifts the hegemonic barrier in Itaewon. Those discrete communities therefore contribute to composing the Itaewon landscape available for intercultural community since it functions rhetorically in that it entails the voices from the marginalized.

In that sense, the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon does have a constitutive function in building the intercultural community. Itaewon’s landscape entails discrete multiplicity, which also means communities of the marginalized found their places to speak their vernaculars. Their vernaculars complicate the contours of Itaewon rhetorical landscape; The Islam Street and Homo Hill are juxtaposed each other, and the juxtaposition projects multiple trajectories on the landscape. The complex contours of Itaewon landscape are therefore the reflection of symbiotic relations among diverse cultures and communities. Their symbiotic relations resemble what Black calls “the ‘both/and’ rhetorical structure as a rhetorical strategy of subaltern groups”96 in that the multiplicity of cultures is based on the acknowledgement of other cultures present in the same space. The spatial arrangement on Itaewon landscape reminds a quilt that comes to one artifact from many different pieces put together. The different are put in dialectics; the discrete communities are put in dialectics.

While those communities contribute to re-structuring the landscape of Itaewon in a way that it becomes more inclusive so that it opens up more possibilities for social others, they still experience struggles with the discriminations toward ethnic and sexual minorities in South Korea. In shedding a light on the subsequent inequity of spatial politics, Shome says “Issues of exclusion and inclusion are better understood and captured through a spatial logic that recognizes the diverse spatialities of power through which inequities are produced and maintained.”97 In order to illuminate a spatial logic, paying attention to arrangements on landscape can be insightful. For example, a spatial logic is semiotically and materially reified in positioning. Some
are laid on the front side in a cityscape and something else (or someone else), which are more than likely socially marginalized groups, are constrained in a narrowly designated spots, alley, or fissures. They are usually in backstreets, and that logic is not exceptional for the Muslim community and LGBTQ community examined in this chapter either. They are in backstreets, and that reflects the power structure in place. Although they lay invaluable marks for their own communities as well as the intercultural community evolving in Itaewon, their struggles are not eased with the spatial structure that maintains the power of the dominant. The landscape as such embodies a “visual structuration of power”98 The way various sectors intentionally and unintentionally arranged indicates a hierarchy reflected in spatial politics.

Nevertheless, it is meaningful that communities of social others found their own places where they can mingle as well as share and present their identities. With diverse communities, Itaewon landscape is envisioning the intercultural community that is more inclusive and sustainable. It is still more or less subjugated to the spatial politics that goes beyond Itaewon. However, the idea of intercultural community is articulated on the landscape of Itaewon, and the articulation empowers the spatial rhetoric of Itaewon for imagining the better intercultural community.
Notes

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7 Yoonkyung Lee, “Migration, Migrants, and Contested Ethno-Nationalism in Korea,” Critical

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9 Victor W. Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage,” in The
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1967), 97.

10 Patricia Davis, Memoryscapes in Transition: Black History Museums, New South Narratives,

11 Ibid., 113.

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14 More gentrification leads to less diversity.

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18 Kyung-Hwa Song and Su-Chan Ahn, “How many Muslims are in South Korea?” Hangeorae (Seoul: South Korea), May 17, 2011.

19 Ibid.


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71 Ibid., 62.

72 Seo, “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea,” 77.

73 Ibid., 77.

74 Ibid., 67.

75 Ibid., 67.

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77 Kim (Translated by Hong), “Queer Cultural Movements and Local Counterpublics of Sexuality.”


79 Seo, “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea”
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82 “Chingusai, Chingusai and Korean Gay Human Rights Movement,” Jinbopyungron (Seoul: South Korea).
84 For example, “American Moon in Itaewon (Korean Title: 이태원 밤하늘엔 미국달이 뜨는가. 1991),” “Mascara (1994).”
85 Kim (Translated by Hong), “Queer Cultural Movements and Local Counterpublics of Sexuality.”
90 Seo, “Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea,” 70.
91 Kimberly Hyo-jeong Campbell, “Pride in South Korea-Part II: Foreign Residents Diversify S.Korea’s Queer Culture Scene,” The Hankyoreh (Seoul: South Korea), June 10, 2011.
92 There was another movie actress who publicly came out as a transgender in 1994. She was in a movie called *Mascara* (1994), which was about a transgender. Although she got some publicity, it was nothing like the controversy Hong Suk-Chon’s coming-out brought about in 2000.

93 In 2003, he was in a TV drama titled *The Perfect Love*. His character in the drama was a gay. It was the only time he was on screen until 2010 when he started being in many TV shows.

94 Schober, “Itaewon’s Suspense,” 40.

95 Endres and Senda-Cook, “Location Matters,” 258.


98 Enck-Wanzer, “Tropicalizing East Harlem,” 357.
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION: RHETORICAL LANDSCAPE OF ITAEWON

Itaewon had been located at critical junctures of politics and culture in the history of South Korea. Previous studies on Itaewon characterized Itaewon as alien space in South Korea,¹ an Americanized exotic space for Koreans,² and as a relatively more liberating space in South Korea.³ Those studies reflected the complexity of space Itaewon entailed. Grounded on those previous studies, this research approached Itaewon as the site upon which the discursive changes and shifts involved in reimagining South Korea were reflected. Itaewon was examined as synecdochic of the Korean society and culture that was communicating the ever-changing rhetoric of South Korean identity-building in spatial manner. With the concept of rhetorical landscape, I aimed to contextualize the historical, political, and cultural junctures that formed Itaewon as a space that involves multiple trajectories of sociocultural and political identities of South Korea. Such analysis was to gain a better understanding of spatial politics in Itaewon and by extension South Korea. In doing so, I also intended to illuminate how Itaewon rhetorically embodied tensions among various agents in space. The concept of rhetorical landscape, which I developed as a critical framework in this research, was useful for that objective because it directed attention to relational matters in space. The concept helped highlight the nature of spatial politics that became gradually configured on landscape. By analyzing the configuration of Itaewon landscape, I aimed to cast a light upon Itaewon as a site that negotiated transcultural identities as it mediated political, social, and cultural forces. In the following sections, first, I review previous chapters. Highlighting the interlocking natures among the constituents, I illuminate their dialectics that together composed the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. Second, I summarize theoretical implications of the concept of rhetorical landscape that was developed in
this study. Third, I clarify what this study on the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon can provide for future research on intercultural communication.

**Chapter Review**

In this section, I review each chapter in order to present their interconnectivity and ultimately piece together an answer to my research question. First, Chapter Two focused on the Americanization of Itaewon. Instead of treating Americanization merely a consequence of US militarization in the 1950s, this study contextualized it within broader discursive shifts South Korea was experiencing during the 1950s and onwards. In doing so, the complexity and particularity of modernization of South Korea were explicated. Modernization in South Korea was at a critical juncture with shifts in political and cultural discourses after the Korean War. South Korea was undergoing the rapid changes with the influx of western cultures during that time, and the US had substantial influence on the changes in South Korea. With the physical presence of the west, that is, the US, Itaewon was located at the core of the discursive changes in (re)imagining South Korea. Acknowledging the geopolitics at play, the chapter examined Itaewon as synecdoche of the Korean society and culture specifically through illuminating the spatial representation of the ideological aspect of Korean modernization, which was reified in a form of Americanization. Analyzing how constituents involved in the ideological dialogue were creating the disposition to the space of Itaewon, this chapter revealed the geopolitical inequality deeply embedded in the South Korean modernization. Furthermore, I particularly scrutinized the spatial representations of their relationships which, I argued, configured the landscape of Itaewon. The drastic contrasts between the town and the US military base, adjacent to but efficiently separated from Itaewon, marked the contour of inequality on the Itaewon landscape. The main street of Itaewon and the parallel street nicknamed Hooker Hill illustrated the bumpy ride South
Korea had been experiencing with its modernization. Paralleled to each other in the space as such, they created the contour of the landscape that articulated the convoluted Korean modernization, the celebrated but yet subjugated.

The complex sentiment Koreans have toward modernization was discussed through examining the Itaewon landscape on which the American imperialism left an influential mark. The Korean modernization that occurred inherently at the historical and political junctures of 20th century geopolitics remained its paradoxical characteristic, celebrated but subjugating, revealed on the landscape of Itaewon with the US military base. The geopolitical inequality of modernization is rooted in the Cold War ideology that is still present in South Korea as long as it is divided from and in conflict with North Korea. Americanization of Itaewon, thus, was a signifier of American imperialism that pervaded the geopolitics of the post-Cold War era. Itaewon entailed the convoluted sentiment South Koreans share toward Modernization, and juxtapositions of places in Itaewon were revealing the tensions among agents with different interests of their own. Therefore, the Itaewon landscape configured by the juxtapositions was the articulation of the spatial politics in flux. Another component to the Itaewon landscape complicated the spatial politics Itaewon embodied, but it did deepen our understanding of their relations and their rhetoric layered in space. The component, the War Memorial of Korea, and its relation reified through its location to the US military base also reaffirms the un-ended Cold War as well as its enduring ideology at work in the national identity of South Korea. Those two places for each nation located next to each other therefore represent not only the political relationship of the two but also the power hierarchy in their relation. The WMK is a representation of the geopolitics and it shows how the particular experience of colonialism and postcolonialism affects the discourse (re)imagining the nation, South Korea.
Chapter Three focused on the other layer on the Itaewon landscape, the layer generated between the US military base and WMK. Further exploring the geopolitics of the Cold War era that deeply influenced the birth of South Korea as a sovereign entity, this chapter provided a close reading of the WMK as the place where South Korean nationalism discourse was generated. By juxtaposing the WMK with the US military base, I argued that the spatial arrangement reflected the relationship between those two nations, and re-articulated the enduring Cold War ideology still present today in South Korea. The WMK constituted South Korean-ness by separating it from North Korea. I found that the WMK accomplished two primary objectives. On one hand, its rhetoric for Korean nationalism was instituted based on celebrating its independence from the colonialism of the past. In that sense, its rhetoric was epideictic because it was the appreciation of the current, that is, the sovereign nation that was liberated from the colonial power. On the other hand, the rhetoric of South Korean nationalism elaborated in the WMK also entailed the postcolonial vestiges of the continuing Cold War ideology, which empowered the US over South Korea even in the soil of South Korea. Understanding the rhetoric of the WMK within such comprehensive and complicated discourses helped elucidate the postcolonialism embedded in South Korean nationalism. Furthermore, configured through the transition from colonialism to postcolonialism, the constitutive rhetoric of the WMK advocated nationalism generated in a particular manner: ethnic nationalism. South Korean nationalism as such was a reification of the particular experiences South Korea underwent as the colonized. The WMK complicated the international sensibility of Itaewon by imbuing it with Korean nationalism.

The US military base was the origin of the Americanization of Itaewon, a transformation that liberated the space from Confucian moral frameworks allowing for diversity. But the WMK
coupled with the US military base accelerated a process whereby Itaewon became contextualized as a masculine space, and South Korean nationalism is represented as closely tied to the militarism in the WMK. The juxtaposition of the WMK and the US military base therefore, on one hand, disposed Itaewon to influences that constructed masculinity within the space. On the other hand, the development of the WMK paralleled the Americanization of Itaewon. Such a relationship has important implications for Korean ethnic nationalism. Since Korean ethnic nationalism formed as a resistance to colonialism, the influence of the American military in South Korea reaffirms ethnic homogeneity as a response to neocolonialism. Clearly, the process of Americanization is ambivalent. While a reading of the museum as a separate entity shows that the memorial emphasizes ethnic nationalism, when the WMK is contextualized as a part of the larger landscape of Itaewon, a different reading emerges. Specifically, visitors most likely navigate past the diversity of Itaewon to practice the ritual memorialization of Korean nationalism. Hence, the larger landscape functions to mediate the celebration of ethnic nationalism. As a mediator, the landscape of Itaewon therefore frames and transforms, albeit intermittently, the meaning and identities of ethnic nationalism. Paradox is rife, to be sure.

Hence, while the WMK reiterated the ethnic exclusivity of Korean-ness, the forces upholding ethnic nationalism such as the foreign military forces also perpetuated diversity within Itaewon. The juxtaposition of the WMK and the US military base unfolds the convoluted trajectories of feelings South Koreans share towards American(ization). The different sets of attitude the WMK generated with respect to the US military base and Americanization within Itaewon unveiled ways in which American influences metamorphosed throughout time. Such change created junctions as well as disjuncture within the indigenous culture of South Korea. The complexity of attitudes embodied within the space of Itaewon is more clearly revealed in
Chapter Four: Vernacular Rhetoric of Others in South Korea, when discussing other sectors in Itaewon. In this chapter, it becomes clear that the complex attitude exhibited within the spaces of Itaewon involves a dialectic between enclaves of social others, the rhetorical landscape of the district, and the mediation between national, international, and local interests. Given such complexity, it is clear that the attitudes inherent within the spaces of Itaewon are configured via liminality, as Itaewon yields possibilities for the different, the social others, and therefore Itaewon ironically provides opportunities for people who were otherwise excluded from mainstream discourses to articulate their identity via vernacular discourses. Such function Itaewon space practices is ironic and dialectic because the different groups of marginalized people are able to (re)gain their voices through the space of Itaewon, thereby providing a response to ethnic nationalism from the marginalized ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual minorities of South Korea. Therefore, investigating other sectors in Itaewon illuminated this dialectical dynamic more clearly. Specifically, by examining the juxtaposition of the WMK with Islam Street and Homo Hill, it becomes clear that social others utilizing vernacular generated another layer of meaning to the space of Itaewon, vernacularly complicating the contours of the landscape. As Lawrence J. Prelli indicates, “rhetorical displays are manifested through emphases and de-emphases that exhibit ‘orders of desire,’” hence, the juxtaposition revealed another aspect of the spatial politics articulated on the landscape.

In Chapter Four, the liminality of the space of Itaewon is discussed further through an examination of the Muslim community and LGBTQ communities that emerged in the enclaves of Itaewon. By examining the change of Itaewon’s landscape overtime, I coupled spatiality with temporality and investigated how the changes in the space of Itaewon complicated the dynamics of the space. I analyzed two communities in Itaewon, elucidating ways whereby the spatiality of
Itaewon was being re-articulated by social others and ultimately transformed into a space for intercultural community. The re-articulation of the space occurred through the use of vernacular discourse specific to those communities, discourse that served to empower the social others through their place-making. The vernaculars of social others shifted the grid demarcating the landscape of Itaewon; a discourse therefore functioned to re-structure the uses of the space and consequently to diversify the agencies available to bodies operating within the space. Considering the predominant discourses in Itaewon --mainly ethnic nationalism and masculinity, both of which reflected homogeneous and conservative qualities of South Korean society and culture--the emergences and continuous presences of marginalized communities in Itaewon is very meaningful to the intercultural community. The importance of this diversified and inclusive space is not limited to Itaewon but also has importance for social others throughout South Korea. The Muslim community in Itaewon, which is represented via Islam Street, opened up the possibility of imagining a nation as a community, hence challenging imaginations restricted by ethnic nationalism. Also, the LGBTQ community in Itaewon demonstrated how space was strategically utilized as a means of community-building. With such communities, and hopefully more to come, maintaining a space within Itaewon, the district is aptly situated to generate a discursive space for (re)imagining South Korea as a community, a task benefited by the introduction of different concepts that challenge ethnic nationalism and heteronormativity. Itaewon, however, is far from utopian, a fact demonstrated by the current conditions of the material spaces in which intercultural community resides: spaces marked by backstreets and small alleys, neglected spaces suggesting that barriers still exist for intercultural enclaves within the district, synecdochic conditions that mirror larger South Korean society and culture in the current time.
Throughout Chapter Four, I focused on potential for an intercultural community in Itaewon, a potential that developed over time and was inscribed upon the space of Itaewon. I determined that the distinctive disposition of the space originated from the process of Americanization is a critical force motivating excluded groups both to find and found their own places in Itaewon. The liminality the space of Itaewon, therefore, worked for marginalized groups as it involved the fluidity that substantiated opportunities to break off from exclusions and discriminations that marginalized groups had been struggling with as parts of the homogeneous society and conservative culture of South Korea. While the presence of the US military, the expedited process of Americanization, as well as the overt militarism and masculinity confined the space of Itaewon ideologically, a distinctive attitude nonetheless evolved and emerged throughout the transformations of the space. Such transformations, throughout time, planted the possibility for an emancipatory place-making, an act emerging from those without traditional social and cultural capital. The place-making of social others in Itaewon, which re-articulated the spatiality of Itaewon by simultaneously re-structuring the space, therefore composed the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon, creating a landscape that became more complex and inclusive, but also more reflective of South Korean society and culture.

**Theoretical Implications**

The examination of Itaewon intended to illuminate the multifaceted spatiality of the district provides theoretical implications regarding the concept of *rhetorical landscape*, as related to rhetorical scholarship on place and space. First, conceptualizing landscape in rhetorical terms helps articulate ways in which place is identified in space. Second, rhetorical landscape demonstrates ways in which places are dialectically constructed. Third, the study articulates the dialectic composition of a contour of landscape within space. Therefore, the process of
conceptualizing landscape in rhetorical terms is to elaborate upon both the spatiality of power as well as spatial politics. Complicating the previously discussed concepts – concepts such as space and place – the theoretical articulation of rhetorical landscape helps clarify the multiplicities of spatiality. Such multiplicities are (re)composed through the dialectic between space and place, as well as through the dialectic between places in space and the junctures of spatiality with temporality. In the remainder of this section, I elaborate the benefits of this theoretical concept.

First, the concept of rhetorical landscape extends the discussion of space and place. Space and place are increasingly important concepts for understanding communication. In this analysis, I extend the subject of space and place by drawing out insights from rhetorical scholarship, an emphasis which focuses on the relational matters between space and place, and the meanings of place in space. A relational matter in the concept of rhetorical landscape needs to be understood in two dimensions. First, a relational understanding of rhetorical landscapes, on the one hand, aims to elaborate the rhetoricity of spaces, within which one can find places of conflicting interests coexisting. Upon locating such places, this analysis aims to demonstrate the possibilities available to critics who scrutinize the way relationships among such places engender a disposition within the space. Such a disposition, I argue, functions as a symbolicity of space. Second, to understand the relational matters of rhetorical landscape, critics, on the other hand, must account for the dialectical dynamics of places in space. In Itaewon, its distinctive spatiality influenced what types of places could emerge. In order to understand the symbolicity of places such as the main street, the Antique Street, Hooker Hill, the WMK, Islam Street, and Homo Hill, I examined each on landscape in two tiers: as an individual entity and as related to the scene of Itaewon as a whole space. When those places were identified in the space of Itaewon, they revealed the complexity of South Korean modernization, a transformation closely connected to
the emergence of Americanization, and substantially reified in South Korean nationalism. In order to maintain the complexity contained within this district, liminality becomes a key characterization of the disposition of Itaewon.

In sum, the concept of rhetorical landscape provides critics with the perspective needed to understand the dialectical dynamics among places in the spaces, an ability demonstrated via the analysis of Itaewon. In Chapter Two throughout Chapter Three, for example, I demonstrated that the US military base and the WMK generate a dynamic that resonates with Cold War ideology. Such a dynamic provides an anchoring attitude within the disposition of Itaewon’s space. When viewed not as a sole constituent but as two entities interacting upon one another, one can see how those places—the US military base and the WMK—clearly generate the stratum in space. In Chapter Four, I paralleled the US military/WMK stratum with the dynamic relationship that had evolved between two marginalized communities – the Muslim and LGBTQ communities of Korea, communities which maintain places on Islam Street and Homo Hill. Those two streets together functioned to shift the disposition of Itaewon’s space by re-articulating Itaewon’s telos as one that maintains places for social others. In doing so, their dialectical dynamic creates another stratum in the space of Itaewon, a stratum that challenges and complicates the spatial relationship formed between the US military base and the WMK. In all, the spatial dynamics dialectically cultivated in Itaewon form multifaceted strata in space, strata which become clearer when conceptualized as a rhetorical landscape.

Second, when taking relational matters into account in order to analyze the spatiality of power and spatial politics, it becomes necessary to account for materiality. Whereas the spatiality of power is represented as the symbolicitiy entailed by a space, the spatial politics of a landscape reify the materiality of space. This theoretical elaboration on the two ideas helps magnify the
need for locating a discussion of symbolicity in terms of the juncture between symbolicity and materiality. Therefore, while the concept of rhetorical landscape casts a light on the relational matters of space and place, the concept also clarifies the dialectical relationship between symbolic and material aspects of spatial rhetoric. Just as some symbols are iconic—a reduced image of the non-symbolic motion which they signify—so too does symbolicity present a reduced image of the dialectic transformation of various materials interacting with each other. Materiality in the concept of the rhetorical landscape, therefore, needs to be understood not only as a means of motivating the production of symbolicity, but also as a product of symbolicity. In Itaewon, materials such as the fence surrounding the US military camp, the statues in the WMK, the Mosque, and the gay bars are a means of symbolicity for various interests. Islam Street and Homo Hill are founded on the backstreets of Itaewon, a location that indicates a materiality that is produced and shaped by the symbolicity of otherized communities in South Korea. The WMK located adjacent to the US military base in Itaewon demonstrates a materiality that signifies the relationship between the two agencies. The vernaculars of the Muslim and LGBTQ communities signify the symbolic aspect of space, providing a discourse which was able to be more fully understood when investigated within spatial politics of Itaewon and contextualized by the materiality of those backstreets. The narratives in the WMK carry with them the symbolicity of the museum, but the WMK’s narratives could only be fully understood when put on the grid of spatial arrangement, a grid that underlines the WMK’s location on the border with the US military base. The concept of rhetorical landscape, therefore, ultimately aims to illuminate the complex dynamics in spatial politics. The effort is intended to help scholars obtain a more nuanced understanding of spatial politics.
The complex dynamics in spatial politics propose multiple trajectories layered in space, which highlight a multifaceted spatiality in flux. In order to grasp spatiality in flux, it is essential to investigate spatiality at junctures with temporality. Massey indicates “the mutual necessity of space and time.” She argues “it is on both of them, necessarily together, that rests liveliness of the world.” Space is ever-changing. The process (or progress) is glacial. Temporality in the equation for rhetorical landscape underscores a contingent nature of spatiality. Contingent upon political, social, cultural, and historical contexts, spatiality is generated, re-constructed, shifted, and transformed. Temporality as another axis to spatiality therefore provides us an insight to recognize tensions, struggles, and negotiations that are spatially experienced and represented. Throughout chapter Two, Three, and Four, I demonstrated the ever-changing Itaewon all through its life up to now. I specifically examined how and what kinds of multiple contingent forces have been involved in the metamorphosis of spatiality of Itaewon. In previous chapters, it was analyzed that Itaewon had been a site of negotiations between imperialistic external forces and nationalism, between heteronormativity and homosexuality, and between ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism. With the critical examinations, I also illuminated the spatiality of Itaewon had been re-articulated through the dialectic between places. The dialectic between the US military base and the streets for social others such as Islam Street and Homo Hill did transform the spatiality of Itaewon from what was previously generated through the dialectic the military base had with the WMK. The shift on the disposition of Itaewon space varied the spatiality while marking another layer on the landscape. As the analysis on Itaewon indicates, when engaging temporality into discussing spatiality, the concept of rhetorical landscape helps us see tensions, struggles, and negotiations among entities in space that generate strata and thus mark contours on landscape. Therefore, rhetorical landscape is a reification of continuous negotiations.
Beyond Itaewon

Proposing that Itaewon mirrored transformations South Korea had been experiencing on its landscape, this research examined Itaewon as a synecdoche of South Korean society and culture. The analysis showed how the foreign influences had integrated into the society and culture of South Korea. Through the critical examination of Itaewon, this study revealed ideological nature of Itaewon space, specifically the neo-coloniality in modernization of South Korea that was substantially influenced by Americanization obfuscated with the western. Since the effects of Americanization on the modernization process of South Korea were undeniable, Itaewon, the longtime gateway of western society into South Korea, became a central site of modernization. In the process, the fact that Americanization was obfuscated with the westernization or modernization should not be ignored because that highlighted the imperialistic power the US practiced on South Korea on the continuation of the Cold War geopolitics. Therefore, the modernization of South Korea was the experience of postcolonialism in modern time. Also, the ideology of the Cold War implanted by the presence of the foreign force, the US, in Itaewon was reflected upon discursive practices for imagining South Korea. At junctures with the indigenous culture of South Korea, the geopolitics generated Itaewon as a distinctive space and transformed the way South Korea was imagined. Because of its centrality in all of the shifts, Itaewon space embodied the layers of changing attitude and the discursive shifts were laid out on the landscape of Itaewon. On that note, Itaewon landscape was constitutive because it had been a means for positioning South Korea. The constitutive feature of landscape illuminated through investigating Itaewon in which foreign forces became practiced in a manner of postcolonialism provided an insight to critically approach other regions where external forces, varying from foreign militaries to political forces, get involved into indigenous discourse of community. In
shifting geopolitics, that is not the case only for South Korea; rather, we can observe other regions or countries throughout the world that are currently experiencing the tensions and negotiations. Therefore, this study provides a critical lens to help us understand them.

Another aspect of South Korean society and culture unveiled through investigating Itaewon landscape was who became social others in the context and particularity of South Korea. Contextualizing the status of social others in South Korean circumstances, which were characterized as ethnically homogeneous and culturally conservative, this study scrutinized the forms and manners of vernacular rhetoric of social others that were represented through the space of Itaewon. With analyses of Muslim and LGBTQ communities, I demonstrated that their vernacular rhetoric is highly in visual forms and their vernaculars create a sense of intercultural community in Itaewon in a dialectic manner. Moreover, examining the communities and vernaculars of Muslims and LGBTQs in Itaewon, what this study ultimately provided was the discussion on who became defined as Others in South Korea and why. Besides casting a light on their places in South Korea today, what makes it even more important is that the discussion enriches our understanding of social inequity among diverse groups categorized such as races, genders, and ethnicities. The contention is not about race, gender, or ethnicity per se. It is rather about who is socially empowered and who is not; who is culturally included and who is not. Therefore, understanding the social inequity within the South Korean historical and cultural circumstances underscores that Others in any society are socially and culturally constructed concept, which is so naturalized that we often times overlook. We are not living in absolutes, we rather live in relativity. Moreover, approaching social others through spatial communication unveils another rhetorical feature of landscape, vernacular, and it is beneficial to enrich intercultural communication scholarship since often times that type of communication occurs in
non-verbal forms. A form of intercultural communication can be varied especially when it deals with the marginalized who would not be able to afford to be in mainstream discourse, which limits a means for their communication. Thus, examining space and approaching social others through spatial communication extend a spectrum of possibilities of intercultural communication given that social others would have less accessibility to traditional means of communication in order to speak for themselves. Therefore, paying attention to communicative practices of social others that are performed in visual and spatial forms could enhance a possibility of better and more understandings of intercultural communication that includes invisible, marginalized, or muted groups in society. Hence, connecting spatial communication and intercultural communication in the concept of rhetorical landscape provides us an insight to identify different rhetoric deployed by different agents in a manner of vernaculars that are spatially represented. Therefore, analyzing relations of inter- cultures and inter- agencies with the concept of rhetorical landscape can enrich a potential for intercultural communication in that it helps us illuminate various vernaculars including those of the marginalized.

While enabling vernaculars of social others in their place-making to be included to the discussion, the concept of rhetorical landscape also implies epideictic aspect of landscape. Appreciating place-making of social others and celebrating the emergence of intercultural community from within, the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon was epideictic. In other words, it was epideictic not only because those diverse vernaculars were speaking for their own culture and community, which were critical for them to maintain their identities, but also because their vernaculars together created the sense and value of intercultural community. The potential for intercultural community was ingrained throughout the rhetorical landscape of Itaewon. The rhetorical landscape of Itaewon reified the possibilities of “both/and rhetoric” that suggests
prospect of a sustainable environment for intercultural community. Therefore, the critical reading
of Itaewon landscape provides an invaluable outlook for globalizing cities beyond Itaewon,
Seoul, South Korea.
Notes

1 Kim, “Itaewon as an Alien Space.”

2 Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space”; Schober, “Itaewon’s Suspense.”


5 Massey, *For Space*, 56.

6 Ibid., 56.

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