Translation and Fragmented Cities: Focus on Itaewon, Seoul

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<Abstract> Cities are open texts. They are perpetually transformed by their dynamic relationship with history and with the people who live in them. They are "rearticulated, transformed from a singular structure into a multilateral palimpsest that can be 'written' up and over, again and again," with time. Therefore, the boundaries of cities' identities continuously expand with this dynamic movement. There can be no single, fixed, or complete description of a city, which is why cities require continuous translation. However, cities are commonly represented as a single, fixed, and complete image in the process of translation through selective appropriation, and people consume that image. This paper attempts to reveal the process and ideological bias in such selective appropriation with a focus on Itaewon, South Korea. Historically, Itaewon has always been a site of different cultural encounters reflecting the historical twists and turns of Korea. After the Japanese invasion of the country in 1592 and the Manchu war of 1636, Japanese and Chinese soldiers stayed in the area. Then, during the colonial period, the Japanese army was stationed there, and after liberation, the American army was quartered there. Now, Muslims are flocking to the area, and it is becoming a city of immigrants. Because of these dynamic historical moments, Itaewon has been the site of cultural amalgamation and conflict, always retaining traces of the past. However, the images of Itaewon created by tourist books are ahistorical and fixed; the city has been fragmented as a commodity to be consumed through selective appropriation, and its dynamic history has been erased. The most common of these images are those of shopping centers and the red light district, images that have been reinforced by reproduction throughout decades. This paper investigates the process of this fragmentation of Itaewon and its underlying ideology.

INTRODUCTION

I was motivated to consider the aspects of a city's translation (in terms of intersemiotic translation in which nonverbal text is transferred into verbal text) when I found the translation of Itaewon, an area located in the northern part of Seoul, South Korea. Shockingly, the words that caught my eye were "Red Light District." Wikipedia, the internet encyclopedia, in its entry on Itaewon, highlighted only the Red Light District as a local attraction, as follows:[1]

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itaewon (last accessed December, 2014).

Contents
1. Local attractions
    1.1 Red Light District
2. See also
3. Notes
4. External links

With a brief explanation of the geographical location of Itaewon, Wikipedia introduces local attractions, focusing on the international dishes, hotels, shops, and clubs that tourists can enjoy:

> Many restaurants serving international dishes are found in this area […]. Major hotels such as The Grand Hyatt and local landmark The Hamilton Hotel can be found here as well as dozens of shops and services aimed at tourists. High quality leather products in Korea can be found […] as well as various types of traditional Korean souvenirs. […] Itaewon is one of the popular club congested area in Korea, […] Most of foreign people go to the clubs for clubbing and hooking up while they are staying in Korea.[2]

Then separate space was allocated to the introduction of the Red Light District under the same title:

> There is a portion of Itaewon known as "Hooker Hill" among GI's of different allied nations stationed in South Korea. Although the stereotype of only American servicemen frequenting this area is well-known, men from all other countries, including Middle-Eastern and African, are known to frequent this area as well. Furthermore, because South Korea is not widely socially accepting of homosexuals, there is an underground gay area within this district as well.

The prominent image of Itaewon represented by Wikipedia is of a "retail" city—selling goods and bodies.

An explanation of this followed: "This article is written like a travel guide rather than an encyclopedic description of the subject. [. . .]" (July 2013). This explanation is very significant in that it suggests that a travel guide does not present full, complete, and thorough information, but rather is selective regarding the information it includes. This is quite appropriate since a travel guide should be light enough for travelers to carry. However, the problem with selective information—in other words selective translation—is the image the translation produces. This paper is concerned with this point.

Translation has been frequently presented as an activity to create an image of others or of selves, in the case of Itaewon, for example, this includes "a nostalgic image of a lost past" about Japanese people (Fowler 1992), images of the East by the West in colonial contexts (Niranjana 1992), or a self-image

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[2] The article has since been altered, but there is no significant difference in its content.

by a colonized people (Tymoczko 1999). The process involves "a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication—and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes" (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002, xxi).

However, little notice has been taken of translation as an activity to create images of cities and of the process this involves. French theologian Jacques Ellul states that the evolution of cities represents man's fall from natural grace and the subsequent attempt to create a new, workable order (Kotkin 2005, xv). This may mean that cities are constructed and shaped through the dynamic relationship with human beings, and they are formed, and transformed, by such repeated attempts throughout the city's history, keeping traces of every historical moment. That is, they are "rearticulated, transformed from a singular structure into a multilateral palimpsest that can be 'written' up and over, again and again" (Chambers 2012, 104) with time. Therefore, the boundaries of cities' identities continuously expand with this dynamic movement.

However, cities are commonly represented as a single and fixed image in the process of translation through selective appropriation, and people accept and consume that image. In the history of translation studies, little attention has been paid to these aspects of cities, that is, cities as a translated text.

Cities are translated through special forms of communication, such as the environmental landscape, symbolic artifacts, local events, or other landmarks, and through verbal communication, such as cities' names, slogans or statements.

This paper attempts to reveal how verbal translation, especially for tourists, constructs an image of a city, with a focus on Itaewon. Itaewon has been a very particular and special space in Korean history. Unlike other areas of Seoul, which have a single ethic identity, Itaewon has been the space of expatriates. It has been a foreign and exotic land within Korea, a zone of contact where native and foreign cultures encounter each other, and a mediating channel though which foreign cultures are introduced. This paper first investigates Itaewon as a site of cultural encounters and cultural translation against the background of Korean history, then it examines its translation in tourist books and the subsequent effects.

ITAEWON AS A SITE OF CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS AND CULTURAL TRANSLATION

When French historian Fernand Braudel stated, "A town is always a town, wherever it is located, in time as well as space" (Rybczynski 1995, 49), he must have been referring to the universality of the urban experience. As Kotkin notes, the urban experience is universal "despite vast differences in race,

climate, and location" because "there is the visceral 'feel' of the city almost everywhere—the same quickening of pace on a busy street, an informal marketplace, or a freeway interchange, the need to create notable places, the sharing of a unique civic identity" (2005, xv–vxi). The omnipresent visceral feel he refers to is created by the so called "non-places" found in almost every city. Non-places, a term coined by French anthropologist Marc Augé, refers to anthropological spaces of transience that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as "places." As Augé points out, supermodernity produces nonplaces, "meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike in Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places" (1995, 63). Nonplaces are temporary, ephemeral, fleeting spaces for passage, communication, and consumption. Augé puts it thus:

> If place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. [. . .] the same things apply to the non-place as to the place. It never exists in pure form; places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it; the 'millennial ruses' of 'the invention of the everyday' and 'the arts of doing,' so subtly analysed by Michel de Certeau, can clear a path there and deploy their strategies. Places and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed. (Augé 1995, 63–64)

Examples of nonplaces are air, rail, and motorway routes, aircraft, trains and road vehicles, airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of a communication (Augé 1995).

These nonplaces make urban scenes familiar and uniform, creating an illusion of universality in urban experiences. In extreme cases, those nonplaces may make urban experiences homogeneous so that they give the impression that "only the name of the airport changes" as described in the novel Invisible Cities by Italian writer Italo Calvino:

> If on arriving at Trude I had not read the city's name written in big letters, I would have thought I was landing at the same airport from which I had taken off. The suburbs they drove me through were no different from the others, […] The downtown streets displayed goods, packages, signs that had not changed at all. […] You can resume your flight whenever you like, but you will arrive at another Trude, absolutely the same, detail by detail. The world is covered by the sole Trude, which does not begin, nor end. Only the name of the airport changes. (Calvino 1972/1974, 128)

However, despite "the universality of the urban experience," each city has a unique and special "feel," which gives city tourists a different experience. One of the factors that make each city unique and special is its ascent and decline throughout history, the process of which is "both rooted in history

and changed by it" (Kotkin 2005, 147), in other words, the characteristics of "places" in Augé's term. Cities are not stagnant; they are reconfigured, reshaped, and rearranged with political, economic, social, and cultural changes throughout history.

Just as Lotman points out in his discussion on the symbolism of St. Petersburg, "The city is a mechanism, forever recreating its past" (Lotman 1990, 194–195): architectural ensembles, city rituals and ceremonies, the very plan of the city, the street names and thousands of other left-overs from past ages act as code programs constantly renewing the texts of the past. Lotman also says that "in this sense, the city, like culture, is a mechanism which withstands time" (Lotman 1990, 195).

So, as Simon's *Cities in Translation* (2012) suggests, cities are "intersections of memory," and the streets of the cities keep those memories. Itaewon is such a city. Compared to other areas in Seoul, it is an area with a rapid pace of change, and it has various images: diversity, ambiguity, disorder, chaos, exoticism, foreign land within the country, and so on. Such dynamicity and images throughout the history of the place stem mainly from its geographical location, specifically, its location near Han River.

As Lotman puts it, there are two ways in which a city as a demarcated space may relate to the earth which surrounds it—concentric and eccentric:

> Concentric structures tend towards enclosure, separation from their surroundings which are classed as hostile while eccentric structures tend towards openness and contacts with other cultures. [...] The concentric situation of the city in semiotic space is as a rule associated with the image of the city on the hill. [...] The eccentric city is situated "at the edge" of the cultural space: on the seashore, at the mouth of a river. (Lotman 1990, 191–192)

The peculiar situation of Itaewon, due to its location near the Han River, imbued it with openness. Indeed, various meanings and different stories about the origin of the name show such characteristics. Itaewon has three different names and meanings, using different Chinese characters—梨泰院, 李泰院, and 異胎院—which are embedded in its geographical position and Korean history.

Firstly, Itaewon was initially a place for travelers and trading. During the Joseon Dynasty, one of four Hanyang (present Seoul) *won* (院)—a *won* was a kind of inn established for government officials and travelers by the government—was located there. So the place was named Itaewon. The *won* (院) in the name "Itaewon" meant "inn offering lodgings to travelers" (SMG 1998, 83). As more people frequented the area, inns for foreign envoys and markets were formed (Jang 2000, 59). Another story claims that Itaewon (梨泰院), meaning "area for pear trees," was so named because pear trees were grown there.

Itaewon was also a space of trauma. It was the area for alienated women, women who had to choose isolation from the society because, with the scar of foreign invasion on their body, they could not be accepted in Korean society.

During the Seven-Year War (1592–1598) against the Korean dynasty of Joseon, a Japanese military supply base was established in the Unjongsa Buddhist nun temple near present-day Itaewon. It is said that the Japanese commander Katō Kiyomasa and his soldiers seized the temple, raped the nuns, and then stayed for some time. They subsequently burned the temple before they left. The Buddhist nuns, who had lost their home, moved to nearby Yunggyeong Mountain and lived there. Thus, the area was called Itaewon (異胎院), which means "village for being pregnant with a foreigner's child" (No-mi Lee 2011, 242–243; Hoefer et al. 1981; Jun-gi Kim 2012).

Itaewon was also the place where Korean women, who had been taken to China during the second Manchu invasion of Korea in 1636, returned and settled down (Chosun Daily 2011).[3] In Joseon society, which had a tradition of monogamy, those women were despised as *hwanhyangnyeo* ("women who returned") and so they could not return to their home. Therefore, they went to live with the nuns (Heu-suk Han 2001, 59).

According to another story, the name originated from *Itain* (異他人), which means foreigners, in reference to Japanese soldiers, who surrendered and were naturalized during the Seven-Year War, forming a community there (Jun-gi Kim 2012).

This link between Itaewon with marginalized people might have facilitated the formation of neighboring Haebangchon (literally, "liberation village"). Haebangchon was the area for displaced people after liberation from Japanese colonial rule, for north Korean refugees after the Korean War of 1950–1953, and then for farmers who had left their rural hometowns for cities during the process of industrialization.

Geographically situated near Han River, Itaewon was considered strategically important in terms of transportation and military withdrawal. Thus, Itaewon has frequently been an area for foreign troops, having been a logistics base for the Mongolian Army during the late Goryeo Dynasty and a supply base for the Japanese Army during the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 (Choi 2003, 23); it was also used by Chinese forces during the Im-O mili-

[3] 서울 속 외국 이태원 백서. 美軍거리서 다국적 거리로 (Itaewon White Paper: From the Street of the US Military Army to Multinational Street). Chosun Daily, Feb 21, 2011. http://boomup.chosun.com (accessed December, 2014).

tary revolt of 1882–1884, was the location of the Japanese military headquarters during the colonial period of 1910–1945, and was used by the US forces after the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule (No-mi Lee 2011, 242–243; Shin 2008, 193; Seoul Development Institute 2001).

The deployment of foreign troops transformed and rearranged the topography of Itaewon. During the 1920s, for instance, the public cemetery, which was located near the present-day Central Mosque, was transformed into the Japanese military headquarters. The cemetery was moved to the Miari district, and the body of Yu Gwan-sun, a patriotic martyr for independence from Japanese colonial rule, was lost in the process.

However, the biggest changes to and deepest influence on Itaewon came with the deployment of the US forces. On September 9, 1945, the US forces came to be stationed in Itaewon when the US Army commanding officer John Hodge received the surrender of all the Japanese forces in Korea south of the 38th parallel and took over the Japanese barracks and military facilities. The US Army Military Government was established and lasted from 1945 to 1948. However, with the Korean War in 1950, the US forces came back to be stationed in Itaewon, and the history of the US forces in Itaewon began. The English and Korean languages came to be used together; shops and bars emerged; and prostitutes, orphans, widows, and people from the provinces crowded around the US Army base hoping to scrape together a living from working on the base, selling goods to the soldiers, and so on. Military camp town clubs for American soldiers were opened, and Itaewon became a space where "American soldiers consumed Korean women sexually" (Hyeon-mee Kim 2005, 26). Thus, the so called "Hooker Hill" was formed.

However, most of the women who worked at Hooker Hill were victims of the Korean War. As the war had produced many orphans and widows, girls and women had to take responsibility for earning a living. They had to support not only themselves, but also their families. Some of them had to send money to their families in their hometown.[4] Under the circumstances, given that they could not find proper jobs, they had to choose prostitution, becoming *yang-gongju*[5] (a foreigner's whore), as described in Yeong-su Oh's novel of *Anna's Will* (1963):

[4] A girl risked her life to avoid the government's control over prostitution and died because she could not make a living if she was caught. Hearing this news, sixty yang-gongju held a demonstration against the control (Dong-A Ilbo Daily, October 27 1960, 3).
[5] Yang in yang-gongju means Western, and gongju means a princess. Women who sold their bodies to Western men, especially American soldiers, were called yang-gongju.

She had no clothes to cover her body
A brick looked like a chunk of meat to her.
How could you expect a girl, who is starving,
To be a lady, to be faithful?
I was starved.
A mature girl had no place to lay down her body.
Is this sin?

So I became a whore called Anna. (translation mine) (Oh 1963, 330)

As foreign official residences were established in the 1960s, military accommodation was built in 1963, and when the 121st Evacuation Hospital of the US Army was moved to Itaewon from Bupyeong district, more than 10,000 people relocated there. During the 1970s, the area became a shopping district for cheap branded goods; there was a prosperous textile industry, and the area enjoyed the reputation of one of the most popular tourist attractions in Korea among foreign tourists in the 1980s when international events were held in Seoul.

Thus, it was while the US forces were stationed there that Itaewon came to be known for its shopping area and for Hooker Hill. However, Itaewon cannot be reduced to only a shopping area and Hooker Hill. Itaewon was both a colonized space and a space of freedom and resistance. Politically, it was an Americanized colonial space (Lee and Jung 2010, 191), a colonized space (Choi 2003), or a deterritorialized space in that the authority of the nation–state was applied differently from how it was applied in other areas of the country (Eun-sil Kim 2004). Culturally, it was the space of freedom and resistance where Korean people could escape oppression under the Yushin regime in the 1970s and experience American culture (Eun-sil Kim 2004, 27; No-mi Lee 2011, 243). Indeed, Itaewon was the only route to American culture in Korean society: It was a place to experience Americanism as an object of desire for a generation familiar with AFKN radio programs, with singers trained on the musical stages at US military bases, and with Hollywood movies (Choi 2003,102) because foreign travel remained restricted in Korea until 1989.

These characteristics made the area a dynamic space where heterogeneous cultural codes and different subjectivities (including colonized "others," fragmented "youths," and a decolonized "new generation") were encountered, (re)constructed, (re)signified, and transformed at a specific historical stage (Lee and Jung 2010, 191). It was a place where subcultures, such as the culture of the US army in the 1950s–1960s, the Go-Go culture in the 1970s, disco culture in the 1980s, and hip-hop culture around the 1990s, were circulated, and it took on a leading role in Korea's popular music and subculture. The "clubs" which actively interacted with subcultures of different generations formed a site that led Korean popular music and subculture (see Lee and Jung 2010).

Itaewon, where American soldiers were previously the most numerous of the foreign residents, has become more multinational since 1993, when the Korean government introduced an industrial trainee system for foreigners. Foreign workers from India, Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Uzbekistan, and so on settled in Itaewon because the area was more open to foreigners and foreign cultures. Thus, foreigners could feel more comfortable and secure there. Many expatriates found solace in its accommodating nature and chose to set up their homes there. As various cultures, languages, and lifestyles mix together and various cultural activities commingle, the exterior landscape of the area is changing, and the space of the area is being rearranged, creating a unique and distinctive atmosphere. Through these dynamics, the area is becoming the cultural frontier zone where various cultures have become multinational and multilingual (Hyeon-mee Kim 2005, 26).

Itaewon is also a site of both conflict and solidarity as shown in the Muslim community in the area: "Though Arab Muslim traders have been known to make infrequent trading expeditions to Korea since the Silla dynasty, the teachings of Muhammad never made a real impact until 1950 when Turkish troops arrived to fight for UN forces" (Hoefer 1981). In 1960, the Korean Muslim Federation was founded with a Korean, Haji Sabri Suh, as its leader. However, the Islamic community was established due to the need to understand the Islamic world after the oil crisis of 1973 and 1974 (Lee and Jung 2011, 242). In February 1975, an Islamic Center was established in Itaewon, Seoul, and an adjoining Central Mosque—the largest such onion-domed structure in northeast Asia—was opened in 1976 (Hoefer 1981).

The Seoul Central Mosque had been built with both Korean and Middle Eastern funds to serve the 3,000 followers of the Prophet in the nation (Hoefer 1981). The Central Mosque is therefore not only a place for religious belief but also a symbolic site which shows Koreans' effort to understand the Islamic world (Lee and Jung 2011, 242–243).

A larger Muslim community was formed in Itaewon in 2005 when anti-American sentiment spread after two Korean middle school girls were accidentally run over and killed by an American armored personnel carrier, and American soldiers assaulted some citizens. As American soldiers were subsequently banned from bars and clubs, the economic base of the area declined and workers in the entertainment business left the area for cheaper accommodation elsewhere. Thus, the Muslim community was formed around the Central Mosque.

The Muslim community is bringing about changes to Itaewon. One of the most noticeable changes is the increased number of Halal food restaurants and the reduced number of local butcher's shops (Heu-su Yi et al. 2008,

1.
Itaewon, street view

2.
Itaewon, Muslim
settlement area

68). Furthermore, because of the strong solidarity among Muslims, the community is often regarded as a closed community by other Koreans (Lee and Jung 2011, 250).

The Muslim settlement in Itaewon is a segmentation of urban space formed by the pluralism of race and Islamic culture. However, the space is

never homogeneous to the citizens and Muslims living in the Muslim settlement, and the place of residence is perceived according to different meanings. That is, the citizens living in Itaewon view the Muslims as those who threaten their lives and view foreigners as the cause of economic conflicts as well. However, for those Muslims in the settlement, the citizens' hostility toward them has given rise to a view of them as a strange and potential threat. The place of conflict and alienation is an inevitable part of the process of initiating a new cultural solidarity (see Lee and Jung 2011).

Another feature of Itaewon is the coexistence of mutually exclusive activities in the same place: the Muslim community adjoins Gay Hill, which was formed in the late 1990s when gay bars moved there from Euljiro-Jongro (Jung-eun Kim et al. 2010). The position of Itaewon as a place of expatriates makes negotiation across different cultures with no shared history the very condition of civic coexistence. Now, Itaewon is producing a varied atmosphere and landscapes as multinational cultures are dynamically mixed together.

TRANSLATION AND REPRESENTATION OF ITAEWON AS A NONPLACE

Tourist books have an important role to play in presenting an image of a city to the outside world because most tourists depend on the books for information about the city they will visit. They obtain information about the history, culture, shopping centers, or entertainment facilities in the city and they consume the city based on this information. Tourist books provide guidelines to give tourists information and instructions to help them know or understand the city.

Itaewon has been one of the most popular tourist areas in Seoul among foreign tourists to the extent that it has been said that "[y]ou may not know Seoul, but you should know Itaewon" (Saccone 1994, 79). Indeed, for most foreigners the area has become synonymous with Seoul. This section investigates how Itaewon has been presented in tourist books during the past thirty years. For this purpose, tourist books in English from 1981 until 2010 were examined; however, as not many tourist books are available that discuss Itaewon, the sample was limited to seventeen books.

Insight Guides: Korea (Hoefer et al.), which was published in Hong Kong in 1981, offers comparatively detailed information, focusing on the origin of the name and Muhammadanism in Korea. Regarding the name, it quotes Allen and Donard Clark, a father-and-son team of Seoul historians as saying, "Following the Japanese invasion of 1592–1598, the area now called

Itaewon came to be called 'Itaein' or 'Itaein dong' meaning 'Foreigners' Village,' because of the Japanese soldiers who were quartered on this site," and "When the war was over, some of the soldiers settled down, married Korean girls, and spent the rest of their lives here." Then "the tradition carries on, though most American soldiers take their Korean brides home, to 'the world.' as they call the U.S. of A." (Hoefer et al. 1981).

Regarding Muhammadanism, the book says the teachings of Muhammad never made a real impact until the arrival of Turkish troops in 1950, as mentioned previously, and it goes on to explain the foundation of the Korean Muslim Federation in 1960 and the establishment of an Islamic Center in 1975 and, later, the adjoining Central Mosque (Hoefer et al. 1981).

Visitors Guide: Seoul Korea, which was published by Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) in 1998, introduces some of Itaewon's historical traces:

> [the] "won" of the name has meant an inn offering lodgings to travelers of the Choson Dynasty. In the middle of the 17th century, there was a concentrated village of naturalized Japanese. From 1906, a Japanese Military Post was stationed in the area until liberation from Japanese colonial rule, and now US Military Post including headquarters is located there. (SMG 1998, 83)

However, *Insight Guides: South Korea* (Le Bas), which was published in London in 2007, introduces the history of Itaewon using a more poetic tone:

> but foreigners, not all of them Western, now occupy multi-story apartment buildings. [. . .] Imagine the astonished reactions of the Buddhist monks who, for some 500 years, kept a free hostel for travelers near here. What exists now, albeit breathtaking, may prove to be too developed for their tastes: the Grand Hyatt Hotel's mirrored façade; and the twin minarets of the onion-domed mosque below, from which resounds the muezzin's call to afternoon prayer. (Le Bas 2007, 135-139)

The book then adds that centuries ago, Itaewon was used as a stopover point for visitors to the capital, that Japanese troops were housed there during the Japanese Occupation, and that, after the Korean War, they were then replaced by American soldiers.

Although the descriptions in the above three tourist books are not enough to show the dynamicity of Itaewon, they at least reveal the historicity of the area. However, other tourist books introduce Itaewon, focusing on it as place for consumerism and as a shopping area and entertainment district as follows:

> known as a part of the city that never sleeps. [. . .] a one-stop hub for foreign visitors, including shopping, tours, lodging and information services. It also offers many venues in which to enjoy Korean and foreign cultures and cuisines. (KOTRA 2006, 249)

> now a growing mecca for bargain hunters. [. . .] It is lined on both sides with hundreds

of shops and arcades selling ready-made sports clothes [. . .] It is also an entertainment spot that boasts well over 200 restaurants, bars and clubs. (Suzanne Crowder Han 1989, 74)

crowded with shops of all kinds from custom tailors to jewelers, from antiques dealers to clothiers. [. . .] In the evening Itaewon becomes a dynamic entertainment district packed with discos, nightclubs, bars, and karaokes of all sizes. (Saccone 1994, 79–80)

the shopping paradise of diverse visitors from all parts of the world. (KOWOC 2002, 63)

Itaewon offers tailor-made and ready-made clothes [. . .] There is a spirited night life, too. (Chunsung Kim 2004, 90)

it was one of the only places in the country in which you could buy "Western" items [. . .] While it remains a great place to shop for cheap tailored suits and shoes, Itaewon's popularity also made it a byword for transactions of a more sexual nature – hostess bars sprung up all over the place. (Paxton 2008, 109)

It's a bastardized district that's neither Korean nor Western, but a skewed yet intriguing combination of both. Clothing, gifts . . . (Nilsen 2009, 44 and 92)

a lively expat entertainment zone with bars and clubs aplenty, both gay and straight. Market stalls line the main street and the district comes to life in the evening. (Robinson and Zahorchak 2009, 55)

Once a shady red-light district, it's been cleaned up [. . .] You can still find ladies of the night walking down certain streets at night, but during the day, it's a shopper's paradise. (Cecilia Hai-Jin Lee 2010, 63)

Translation of Itaewon in the above tourist books is no different from that in Wikipedia, as was pointed out in the introduction. Rather than being presented as a dynamic space where memories are imprinted, heterogeneous cultures mix together, and new cultures emerge, Itaewon is represented in these books as a large retail outlet for the selling and buying of goods, just like nonplaces, to use Augé's term (1995, 63), which have no urban relations, history, or identity.

The way Itaewon is translated is similar to the process of reification in that it presents fragmented information about the city in the process of commodification for tourism, and thereby stops us understanding the totality of the city. According to Lukács (1971), under capitalism everything is reified as the result of a unified structure of consciousness—that is, seeing everything in a completely discrete way, where everything is separated and fragmented and taken out of the process to which it belongs. Lukács claims this is caused by the fact that everything is turned into a commodity under capitalism, which thus prevents us from seeing the totality of the place and the deeper processes that are going on.

In a capitalist society, a city is presented as a commodity for the tourist industry, and its images are created, manipulated, or distorted in the pro-

cess of translation in order to create a profit. A city's function as a place for entertainment and shopping is frequently emphasized in presenting the city because "the criteria of the successful tourist industry mainly puts priority on spending on entertainment and shopping" (Yi and Oh 1994, 21). Itaewon's image is presented as a place for selling and entertaining; removed from its historicity, the image is fragmented.

FRAGMENTED IMAGE, FRAGMENTED EXPERIENCE

What does this fragmented image have to do with the city? The most direct influence may be the way the city is consumed by tourists. For example, the following recent reviews of the city by tourists[6] show that the way they consume the city is closely related to the image presented in tourist books:

> Itaewon: Lots of Shopping. There are shops and a district for almost every imaginable type of product and some are open until very late at night […]. (October 20, 2002)

> Itaewon: Capital of Kitsch. [. . .] filling up with good restaurants and chain stores. You can find Nike outlets selling all manner of shoes and sports gear, Body Shops filled with makeup and luxurious bath products, and dozens of clothing stores and tailors specializing in Chinese silk dresses. (October 19, 2003)

> Itaewon: Cheap shops and street fashion. You can find bargains of any kind and a lot of the big clothing chains [. . .]. (January 28, 2004)

> Itaewon: Near military base. Itaewon does have some shops [. . .] Itaewon is located near a US military base, so don't mind the soldiers in camouflage wandering around town. At night time, Itaewon transforms itself [. . .] One of the native Koreans told me that most Korean girls do not hang around in that area, afraid to be mistaken as a prostitute. (February 22, 2005)

> Itaewon is perhaps the most famous shopping area for foreigners in Korea. (January 13, 2006)

> Itaewon: Buying a Custom-Made Suit in Itaewon. (May 6, 2007)

> Itaewon: Very Touristy and Expensive, not a Sample of Korea. The Itaewon shopping area covers a 1.4 km in length [. . .] The area has a vibrant night life scene with many bars and nightclubs. (July 24, 2008)

> Itaewon: Special Tourism Shopping Zone of Seoul (April 4, 2011)

[6] All citations are taken from http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Asia/South_Korea/Soul_tukpyolsi/Seoul-1058426/Shopping-Seoul-Itaewon-BR-1.html (accessed December, 2014), which is an interactive site aimed at sharing travel knowledge, which includes chat, forums, travelogues, photos, and maps.

Although one reviewer describes Itaewon as an unexpected treasure trove, most of the reviews show that tourists' experience of Itaewon is superficial and fragmented, alienated from its memories and ongoing history just like the images of the city in the tourist books. They just experience Itaewon as a non-place where things are sold and bought. Considering the general purpose of tourist books, it can be said that the translation of Itaewon that is circulated and reproduced has directed tourists' pattern of consuming the city.

The city is, of course, a place where things are traded, but it is not only a place where things are traded. As Calvino's *Invisible Cities* suggests, a city is an assemblage of memory, desire, signs, names, and other features. So what is traded is not only things but also memories, desires, signs, names, and other things, as shown by *Invisible Cities*' Euphemia:

> You do not come to Euphemia only to buy and sell, but also because at night, by the fires all around the market, seated on sacks or barrels or stretched out on pile of carpets, at each word that one man says—such as "wolf," "sister," "hidden treasure," "battle," "scabies," "lovers"—the others tell, each one, his tale of wolves, sisters, treasures, scabies, lovers, battles. And you know that in the long journey ahead of you, when to keep awake against the camel's swaying or the junk's rocking, you start summoning up your memories one by one, your wolf will have become another wolf, your sister a different sister, your battle other battles, on your return from Euphemia, the city where memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox. (Calvino 1972/1974, 36–37)

Itaewon is also a place that has its memories, desires, signs, and names, and is the place where those memories, desires, signs, and names are traded; thus it deserves to be known for various reasons, not just as a selling place. So the experience of the city could be more complex than simply trading things.

The fragmented experience together with the reproduced image has produced a negative image about Itaewon, so that it loses its attraction as a tourist site. Furthermore, as neighboring commercial areas are created, Itaewon has also lost its merits as a shopping area. Realizing the risk, the government designated the area a special tourism district in 1997 and decided to hold the Itaewon Global Village Festival twice a year in an attempt to revive Itaewon as a site of dynamic cultural exchanges.

CONCLUSION

In the tourism industry, cities are rearranged according to the economic principles of commercialism in a capitalist society. Cities can be classified as a sacred city, a fashion city, a commercial city, and so on, and this classification is translated spatially or verbally, creating a representative image of the city.
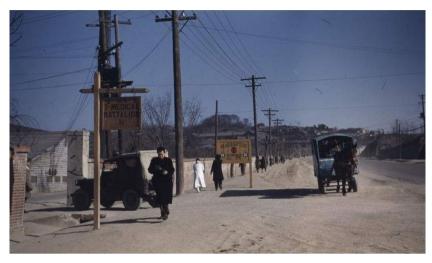
3.
Different views
of Itaewon

Tourist books are one of the media where cities are verbally translated. Itaewon has been verbally translated as a shopping and entertainment area in tourist books, and such a translated image has been consumed among tourists. However, this image has been fragmented, and so has been the experience of tourists.

The experience of cities may be more multiple and more multilateral than the one the tourist books can produce as shown in the description of the city of Irene in *Invisible Cities*:

> If you saw it, standing in its midst, it would be a different city; Irene is a name for a city in the distance, and if you approach, it changes. For those who pass it without entering, the city is one thing; it is another for those who are trapped by it and never leave. There is the city where you arrive for the first time; and there is another city which you leave never to return. Each deserves a different name; perhaps I have already spoken of Irene under other names; perhaps I have spoken only of Irene. (Calvino 1972/1974, 125)

4.
Itaewon, historical view

Therefore, cities cannot be fixed to a single image or translation. The various translations of the name of Itaewon itself—foreigners' village, village for being pregnant with a foreigner's child, village for pear trees—show that the area cannot be translated into one fixed image. The inherent and unique properties of Itaewon have been formed by the totality of geographical and historical moments. Itaewon has been a place for travelers and trading, a space of trauma caused by the conflictive history of Korea, a foreigners' village, a foreign land within the country, a colonized space, a space of freedom and resistance, a deterritorialized zone, a window onto Western culture, a space of conflicts and solidarity, a space for cultural translation, and so on. The area has accumulated its memories throughout history while being repeatedly rewritten, functioning as "a culture-generator."

Indeed, regarding cities as "culture-generators," Lotman says:

> The city is a complex semiotic mechanism, a culture-generator, but it carries out this function only because it is a melting-pot of texts and codes, belonging to all kinds of languages and levels. The essential semiotic polyglottism of every city is what makes it so productive of semiotic encounters. The city, being the place where different national, social, and stylistic codes and texts confront each other, is the place of hybridization, recodings, semiotic translations, all of which makes it into a powerful generator of new information. (Lotman 1990, 194)

Itaewon has been, to use Lotman's words "the place of hybridization, recodings, semiotic translations" (Lotman 1990, 194). However, a selective translation of such a city in the tourist books has focused on the fragmented image in the process of the commodification of the city as a tourist site. This fragmented image has been reproduced during past decades, fixing the image to Itaewon and obstructing cognition of the totality or the whole nature of the

city. This way, translation may be damaging to cities especially when a distorted image obtains authority through reproduction. As a culture-generator, a city deserves its proper translation.

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