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Becoming Gentrifier/d: Aesthetics, Subjectivities, and Rhythms of Gentrification in Seoul, South Korea

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BECOMING GENTRIFIER/D:
AESTHETICS, SUBJECTIVITIES, AND RHYTHMS OF
GENTRIFICATION IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

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DISSERTATION
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Myung In Ji
Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Richard Schein, Professor of Geography
Lexington, Kentucky
2020

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

BECOMING GENTRIFIER/D:
AESTHETICS, SUBJECTIVITIES, AND RHYTHMS OF
GENTRIFICATION IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Gentrification has been extensively studied beyond Euro-American societies. In particular, previous research of Seoul's residential gentrification has broadened our understanding of the role of the developmental state and property speculation in urban clearance and renewal. However, little attention has been paid to the contemporary retail gentrification in Seoul that has different aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms compared to residential gentrification. In retail gentrification, old urban neighborhoods are no longer demolished but cherished with their nostalgic landscapes and atmospheres. In this context, this dissertation project explores Seochon, a gentrifying neighborhood in Seoul, that was designated as a cultural heritage site in 2010. Since then, this previously underdeveloped neighborhood has become a famous tourist destination for urban adventurers who desire authentic objects, places, and experiences.

Combining ethnographic and archival research, this project examines how the cultural politics around authenticity entwine with historic preservation and retail gentrification. Specifically, I address three questions: 1) how the hyperreal simulacra of the past aesthetically assemble Seochon as an authentic urban village, 2) how the fantasy of authenticity endlessly renews the desire for something more authentic while sustaining the paradoxical subjectivities of gentrification, and 3) how the in-betweens on the topological edge of the gentrifier/gentrified embody and enact gentrification in and through the heterogeneous space-times of Seochon. Consequently, the project opens new political possibilities to challenge gentrification-induced displacements by demystifying their physical and psychological processes.

In doing so, this project contributes to more nuanced perspectives on Seoul's gentrification, which has been predominantly identified with state-led, residential urban renewal. At the same time, the project engages with epistemological and ontological limitations in previous gentrification studies through the poststructural lenses of Baudrillard, Lacan, and Deleuze. Specifically, I dismantle the dualistic ideas of good/bad, authentic/inauthentic, and gentrifier/gentrified by analyzing the ever-changing rhythms of

gentrification and displacement. Indeed, the paradoxical subjects of gentrification continue to decenter their subjectivities and distort the dynamics of displacement. Thus, they are virtually/actually in-betweens as they become gentrifier and simultaneously gentrified (gentrifier/d). This reconceptualization of ambivalent and mobile subjectivities highlights differences within and beyond the monstrously imagined gentrification while disclosing the potential for the fight against it from its sponge-like inside.

Furthermore, this project empirically demonstrates this theoretical reframing based on 13 months of qualitative fieldwork and 47 interviews with 50 participants. I illustrate how the subjects of gentrification place themselves in Seochon by reinventing authenticity and displacing their imagined (in)authentic selves/others. Throughout various cultural politics around what authentic Seochon is, the subjects were 'becoming gentrifier/d.' I was one of them as I occupied everyday spaces of the neighborhood, interviewed old-timers and newcomers, participated in a local foodie community, and worked at a hipster-oriented restaurant as a server. Drawing on this autoethnography, the project uncovers the fantasy of authenticity as well as the heterogeneous space-times of gentrification, which are built upon people's desires, imaginations, embodiments, and performances, including my own. Ultimately, this theoretical and empirical revisit enables us to mirror ourselves onto gentrification and to bear our responsibility in challenging the gentrification-induced displacements that we create.

KEYWORDS: Gentrification, Authenticity, Historic Preservation, Urban Tourism, Displacement, Seoul

Myung In Ji

10/06/2020

Date

BECOMING GENTRIFIER/D:
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GENTRIFICATION IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

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In memory of my mother

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PhD. I also would like to thank my father, Su Gol Ji, and my brother, Dong In Ji, for

listening, sympathizing, and encouraging.

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1.1 Introduction

Gentrification is everywhere. As a global urban strategy (N. Smith, 2002) or planetary urban process (Lees et al., 2016), the discourses and practices of gentrification have emerged in the global South while escaping from the box of the global North (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; Lees, 2012; Lees et al., 2015). Whilst some scholars have criticized the danger of its universalization and asserted more attention to local and historical contexts (Ghertner, 2014; Maloutas, 2011, 2018; Smart & Smart, 2017), various urban phenomena have been extensively examined through a theoretical lens of gentrification, particularly in Latin America (Delgadillo, 2016; Díaz-Parra, 2020; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016) and East Asia (He, 2010, 2012; Chang, 2016; H. B. Shin et al., 2016).

Seoul, South Korea, is not an exception. Since the 2000s, Korean scholars have started to employ the concept of gentrification to suggest its relevance to Seoul (e.g. Ha, 2004; K. Kim, 2007). Their studies have often reconceptualized Seoul's urban renewal in the late twentieth-century, in tandem with the demolition of old urban villages and the construction of giant apartment complexes, as gentrification drawing on the rent gap theory (N. Smith, 1996) and the socio-economic and demographic changes of postindustrial cities (Ley, 1996). These previous studies have broadened our understanding of the role of the developmental state and property speculation in large-scale residential redevelopment (S. Y. Lee, 2018; Lukens, 2020; H. B. Shin, 2009; H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). Nonetheless, those studies have unwittingly stereotyped Seoul's case, with other East Asian cities, as

mega-gentrification related to mega-displacement in Anglo-American academia (see Ley & Teo, 2014; H. B. Shin et al., 2016).

This dissertation project aims to provide more nuanced, critical perspectives on Seoul's gentrification by exploring its new discourses and practices, which move beyond the dominant academic conversation regarding urban renewal. Broadly speaking, the emerging gentrification in Seoul shares more with retail (or commercial) gentrification in Euro-American metropolises (see Hubbard, 2017; Zukin, 2010), rather than Seoul's own residential gentrification during the past half-century (see H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). Indeed, Korean public narratives about gentrification have underscored the commercial revitalization and cultural exploitation of old urban neighborhoods (see S. Y. Lee, 2016; H. J. Shin & Kim, 2015). Usually, those neighborhoods were marginalized from the modernist urban renewal and thus unintentionally retained their nostalgic landscape and atmosphere until the late 2000s. In the context of growing new urban tourism and alternative consumerism, urban adventurers start to seek the authenticity of those underdeveloped neighborhoods while upscaling their retail landscapes with trendy bars, cafés, and restaurants, as we observed in New York City (Zukin, 2008).

Contrary to residential gentrification based on slash-and-burn urban renewal, this retail gentrification has not necessarily caused the demolition of existing urban fabrics. Instead, its initiative has depended on the authentic texture and atmosphere of old urban villages. Therefore, the desire for authenticity has led to different forms and processes of displacement. Original local shops have been replaced by more profitable food and beverage (F&B) businesses for visitors. Long-time residents have been symbolically and emotionally excluded from their daily lives and social spaces.

Table 1.1 The Number of Articles Containing the Word 'Gentrification'

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Content	1	0	0	1	3	13	15	41	764	2627	3927	3839	3651
Title	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	149	554	482	382	341

Source: Naver New Search Engine (Naver News, 2020)

During the 2010s, Korean traditional and new media extensively (re)produced the discourses of this new urban process by relying on the English loanword: gentrification (S. Y. Lee, 2016). According to the Naver News search engine (2020), the word 'gentrification' first appeared in a Korean news article in 2007, which criticized Seoul's downtown beautification project (Jun, 2007). The number of articles mentioning gentrification steadily increased during the early 2010s (Table 1.1). Initial pieces often introduced other metropolises' gentrification cases to imply its insight into Seoul. Since 2013, however, the public media has started to investigate Seoul's own cases. News and broadcast media have discussed several old neighborhoods that recently became hip and attractive among single women, expatriates, younger generations, and LGBTQ+ groups and thus experienced commercialization and rent hikes. They named this new urban phenomenon in Seoul "Korean-style gentrification" (Shinyun, 2013; see also S. Y. Shin, 2013; Chingusai, 2013) while creating a gap between what is analyzed as Korean gentrification in Anglo-American academia and what is recognized as gentrification in Korean public narratives.[1]

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[1] Scholars in Korean academia also pointed out this gap (S. J. Kim, 2017; H. J. Shin & Kim, 2015; H. J. Shin & Lee, 2016).

Meanwhile, the number of news articles mentioning gentrification has dramatically increased from 41 in 2014, to 764 in 2015 and 2627 in 2016. As the term has repeatedly appeared in media coverage to describe the commercialization and transformation of old neighborhoods, gentrification has been increasingly associated with its negative consequences:

"Villages become famous, but villagers leave" (Baek, 2014)

"Once people and money come into Seochon...
Flower shop, Ms. Song and laundry, Mr. Kim disappeared" (Eum, 2014)

"Gentrification, the magic of urban regeneration...
Is it the savior or destroyer of a city?" (H. S. Kim, 2015)

"Endless conflicts regarding gentrification" (H. K. Lee, 2017)

In short, Korean public narratives of gentrification have been constituted around 1) the commercialization of old urban neighborhoods and 2) the conflicts around the displacement of original occupiers, particularly retailers.

Although this new discourse has become pervasive, relatively little academic attention has been paid to this contemporary retail gentrification in Seoul until recently. For example, geographers have applied the same theoretical frameworks in analyzing both residential and retail gentrifications by treating the latter as a subpart of "landlord-initiated" (Ha, 2004), "property-based" (H. B. Shin, 2009), and "profit-driven" (S. Y. Lee, 2018) urban processes that have been endogenously and chronologically embedded in Seoul's state-led, speculative redevelopment (H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016; Lukens, 2020). This political economy approach has contributed to the call for solidarity in anti-gentrification movements by highlighting the generalized battle between the gentrifying haves and the

gentrified have-nots (S. Y. Lee & Han, 2019; H. B. Shin, 2018). Nevertheless, this structural view runs a risk of overlooking more textured aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms in retail gentrification.

In this context, this dissertation project explores *Seochon*, a gentrifying neighborhood in traditional downtown Seoul. Since Seochon has been designated as a cultural heritage site in 2010, this previously dilapidated neighborhood has become a famous tourist destination for people who pursue authentic objects, places, and experiences. Drawing upon poststructural lenses and ethnographic research, the project analyzes how the cultural politics of authenticity entwine with historic preservation and retail gentrification in Seochon. To be specific, I address three questions: 1) how the hyperreal simulacra of the past aesthetically assemble Seochon as an authentic urban village, 2) how the fantasy of authenticity endlessly renews the desire for something more authentic while sustaining the paradoxical subjectivities of gentrification, and 3) how the in-betweens on the topological edge of the gentrifier/gentrified embody and enact gentrification in and through the heterogeneous space-times of Seochon.

In this introductory chapter, I first situate this dissertation in urban and cultural geographies by reviewing literature on gentrification, authenticity, urban tourism, and displacement. Second, I introduce the research site of Seochon, in terms of its history and current issues regarding urban redevelopment, historic preservation, and retail gentrification. This is followed by the description of methods, including interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis of data. I then offer an outline of the dissertation by focusing on the three middle chapters (two, three, four), which have been published or submitted for peer-review journals. Finally, the chapter closes with the

theoretical and empirical contributions of the dissertation while suggesting an alternative way to challenge gentrification-induced displacements.

1.2 Residential and Retail Gentrification in Seoul

During the 2010s, the discourses and practices of gentrification have geographically expanded into the global South (Lees et al., 2016; Smart & Smart, 2017). Meanwhile, more-than-physical forms and processes of gentrification-induced displacements have been increasingly examined based on theories of emotion, affect, and psychoanalysis (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Hyra, 2015; Lancione, 2017; Linz, 2017; K. S. Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). I developed this dissertation project at the intersection of these two streams in urban and cultural geographies. Accordingly, the project aims to broaden the gentrification debates in geography by 1) empirically revisiting the understudied case of Seoul and 2) suggesting new theoretical frameworks to explain the psychic and rhythmic processes of retail gentrification, not only for Seoul but also for others. In doing so, this section provides a comparative overview of Seoul's two types of gentrification: residential and retail gentrification. Specifically, I explain their different aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms to emphasize the necessity of new epistemological and ontological approaches in gentrification studies, as well as Seoul studies.

1.2.1 Aesthetics

During the latter half of the twentieth-century, Seoul's neighborhoods were filled with high-rise, high-density apartment complexes (Figure 1.1). This large-scale urban renewal was supported by the modernist urban planning aesthetics of "towers in the park,"

which emphasizes efficiency, rationalism, and social improvement through design (Hall, 2002; Le Corbusier, 2011). While clearing out premodern urban villages, a condominium became the most desirable housing type in Seoul, representing the urban middle class (Ha & Kwon, 2017; Yang, 2018). However, people started to miss the old urban villages that they have lost through the vast demolition and construction (Figure 1.2). As this nostalgic yearning for the past—celebrating the historical meanings and cultural values of underdeveloped but charming urban villages—has become a popular discourse, the agenda of urban renewal has been partially replaced by historic preservation and cultural marketing since the 2000s (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2000, 2008).

This revaluation of old urban fabrics has facilitated culture-led, heritage-led regeneration and gentrification in Seoul (Križnik, 2012; Yun, 2017). Whereas residential gentrification bulldozes and evicts existing neighborhoods, commercial revitalization preserves those neighborhoods in order to aesthetically consume their nostalgic meanings and values. For this reason, retail gentrification seemingly cares for the original neighborhoods. Yet, in many cases, it selectively advocates those neighborhoods through the social construction of authenticity that best suits new consumer tastes (see Brown-Saracino, 2007; Kern, 2016). For example, newly opened businesses inspire people's imaginations and fantasies of authentic urban villages by staging old façades of buildings and simultaneously reinventing new vibes with unique items (Figure 1.3). These staged and reinvented authenticities underline the aesthetics and ethics of new businesses and draw more customers who desire authenticity.

Here, the important point is that desiring authenticity becomes another impulse of Seoul's gentrification beyond the pursuit of economic profits. Capitalist logics, such as

property speculation and rent hikes, still play an important role in retail gentrification; they facilitate the physical displacement of low-income residential and commercial tenants. Nonetheless, the dynamics of displacement are constantly distorted by the cultural politics surrounding authenticity in retail gentrification. To explain, in Seoul's residential gentrification, gentrifiers can fulfil their desire for modern condominiums and redevelopment profits through the displacement of original occupiers. At this point, the perceived displacement does not necessarily diminish their achievement of profits and further motivation of gentrification, which ensures more profits.

However, in retail gentrification, gentrifiers of newcomers and urban adventurers should cope with their paradoxical practices in order to achieve their aesthetic desire for authenticity. This is because, as old neighborhoods attract more and more people, those neighborhoods are likely to jeopardize their authenticity through the objectification, commercialization, and displacement of original communities. Put differently, gentrifiers' desire for authenticity continues to devastate what they desire (Ji, 2020). Therefore, gentrifiers criticize gentrification, despite their own participation in the process (see Kaddar, 2020; Schlichtman & Patch, 2014) and attempt to justify their complicity in gentrification by highlighting their virtuous standpoints as "social preservationists" (Brown-Saracino, 2007; see also Tissot, 2014), "reframing the outcomes of gentrification" as culturally diverse and enjoyable, and "displacing responsibility for gentrification" onto other bad stakeholders (Donnelly, 2018, p. 373). In Seoul's context, this paradoxical aesthetics of desiring authenticity should be paid more attention in understanding the complex cultural politics of retail gentrification.

Figure 1.1 Typical landscape of apartment complexes in 2015
Source: The Seoul Research Data Service (The Seoul Institute, 2020)

Figure 1.2 Large-scale demolition and construction scenes in 1996
Source: The Seoul Research Data Service (The Seoul Institute, 2020)

Figure 1.3 New businesses in old buildings of Seochon
Source: Photographs by the author in 2017

1.2.2 Subjectivities

The desire for authenticity is also related to the ambivalent subjectivities of retail gentrification. Certainly, it is hard to discern the subjects of the gentrifier/gentrified and the displacing/displaced in retail gentrification. In Seoul's residential gentrification, the battlefront between the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified has been relatively clear. Gentrifiers of states, property owners, developers, speculators, and middle-class newcomers have displaced the urban poor for the sake of urban renewal. For example, the South Korean government enacted the Joint Redevelopment Program (JPR) in 1983, which authorized the private association of landlords to initiate and conduct redevelopment projects (H. B. Shin, 2009; H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). With the intent to solve the housing supply shortage, the JRP has significantly increased not only the size of the property market but also the price of each property while fostering intense property speculation. At the same time, the majority of poor tenants have been evicted because membership to redevelopment associations has been only eligible for property owners (Ha, 2004; S. Y. Lee, 2018; Lukens, 2020). In sum, the subjectivities of residential gentrification have been rooted in the class-based battle between the displacing haves versus the displaced have-nots.

On the contrary, the boundary between displacers and displacees is blurred in Seoul's retail gentrification. As I explained above, the original communities of old neighborhoods are the element of authenticity that fascinates gentrifiers. Thus, conscious gentrifiers do not simply evict natives because gentrifiers need them to maintain their fantasy of authenticity. In other words, gentrifiers endorse those natives as authentic others who are different from their inauthentic selves, thus making the neighborhoods more diverse, enjoyable, and authentic (see Burnett, 2014; Lloyd, 2006; Tissot, 2014). For this

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reason, in retail gentrification, natives and newcomers physically coexist in the neighborhoods while creating more subtle dynamics of displacement than the mass eviction, which is typical of residential gentrification. In a similar context, previous gentrification studies have investigated how the longing for authenticity causes everyday violence and more-than-physical displacements by selectively authenticating original communities (Brown-Saracino, 2007; Kern, 2016) and socio-politically and symbolically disempowering them (Addie & Fraser, 2019; Hyra, 2015).

Nevertheless, it is not enough to explain the paradox of retail gentrification only in terms of the cultural exploitation and symbolic exclusion of authentic others, which still assume the impenetrable dichotomy of the authentic gentrified and the inauthentic gentrifier. Indeed, the subjects of retail gentrification continually cross the border between the gentrifier/gentrified and virtually become both. First, the border-crossing happens through the fantasy of authenticity, which sustains the subjects' desire for authentic selves/others (Ji, 2020). Gentrifiers' desire for authenticity not only guides them to distance themselves from original communities and consume others' authenticity, but also to become authentic beings by internalizing authentic others and externalizing inauthentic themselves (see Blum & Secor, 2011; Secor, 2013). Hence, some gentrifiers identify themselves with original communities while feeling gentrified and claim their right to the neighborhoods. This paradoxical desire for and fantasy of authenticity has been at the center of tourism studies as the primary motivation of tourists (e.g. Cohen, 1988; Knudsen et al., 2016; MacCannell, 1989; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; N. Wang, 1999). Unfortunately, gentrification studies have barely engaged with this psychic process of gentrifiers, despite its important role in retail gentrification by adhering to the socio-economic approaches.

Second, the relationally emergent subjectivities of retail gentrification also explain the border-crossings between the gentrifier/gentrified. The most famous example is the displacement of pioneer gentrifiers in "super gentrification" (Lees, 2003; see also Halasz, 2018; Ley, 2003); artists, bohemians, and hipsters are frequently displaced when the area becomes intensively re-gentrified by more affluent speculators and developers. From a lens of relational ontology, the key point of this example is not the power of money, although money is powerful. Rather, the key is the mobile subjects of displacement whose socio-spatial relations keep changing. The subjectivities of gentrifying or gentrified people do not indicate any essential identities that inhere in them. As previous gentrification studies demonstrated, privileged middle-class neighborhoods can become gentrified (Pinkster & Boterman, 2017) whilst original communities can become active gentrifiers themselves (Arkaraprasertkul, 2018). Put another way, urban players are always 'becoming gentrifier/d' in the heterogeneous space-times of gentrification where a thousand different encounters continue to twist and fold the mobius edge between gentrifier/gentrified (see Cockayne et al., 2020). In Seoul's context, understanding these emergent subjectivities is even more important in the research of retail gentrification, which involves the subtle but vibrant process of more-than-physical displacements, than residential gentrification, based on the coercive displacement of the have-nots by the haves.

1.2.3 Rhythms

Finally, we encounter a question: how can we examine gentrification without the concrete subjects of the gentrifying haves nor the gentrified have-nots? This dissertation suggests rhythmanalysis as one possible way to escape from the class-based and identity-

based dichotomies in gentrification studies. This is because a rhythmanalysis enables us to unravel affective, temporal, and animated everyday life, which is connected to broader socio-political relations but simultaneously reworks those relations on the ground (Lefebvre, 2004; see also Edensor & Holloway, 2008; Edensor, 2010a). Clearly, gentrification is a rhythmic process (see Kern, 2016; Langegger, 2016). The ambivalent, emergent subjects embody and enact gentrification via their spatio-temporal doings, feelings, and thinkings, which have rhythms. These rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d (re)shape and are (re)shaped by the space-times of gentrification and displacement. Accordingly, the rhythms, including speed, intensity, frequency, and variation, show the ever-changing dynamics of gentrification-induced displacements.

In this vein, Seoul's retail gentrification can be distinguished from residential gentrification in terms of its different spatio-temporal rhythms. In Seoul's residential gentrification, the whole process of urban renewal, from developing a plan, organizing a redevelopment association, getting authorization by the government, preselling condominiums, clearing out a neighborhood, constructing apartment complexes and, finally, to accomplishing move-in, takes 10 years on average. Throughout the process, original occupiers experience (in)direct displacement (Marcuse, 1985; see also Davidson, 2008; Slater, 2009). First, they are indirectly displaced from the neighborhoods even before the actual urban renewal is decided. "Displacement pressure," such as the rumor of expected redevelopment and the former experience or witness of eviction, makes poor residents continuously fear to be displaced (Doucet, 2009; Liu et al., 2017a). Once the redevelopment officially starts, residents without ownership are directly forced out because they do not have the right to participate in the redevelopment association and the presale

of condominiums. At the same time, low-income homeowners are also displaced if they cannot afford the construction costs and the increased housing prices. This (in)direct displacement in residential gentrification proceeds in the administrative, capitalist system of urban renewal, often without physical encounters or personal interactions between gentrifying and gentrified people. As a result, original communities are almost completely replaced by middle-class newcomers (Ha, 2004; S. Y. Lee, 2018).

On the other hand, Seoul's retail gentrification often happens in a few years. The process can be heuristically summarized as follow: 1) pioneer gentrifiers aesthetically upgrade old, dilapidated neighborhoods with small-scale, hip businesses, 2) the neighborhoods get famous as hip places in traditional and social media and attract urban tourists, as well as bigger chain stores and speculators, 3) increasing demand in the commercial property market raises rents and displaces low-margin retailers, often including pioneer gentrifiers, and 4) most resident-oriented businesses are priced-out whilst residents are excluded from their everyday lives and spaces (Jeong et al., 2015; Y. Yoon & Park, 2018). In the process, the major displacees are low-margin retailers, whether they are old-timers or newcomers (S. Y. Lee & Han, 2019), and residential tenants, particularly when their homes are changed for commercial use (Cho et al., 2020). Meanwhile, remaining residents are also emotionally and socio-politically displaced due to the intense commercialization and touristification (see Pinkster & Boterman, 2017; Spangler, 2019).

However, this is a highly generalized picture about the rhythms of retail gentrification. More heterogeneous space-times make differences in repetitions and distort the dichotomized relations of displacers and displacees. Indeed, there is no large-scale,

total eviction of original occupiers in retail gentrification. Hence, the displacement in retail gentrification draws upon the ongoing encounters and shifting relations between the gentrifier/gentrified. For instance, residents often feel out-of-place when their everyday spaces of streets and parks are occupied by visitors, especially during weekends. Yet, they might feel those places differently during weekdays. In this way, residents' feelings of displacement, which are generated through their temporal encounters with visitors, depend on specific space-times and thus are open to be changed in different contexts.

To take another example, old mom-and-pop shops often coexist with stylish restaurants and microbreweries in the same shopping street while infusing unique vibes into the street. Old laundries, bakeries, and flower shops allow visitors to glimpse the real lives of residents and to visualize their fantasies of authentic urban villages. This uncanny cohabitation of old and new businesses is possible because each shop has different landlord-tenant relations and business conditions. Some landlords raise rents and replace old shops with more profitable F&B businesses. Other landlords support old shops by freezing or even lowering rents. Some shops can manage the rent hikes because their businesses are so successful. Other shops go out of business not only because of high rents but also other reasons, typically a dearth of customers. In short, these repetitive but different encounters between the gentrifier/gentrified constantly (re)constitute the spatio-temporal rhythms of retail gentrification where the relations of displacers and displacees keep changing.

In sum, this dissertation project rethinks these aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms of retail gentrification in order to expand the existing debates around Seoul's gentrification, as well as psychic and rhythmic lives of retail gentrification. In particular, I

dismantle the class-based and identity-based approaches to gentrification-induced displacements by demonstrating the heterogeneous space-times and rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d on the ground.

1.3 Research Site

The research site of Seochon provides the ground for this project as the intersection where the discourses and practices of residential gentrification challenge and negotiate with those of retail gentrification. Seochon literally means *west village* in Korean (Figure 1.4). The place-name of Seochon originated from its location on the west side of Gyeongbok Palace, the main royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897 CE), and the Blue House, the executive office and official residence of the President of South Korea (Figure 1.5). Despite its historically and politically significant location, this neighborhood was barely known to the public and remained underdeveloped until the 2000s. This was chiefly due to the restriction of urban renewal. In order to prevent attacks from North Korean assassins and, more practically, democratic activists, the military dictatorship of South Korea (1963-1987) strongly regulated new construction in Seochon, in the form of height control (S. E. Choi & Lee, 2014). Consequently, as the rest of Seoul was filled with skyscrapers, Seochon was fossilized with its timeworn landscape, consisting of single-story *hanoks* (traditional Korean houses), low-rise buildings, unplanned streets, and traditional markets.
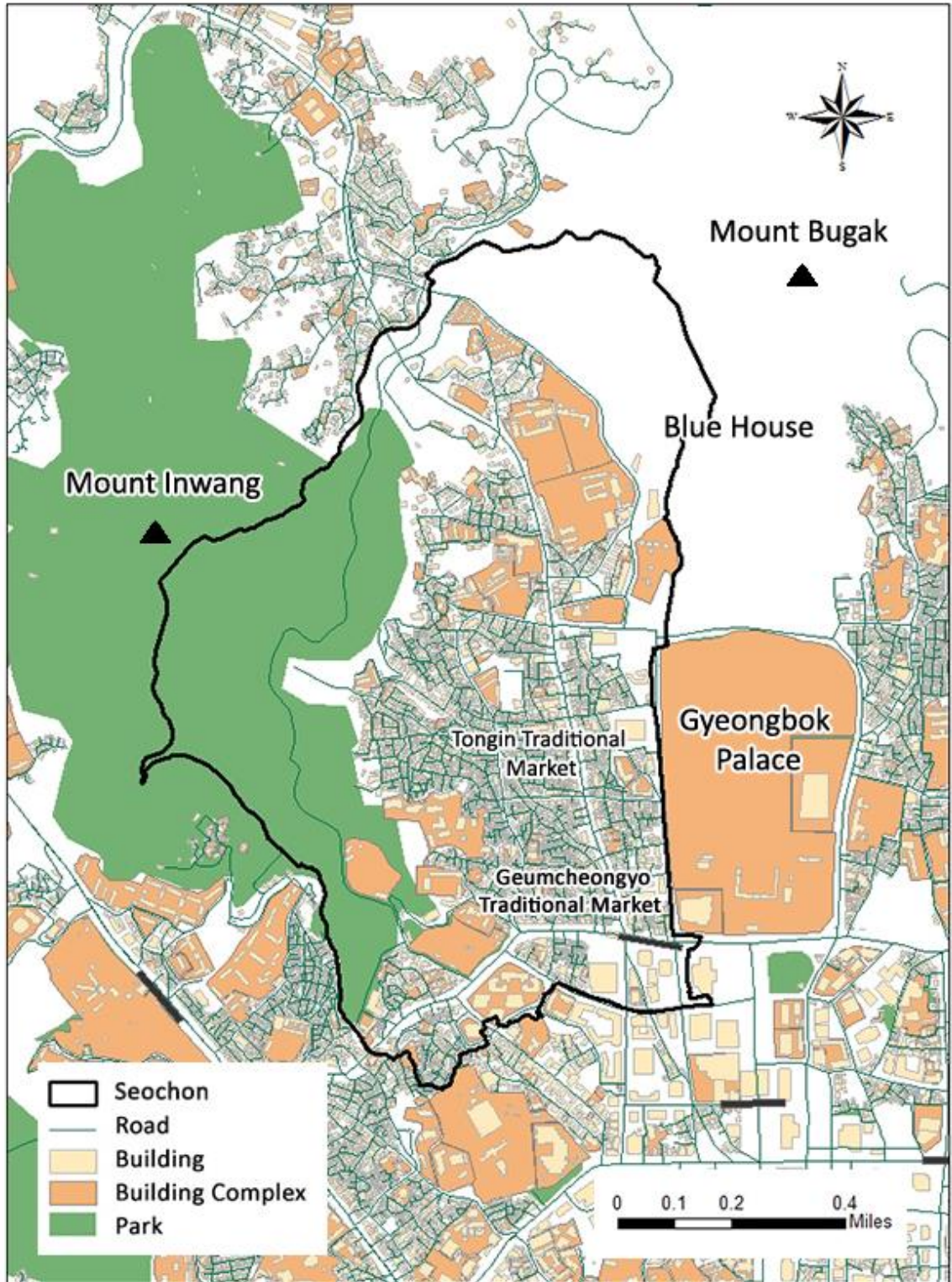
Figure 1.4 Map of Seochon and its surrounding area
Source: Map created by the author

Figure 1.5 Seochon on the left side of Gyeongbok Palace and the Blue House in 2005
Source: The Seoul Research Data Service (The Seoul Institute, 2020)

Figure 1.6 An inside view of Seochon
Source: Photograph by the author in 2019

Since the collapse of the dictatorship, residents of Seochon, especially homeowners, have urged urban renewal in pursuing better living conditions and modern condominiums. Accordingly, during the early 2000s, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) designated parts of Seochon as Prospective Housing Renewal Districts whilst property owners organized the redevelopment association for the JRP (S. Y. Yoon, 2016). However, the redevelopment plan was withdrawn under the regime of Major Oh (2006-2011), who was a passionate supporter of creative and cultural city marketing. As the SMG announced the historic preservation of *hanoks* in 2008, Seochon was selected as a cultural heritage site of *hanok village* due to its large number of extant *hanoks* (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2008, 2010).

This turn to historic preservation stopped large-scale, residential gentrification in Seochon. Nonetheless, it did not mean the end of its gentrification. Together with new urban tourism, motivated by the desire for authenticity, historic preservation facilitated intense retail gentrification in Seochon during the 2010s (S. B. Kim, 2015; H. J. Shin, 2015). Through aesthetic upgrading and commercializing with art galleries, boutiques, restaurants, and cafés, Seochon became a playground for urban adventurers. As I shortly mentioned above, this type of revitalization, based on the historical and cultural attractions of old, unique, and authentic neighborhoods, was new in the history of Seoul's urbanization. Hence, the term 'gentrification' was adopted in traditional and social media to describe this unfamiliar urban phenomenon that was more similar to what happened in Greenwich Village in New York City than any previous cases in Seoul.

In this context, Seochon became an archetype in showing Seoul's so-called "gentrification." Almost every Korean news article introducing gentrification explained

the popularization and commercialization of Seochon and pointed out their accompanying problems, such as the loss of place identity and the displacement of former retailers (typically Eum, 2014; H. K. Lee, 2017). This public narrative problematizes gentrification-induced displacements in Seochon. However, at the same time, it inspires further gentrification by romanticizing Seochon's nostalgic landscape and atmosphere as its authentic place identity. In other words, the news media, in bemoaning the displacement of extant residents and retailers, valorizes their existence and the landscape and atmosphere they create and embody—the very things that lead to retail gentrification in the first place. Another irony of this romanticized fantasy regarding authentic Seochon is that the majority of long-time residents, who are imagined as authentic, actually wanted urban renewal. Thus, residents are not only emotionally displaced from their everyday lives and spaces in the commercialization for visitors but also socio-politically disempowered while forcefully being preserved with their rundown houses.

In this way, Seochon becomes a controversial place where various subjects of gentrification encounter, support, and compete with each other to achieve their different interests and desires. While there can be no one-size-fits-all explanation for such a complex process, the cultural politics around authenticity play a crucial role in Seochon's gentrification in relation to historic preservation. What is authentic Seochon? Who decides it? Surrounding these questions, the subjects of gentrification are constantly becoming the authentic/inauthentic and the gentrifier/gentrified while doing, feeling, and thinking about Seochon differently. Therefore, the project highlights their differences, rather than their fixed class or identity groups, by analyzing the heterogeneous space-times and rhythms that they create (and which create them).

1.4 Research Methods

This dissertation project takes a qualitative approach by combining interviews, participant observation, and archival research of government documents and media coverage. In doing so, my aim is not to generalize Seoul's gentrification or retail gentrification globally. Rather, the project offers "broader stories with and about particularized realities" (Herbert, 2010, p. 74) through an analysis of the heterogeneous space-times of retail gentrification on the ground of Seochon. In the following subsections, I provide more details about data collection, analysis, interviews, participant observation, and my positionality throughout the fieldwork.

1.4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Following Lefebvre's suggestion that "to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been *grasped* by it" (2004, p. 27, emphases in original), I conducted 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Seochon, from July 2017 to August 2018, to situate myself inside the rhythms. During the first six-month phase, I concentrated on conducting individual interviews that I located through my personal network. For interviews and participant observation, I regularly visited Seochon and occasionally stayed in my friend's house or a guest house in Seochon. However, visiting places and observing others were not enough to grasp the more intimate moments of gentrification. Therefore, I started to work in a newly opened restaurant, *Seven Fortunes*, in January 2018. During this second phase of fieldwork, I also actively participated in a local foodie community, *Seochon Eaters*.

These engagements enabled me to catch less-visible, less-verbalized rhythms of gentrification and its accompanying displacement by becoming part of them.

As a result, collected data included 47 interview transcripts, field notes from participant observation, policy and ordinance documents about historic preservation, and traditional and social media coverage about gentrification. The archives were coded manually to draw out common and contrasting themes. In the process, I paid attention to how those themes recurred in relation to other themes while assembling, disassembling, and reassembling certain patterns (Crang, 2005; Dittmer, 2010). The broad categories of codes consist of redevelopment, historic preservation, place-name, media representation, commercialization, F&B business, property, rent, displacement, everyday life, etc. Initial coding of 27 interview transcripts occurred during early 2019 to prepare a manuscript for the peer-review journal *Cultural Geographies*. The manuscript has since been published online (Ji, 2020) and is included as chapter three. All data are in Korean. I translated them into English only when quoted directly in manuscripts.

1.4.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews enabled me to obtain vivid stories about people's experiences, emotions, and thoughts about Seochon and its retail gentrification (Bondi, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews followed a set of semi-structured, open-ended questions. Yet, I also gave interviewees room to take the lead in the conversation by allowing for flexibility within the interview itself (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Valentine, 2005). In sampling, I sought the rich and diverse stories of interviewees rather than their statistical representation (Kuzel, 1999). Consequently, I conducted 47 interviews with 50 individuals,

including three group interviews and three follow-up interviews. Interviewees consisted of 22 residents (including 3 former residents), 16 business owners (including 8 residents and 8 commuters), and 12 visitors (see Table 1.2). Interviewees included 25 men and 25 women, ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s. Broadly speaking, most residents and visitors were middle-class, white-collar workers.

Table 1.2 Gender, Age, and Occupation of Interview Participants[2]

#	Category	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Residence Status	Occupation
1	V1	Songju	Woman	30s	Visitor	Official
2	R1		Man	30s	Resident	Official
3	B1	Wonsik	Man	30s	Commuter	Café owner
4	R2		Man	20s	Former Resident	White-collar worker
5	R3		Man	20s	Resident	Blue-collar worker
6	B2	Junghee	Woman	40s	Commuter	Bar owner
7	R4		Woman	20s	Resident	College student
8	B3		Man	40s	Resident	Guesthouse owner
9	B4		Woman	50s	Commuter	Restaurant owner
10	V2	Namil	Man	50s	Visitor	Retiree
11	V3		Man	70s	Visitor	Retiree
12	V4	Minu	Man	30s	Visitor	White-collar worker
13	B5	Bora	Woman	40s	Resident	Property agent
14	B6	Mansu	Man	50s	Resident	Property agent
15	B7		Man	50s	Commuter	Property agent
16	B8		Man	30s	Resident	Guesthouse owner
17	B9		Woman	30s	Commuter	Café owner
18	R5		Man	30s	Resident	White-collar worker
19	V5		Woman	20s	Visitor	Blue-collar worker
20	R6	Hana	Woman	40s	Resident	Housewife
21	R7	Doona	Woman	40s	Resident	Housewife
22	R8	Sena	Woman	40s	Resident	Housewife
23	V6	Yumi	Woman	30s	Visitor	White-collar worker
24	R9	Kitaek	Man	40s	Resident	White-collar worker

[2] Category V, R, and B indicate visitor, resident, and business owner in sequence.

Table 1.2 Gender, Age, and Occupation of Interview Participants (Continued)

#	Category	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Residence Status	Occupation
25	R10		Woman	30s	Resident	White-collar worker
26	R11	Sunja	Woman	50s	Resident	Restaurant employee
27	B10		Woman	50s	Resident	Restaurant owner
28	R12		Woman	50s	Resident	Housewife
29	B11		Woman	50s	Resident	Alterations owner
30	R13		Woman	50s	Former Resident	Housewife
31	R14	Misook	Woman	60s	Resident	Housewife
32	V7		Woman	30s	Visitor	Official
33	R15		Man	80s	Resident	Retiree
34	R16		Woman	30s	Former Resident	Official
35	V8		Man	40s	Visitor	Official
36	B12		Man	50s	Commuter	Butcher shop owner
37	R17		Woman	30s	Resident	White-collar worker
38	B13	Jungmin	Man	50s	Resident	Business owner
39	R18		Man	30s	Resident	Local activist
40	V9		Man	30s	Visitor	White-collar worker
41	V10		Woman	30s	Visitor	White-collar worker
42	R19	Sooho	Man	70s	Resident	Local activist
43	R20		Man	20s	Resident	College student
44	B14		Woman	30s	Commuter	Café owner
45	B15		Man	50s	Commuter	Bar owner
46	R21		Woman	50s	Resident	Housewife
47	V11		Man	50s	Visitor	White-collar worker
48	R22		Man	30s	Resident	White-collar worker
49	V12		Woman	20s	Visitor	Graduate student
50	B16	Hyoshin	Man	40s	Resident	Restaurant owner

I employed the recruitment methods of snowball sampling, door knocking, and street recruiting. During the first phase of fieldwork, I recruited most interviewees through my personal network. Fortunately, I had several friends who lived in or worked near Seochon. They participated in interviews and/or introduced me to other residents and regular visitors. Part of these interviewees were officials working at government buildings around the Blue House and the Seoul City Hall very close to Seochon. In order to recruit

shop owners, I visited their shops and asked their willingness to participate in an interview. However, this strategy of door knocking was not an efficient way to recruit F&B business owners, because they were always busy during their open hours. Therefore, I patronized local cafés and restaurants and focused on building good relationships with owners, rather than directly requesting interview participation. Finally, I recruited visitors by spending time in famous tourist destinations and talking with random people who seemed to be visitors, such as those who took photographs. After I started to work at Seven Fortunes, the recruitment became much easier. One of my co-workers, who was a long-time resident of Seochon, introduced me to a variety of residents, particularly senior natives. Additionally, my position as a local restaurant server helped me more easily approach shop owners and regular visitors.

All interviews were undertaken in Korean and typically lasted between one to two hours. Interviewees chose the interview locations, which were most commonly cafés in Seochon. At the same time, some interviews were conducted in multiple places, especially when they spontaneously became walking interviews. During interviews, I took detailed notes on observations and thoughts while recording interviews when permission was granted by interview participants. Audio files were subsequently transcribed and coded. Most interviews were one-on-one whilst three interviews were conducted with two (with R9 and R10) or more participants (R6, R7, and R8, as well as B13, R18, V9, and V10). These three group interviews were not planned yet unintentionally happened in arising circumstances by incorporating multiple participants into a conversation. Certainly, during the course of fieldwork, the interview style was modified depending on the given situation, as well as each interviewee's personality and rapport with me. Thus, some interviews were

more structured and formal, whereas others were more fluid and informal, given the nature of everyday life and personal relationships.

1.4.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation provided a deeper understanding of how people embody and enact retail gentrification on the ground while continuously distorting the dynamics of displacement. To be specific, I was able to capture more intimate and nuanced rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d by observing and participating in the daily practices and interactions in Seochon (Herbert, 2000; Watson & Till, 2010). Indeed, throughout the fieldwork, I became a gentrifier and simultaneously gentrified. I wrote detailed fieldwork diaries based on what I saw, did, felt, and thought. While notetaking occurred throughout participant observation, I documented various space-times of Seochon with photographs and videos (Dowling et al., 2016).

First, I walked and occupied street spaces (shopping streets, back alleys, and traditional street markets) day and night to see how people's movements and encounters on the streets composed certain spatio-temporal rhythms. I also frequented local restaurants, cafés, and bars to glimpse how certain objects and experiences were produced and consumed as authentic in those shops. Furthermore, my participation in Seochon Eaters—a local community promoting neighborships and local businesses by eating out together—broadened my experience and understanding of Seochoners and foodie culture. In this way, I entered myself into Seochon and its retail gentrification, particularly as a foodie gentrifier who invaded the everyday spaces of residents and supported the new commercial scene in a search for authentic Seochon.

At the same time, working at Seven Fortunes blurred my positionality between the gentrifier/gentrified, as well as the researcher/researched. Seven Fortunes was a *hanok* restaurant serving typical Korean dishes, including *miyeok-guk* (seaweed soup) and *japchae* (stir-fried glass noodle). It opened in January 2018, and I was its first employee. As a founding team member, I was able to closely watch the ways in which authenticity was reinvented in a hipster-oriented F&B business. Indeed, the owner created unique vibes for Seven Fortunes in order to attract "our culturally conscious customers," to borrow her words. She mixed various retro symbols in the restaurant, reflecting not only Korean but also Western cultures.

For example, although the building of Seven Fortunes was *hanok*, its interior was decorated with European-style teacups, a stained-glass chandelier, and a vintage pendulum clock. My bodily performance also contributed to that heterogeneous mixture generating authenticity; I was instructed to wear a French-style hairband and apron while working. Our customers appreciated those (in)authentically mixed styles of the past and often told me that Seven Fortunes was the restaurant best-fit to Seochon because its authentic atmosphere inspired their nostalgia, as Seochon did. Although Seven Fortunes earned a good reputation in Seochon, its business failed to succeed. Owing to a small number of customers compared to a high rent and the owner's personal issues, Seven Fortunes went out of business in May 2019, only five months after it first opened. I was fired, and subsequently, the restaurant was replaced by another hip F&B business with new owners.

In sum, I was a gentrifier who formed a new normative rhythm for non-residents and, simultaneously, became gentrified as I lost the place where I belonged in Seochon. Put differently, throughout the fieldwork, my positionality constantly changed as I crossed

the borders between the gentrifier/gentrified, the producer/consumer of authenticity, and the researcher/researched of my project. This lived experience of border-crossings has led me to challenge the dichotomous frameworks of gentrification and displacement, which have been persistent in previous studies. Consequently, the findings presented in this dissertation provide alternative views moving beyond the dichotomies in the gentrification debates.

1.5 Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation is written in a three-article dissertation format based on three manuscripts, which have either been published or submitted for publication to three different journals. These articles are combined here as the middle chapters (two, three, and four) and joined by the introduction and conclusion.

Chapter two explores how Seochon aesthetically becomes an authentic urban village by drawing upon the concept of simulacra—copies without resemblance to their models. Specifically, I challenge the Platonic division of 'good and bad' in historic preservation through the post-structural lenses of Baudrillard and Deleuze. Although heritage-led gentrification literature has frequently criticized simulacra as bad copies of good past which devalue the authenticity of cultural heritage, all the discourses and practices of historic preservation are inevitably simulacra. To emphasize the emptiness of authentic heritage, the chapter examines the ongoing process of reinventing and reassembling the hyperreal simulacra of the past, as well as the affective imaginations and embodied experiences of various urban players in the process. In doing so, I demonstrate how the simulacra, not the models, really work in historic preservation and gentrification.

In short, the chapter shows that the divergent movements of simulacra continue to escape from any ideal representations of the past. Therefore, I argue that, for more capacious historic preservation, we should support alternative movements of simulacra that affirm all possible imaginations and experiences of (and beyond) the past. This chapter has been submitted to the journal *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

Chapter three discusses the ambivalent subjects of retail gentrification by drawing upon the Lacanian understanding of subjectivity, desire, and fantasy. As I briefly stated above, gentrification studies have well documented how gentrifiers' alternative consumption practices of seeking authenticity lead to retail gentrification. However, they pay scant attention to their paradoxical practices: gentrifiers continue to take part in gentrification by consuming authenticity, even as they criticize the gentrification-driven loss of authenticity. In this context, this chapter explains how the fantasy of authenticity sustains this paradox while facilitating the ongoing retail gentrification. To be specific, I illuminate the toponym debate in the neighborhood. Indeed, Seochon is not the only name of the research site, although it is its most famous nickname. Various subjects of gentrification name the neighborhood differently—Seochon and Sejong Village—and claim that their own name is more authentic than the other. In and beyond this toponym debate, the fantasy of authenticity allows the subjects to constantly cross the borders of authentic/inauthentic and gentrifier/gentrified, and thus, reinvest their endless desire for something more authentic. Ultimately, by bridging psychoanalysis and gentrification studies, I argue that we, as the subjects of gentrification, should take responsibility for our compelling desire for and fantasy of authenticity to challenge the cycle of the continuing retail gentrification. This chapter has been published in the journal *Cultural Geographies*.

Finally, chapter four challenges the structured battle between the displacing haves (gentrifier) and the displaced have-nots (gentrified). Moving beyond this revanchist dichotomy, I develop a new framework that can account for in-betweens, who float around the topological edges of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced while constantly becoming gentrifier/d. In doing so, I critically revisit the concepts of displacement, topology, and rhythm by inviting Lefevre, Deleuze, and Guattari into the conversation. I also empirically demonstrate how the topological in-betweens live through the transcoding rhythms. This rhythmanalysis underscores mobile subjects of gentrification and thus enables us to grasp the heterogeneous space-times and differences within gentrification. Consequently, I argue that more convincing urban justice movements are possible not by solidifying the class-based and identity-based battles, but by recognizing the potential of in-betweens and their rhythms of becoming that continue to reshape the dynamics of displacements on the ground. This chapter has been submitted to the journal *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers*.

1.6 Conclusion

I began this chapter by illustrating a gap between academic and public understandings of Seoul's gentrification. Whereas academia has defined the state-sponsored, large-scale, residential urban renewal as an exemplar of Seoul's gentrification, the contemporary public discourses and practices of gentrification have been more associated with the complex aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms of retail gentrification. In order to fill this gap, this dissertation project builds new frameworks that address the symbolic, psychic, and spatio-temporal processes of retail gentrification. Hence, the project

contributes to the broader literature of urban and cultural studies while providing a more nuanced and textured analysis of gentrification, specifically in Seoul's contexts, which have been understudied and dominated by political economy.

On the one hand, the project engages with epistemological and ontological limitations in previous gentrification studies by employing poststructural approaches to gentrification and displacement. Specifically, I dismantle the dualistic ideas of good/bad, authentic/inauthentic, and gentrifier/gentrified and reconceptualize the ambivalent and mobile subjects of gentrification, who are becoming gentrifier/d. Therefore, the project highlights differences within and beyond the monstrously imagined gentrification while opening an alternative avenue to more convincing and capacious anti-gentrification movements.

On the other hand, this project empirically demonstrates this theoretical reframing. Drawing on in-depth ethnography in Seochon, I show the ways in which various subjects of gentrification place themselves in the neighborhood by reinventing authenticity and ex/including their imagined (in)authentic selves/others. Throughout various cultural politics around what authentic Seochon is, the subjects are becoming gentrifier/d. In doing so, the project unfolds the fantasy of authenticity as well as the heterogeneous space-times of gentrification, which are built upon people's desires, imaginations, embodiments, and performances. This theoretical and empirical revisit enables us to mirror ourselves onto gentrification and to bear our responsibility in challenging the gentrification-induced displacements that we create (and which create us). Ultimately, the project offers new possibilities to challenge gentrification by demystifying its paradoxical aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms.

Chapter 2 ALL POSSIBLE PASTS: HERITAGE, SIMULACRA, AND GENTRIFICATION IN SEOUL

2.1 Rethinking Simulacra in Historic Preservation

Marketing cultural and historical attractions has become a common strategy to improve the global competitiveness of postindustrial cities as it remakes urban space more desirable (Florida, 2005; J. Wang et al., 2015). In particular, historic preservation and heritage designation have contributed to urban regeneration (Chang, 2016; Su, 2011). The case of Seochon in Seoul, South Korea, illuminates how historic marketing and branding add new value to devalued old urban fabrics. Seochon is a nickname of an old neighborhood on the west side of Gyeongbok Palace—the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty, which means *west village* in Korean. Given its politically significant location, right next to the Blue House—the official residence of the President of South Korea, any high-rise construction project in Seochon has been strongly controlled by the state. Accordingly, Seochon has been unwittingly preserved with its old-time landscape of single-story *hanoks* (traditional Korean houses), narrow alleys, and mountains behind the neighborhood (Figure 1). Since the late 2000s, this nostalgic landscape has been celebrated as a palimpsest displaying the past of Seoul. When the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) designated Seochon as a historic preservation district of *hanok village* in 2010, this previously underdeveloped neighborhood became a cultural heritage where people could experience an authentic urban village of the past.
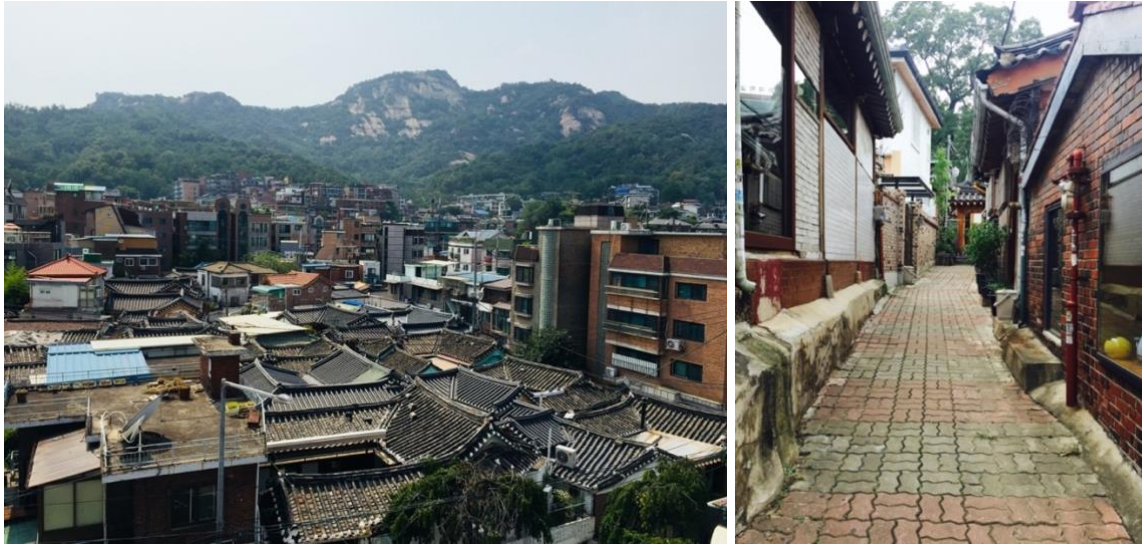
Figure 2.1 Nostalgic landscapes of Seochon with hanoks and alleys
Source: Photographs by the author in 2019

As previous urban scholarship points out, this heritage-led revalorization often leads to gentrification by bringing new investment, public attention, middle-class newcomers, and urban tourists into the neighborhoods (Cesari & Dimova, 2019; Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; W. Shaw, 2005). The real estate market thrives while transforming residential buildings into commercial and tourist-oriented properties (Arkaraprasertkul, 2018; H. B. Shin, 2010). New restaurants, microbreweries, and accommodations replace old retail stores where residents bought daily goods and services (see Zukin et al., 2009; Hubbard, 2017). The retail transformation and economic revitalization displace residential and commercial tenants who cannot afford the increasing rental prices. Locals are also affectively excluded from their social spaces and everyday lives as newcomers and new businesses for visitors colonize their neighborhood (see Linz, 2017; Spangler, 2019).

Indeed, historic branding often involves the selective and exclusive processes that "legitimate certain users over others through the creation of a 'single-minded' space"

(Masuda & Bookman, 2018, p. 171). In the process, the present lives of neighborhoods are often disregarded, whereas certain images and styles of the past are romanticized and promoted as "authentic" (see Brown-Saracino, 2009; Kern, 2016). Therefore, literature regarding historic preservation has doubted the "staged authenticity" of heritage (MacCannell, 1973), especially when the preservation efforts only obsess about physical, aesthetic, and marketable aspects of heritage and do not support the sustainability of local communities (e.g. H. B. Shin, 2010; Su, 2011; Xu et al., 2014; Delgadillo, 2016). This aesthetic and commercial exploitation are particularly criticized as a "fraud" of *simulacra*—copies without resemblance to models—that degrade the "honesty" of heritage by creating a "cannibalistic relationship between customers and heritage that replaces the original bond between the local residents and their everyday spaces" (Martínez, 2016, p. 55). This criticism emphasizes how the simulacra of heritage disrupt the authentic local life and thus puts heritage in danger of losing its authenticity.

However, what is the authenticity of heritage? Put another way, is it possible to distinguish true heritage and false simulacra? Is it possible to abolish the heritage-led gentrification by removing the simulacra? Following these questions, this article dismantles the Platonic dichotomies of true/false, model/copy, and real/fantasy in preserving the past while escaping from a "will to select, to sort out" good and bad (Deleuze, 1983, p. 45). I argue that all the discourses and practices of historic preservation are inevitably simulacra. Indeed, preserving the ideal heritage of the past is impossible because the past (model) is a fantasy that "emerges as being-lost" (Žižek, 2008a, p. 15). The past emerges only once we lose it. Therefore, the preservation of the past is a paradoxical practice that keeps recreating the past through its continuing ruination. In other

words, there is no ideal heritage of the past, only its simulacra that dissimulate the emptiness of their model (see Baudrillard, 1994).

This post-structural revisit to the concept of simulacra enables us to grasp the inherent limitation of historic preservation. By moving beyond the dominant policies and practices of historic preservation that only safeguards good images of the past while displacing others, this article highlights the theoretical and empirical usefulness of simulacra in the heritage-led gentrification debate (Cesari & Dimova, 2019; W. Shaw, 2005). To be specific, my aim is not to make any perfect guidelines for historic preservation, if any, with a selective list of good and bad, because this attempt will inevitably justify displacement in any form and might cause further gentrification under the name of anti-gentrification in heritagization. Instead, I argue that a more capacious historic preservation is possible not by protecting the idealized past but by attending to differences within all possible pasts (and presents) as the simulacra.

To support this argument, this article explores how simulacra, not models, really work in historic preservation and its accompanying gentrification. My findings draw on governmental documents, media coverage, and 13-months of qualitative fieldwork in Seochon hanok village. I first analyze how selective images and styles of hanoks are socio-politically assembled and idealized as the authentic past. Then, I disassemble those idealized images and styles by demonstrating how affective imaginations and embodied experiences of various urban players differently simulate Seochon and its imaginarily authentic past. Consequently, this article offers a new political possibility for the anti-gentrification debate in historic preservation by demystifying the divergent movements and differences in reinventing and reassembling the past. Overturning the Platonic idealization

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in heritage-oriented urban planning, therefore, allows us to become part of alternative movements of simulacra that affirm all possible imaginations and experiences of (and beyond) the past.

2.2 Locating Historic Preservation in the Context of Seochon in Seoul

Before exploring the specific case of Seochon hanok village, this section offers the background of discourses and practices of historic preservation in Seoul. Since the Korean War, Seoul's rapid population growth has caused a chronic housing shortage. The state has facilitated the mass construction of high-density, high-rise apartment complexes to provide sufficient residential infrastructure by reducing the state's administrative and financial burden and expanding the private sector's role in the process (Lukens, 2020; H. B. Shin, 2009). The modernized apartment has become a major housing type in Seoul with support from the developmental state. Accordingly, property owners gained a colossal amount of development profits, whereas the former low-income residents and tenants were evicted with no or little compensation (Ha, 2004; S. Y. Lee, 2018). Literature has introduced this residential urban renewal as the archetype of Seoul's gentrification and emphasized its endogenous process of speculative urban redevelopment (typically H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). In this context, old, rundown neighborhoods were stigmatized as urban decay that should be fixed through clearance, by virtue of modernist development and capital accumulation.

Nevertheless, new public discourses and practices arose during the 2000s; people started to recognize the historical and cultural value of urban villages. As the total destruction of old urban fabrics has made Seoul fraught with repetitive, uniform apartment

buildings, old, dilapidated neighborhoods have become special places with their retro landscape of the 1960s and 70s. In short, urban villages have become rare and thus valued (Appadurai, 1981). The broader socio-political changes in South Korea contributed to this shifting perspective. In the late 1980s, South Korea officially became a democratic state through struggles against the long-standing military dictatorship regime. This political overthrow provided opportunities for various urban social movements, including resistance against slash-and-burn redevelopment and displacement, while cultivating a series of urban rights discourses (H. B. Shin, 2018). At the same time, this emancipatory aspiration composed the "consumer society," based on new urban ways of life, where consumption as a "socialized exchange of signs" symbolically functions for differentiation (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 93). Together with considerable individual wealth and purchasing power from rapid economic growth during the 1970s through the 80s, new urban middle-class started to express itself through buying commodities and exploiting their symbolic, aesthetic, and cultural value beyond use value (S.-K. Kim, 2002).

Meanwhile, individual consumers have become one of the key actors of urban change by reforming the microscale power structure (W. K. Jo, 2014). This new urban cultural politics has intertwined with the discourses and practices of historic preservation pursuing place-based uniqueness, originality, and "authenticity" (see Zukin, 2010). People appreciate the charm of old neighborhoods, which have long been disregarded by the speculative interest and modernist redevelopment projects. Their fossilized landscape inspires people's fantasy of authentic urban life of the past, which makes those neighborhoods distanced from contemporary Seoul. This symbolic landscape and its phantasmatic distance evoke an aura (Benjamin, 2008) and nostalgia for imagined

"humane, intimate, stable, and satisfying" urban villages (Meinig, 1979, p. 183). Reflecting this yearning for authentic urban villages, Jane Jacobs' influential book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), was translated into Korean in 2010. Public media and academia have constituted the discourse of historic preservation to discover and recover meanings that are inscribed in old neighborhoods. Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Naver Blogs—the biggest Korean searching engine, have also reproduced and distributed the nostalgic fantasy of urban villages with landscape images and visit experiences. This preservation discourse can be summarized with one newspaper article's title of "In Search of a Lost Village" (Hyeon, 2009).

Historic preservation initiatives are not only generated by this public enthusiasm for the past, but also by governments. In South Korea, and East Asia broadly, the national and local governments have been one of the most powerful urban players as they have "mutated over time vis-a-vis pressures" of diverse "political economic conjunctures" (H. B. Shin et al., 2016, p. 464). During the 2000s, the SMG partially reconsidered the modernist urban renewal plan of the traditional downtown Seoul and payed attention to historic preservation (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2000). Indeed, under the regime of mayor Lee (2002-2006) and Oh (2006-2011), the entrepreneurial governments marketized a brand of Seoul by restoring and recreating its natural, historical, and cultural attractions to magnetize global investment and tourism and thus boost the local economy (Križnik, 2012; Y.-S. Lee & Hwang, 2012).

On the one hand, under the slogan of environmental/creative city-making, several urban mega-construction projects were achieved, including the Cheonggye Stream restoration and the Dongdaemun Design Plaza construction (Bowen, 2015). On the other

hand, old urban villages with hanoks were selected and promoted as cultural heritages of hanok villages representing the past of Seoul (Yun, 2017). As a pilot case, Bukchon (north village)—a high-class wealthy neighborhood with luxurious hanoks during the Joseon dynasty—was designated as the first hanok village and nurtured as a tourist destination (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2001). Since Bukchon was successfully branded as an upscale hanok village, the SMG decided to broaden the target to the entirety of Seoul and announced the "Hanok Declaration" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2008). The former Seoul mayor, Oh, described this hanok preservation and promotion as follows: "We will create a new and innovative hanok complex for the contemporary Seoul" (H. J. Jo, 2008). His use of words, such as "new" and "innovative," patently shows how seemingly contradictory principles of preservation and development are intertwined in a discourse of hanok village in transforming the urban decay of the past into the future asset.

In this context, Seochon was selected as an additional hanok preservation district with 668 hanoks in 2010 (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2010). The following sections explore how (dis)simulating the past actualizes the urban changes regarding historic preservation and gentrification in Seochon. In doing so, I demonstrate the processes of assembling, dissembling, and reassembling the simulacra of an authentic urban village. The findings are based on the SMG's policies and ordinances about Seochon hanok village, traditional and social media coverage, and ethnographic research in Seochon. Specifically, I conducted 47 interviews with 50 individuals including 3 group interviews and 3 follow-up interviews from July 2017 to August 2018. Interviewees consisted of 22 residents (including 3 former residents), 16 business owners (8 residents and 8 commuters), and 12 visitors. Interviews were conducted in Korean and then translated by the author while

cultural consultants guided the translation of quotations. All names of interviewees in the following are pseudonyms. Along with the interview transcripts, the copious field notes from participant observation—working in a newly opened restaurant and engaging in a local foodie community—enhance the validity of the qualitative data.

2.3 The Simulacra of the Ideal Past: "*Such hanoks are elsewhere, not here*."

> [The image] is the reflection of a profound reality;
> it masks and denatures a profound reality;
> it masks the absence of a profound reality;
> it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum.
>
> (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6)

Through heritagization, Seochon has been symbolically and materially recreated as a hanok village where the simulacra of authentic hanoks are reinvented, staged, and consumed. Here, the simulacra do not indicate copies that attempt to identically replicate or imitate ideal hanoks of the past. The simulacra rather disprove an assumption of the ideal hanoks. As Baudrillard (1994) and Deleuze (1983, 1994) both explain, the *simulation*—making and doing simulacra—is opposed to normative representation, which is founded on the axiom of resemblance to a model. The simulation does not aim to simulate the model; rather, it dissimulates that "there is nothing" and "everything is already dead and resurrected in advance" (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6). In this sense, the legal definition of hanoks is noteworthy: hanoks are wood-based buildings that reflect the "traditional *style* of Korea" (emphasis added).[3] Put differently, there is no such thing as an authentic hanok, only its styles. For this reason, creating Seochon hanok village is a socio-political process

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[3] Act on Value Enhancement of Hanok and Other Architectural Assets, Article 2.

of authentication that keeps reinventing and authorizing what traditional Korean styles are (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; L. Smith, 2006). As good images, the selected styles of hanoks mask the emptiness of the model of authentic hanoks while excluding others as bad images.
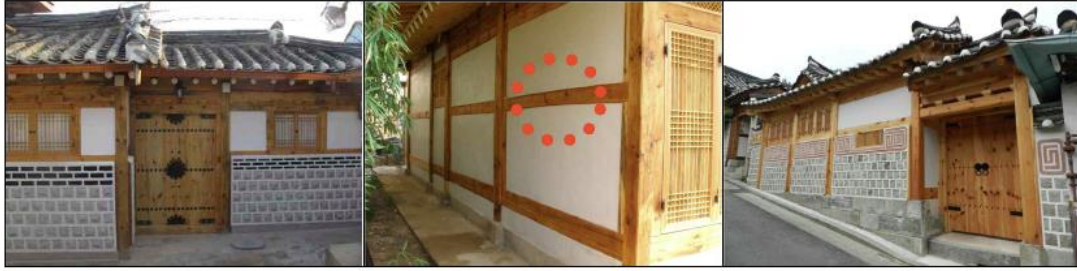
Figure 2.2 Images of good and bad hanoks
Source: The SMG Hanok Guideline (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2014)

The SMG has assembled some ideal styles of hanoks with the District Unit Plan (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2010, 2016). The plan controls construction, extension, and alteration of Seochon's buildings in terms of use, height, size, form, material, and even exterior paint color. The plan also clarifies required and preferred styles of hanoks, concerning roof, façade, layout, fence, and door. To be specific, the SMG Hanok Commission authorizes those ideal hanok styles as an "authenticator" (see Brown-Saracino,

2007). The commission's guideline of hanok construction and remodeling draws on the extant hanok buildings (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2014). Yet, it does not mean that all varying styles of buildings are accepted as authentic hanoks. In the guideline, diverse hanoks are evaluated and categorized as good and bad examples; the ideal styles of hanoks are reinvented and reassembled with vivid red marks of O and X on various photos (Figure 2.2). Moreover, not only hanoks, but also the overall landscape of Seochon, including non-hanok buildings, streets, signboards, and night-lights, is regulated to create a harmonious image of a hanok village and thus make the brand of Seochon more appealing. Simultaneously, aesthetic words, such as idyllic, natural, elegant, and beautiful, keep recurring in the detailed guidelines about how to rearrange Seochon's landscape.

To sum up, the SMG's plan of historic preservation aestheticizes and privileges a certain landscape of the imagined past (Schein, 1997; Duncan & Duncan, 2004). This symbolic landscape of the past does not represent actual buildings—that are assumed as hanoks—or their surroundings. Rather, it is a simplified, beautified, and authorized image of the past. This authentication through landscape control becomes a "cultural lever for claiming space" that frequently "coincides with the politicians' rhetoric of growth" (Zukin, 2009, p. 551; see also Borges, 2017). Indeed, the plan serves for marketing and branding Seochon hanok village as a charming image-maker of Seoul. In other words, the District Unit Plan and accompanying Hanok Guideline do not aim to maintain the extant old urban fabrics, although the SMG insists that the past, as the model of historic preservation, is embedded in them. Instead, the SMG socio-politically and imaginarily authenticates what a real hanok is with selective styles and images of hanoks in reality. Consequently, the

SMG's attempt to preserve a 'good' heritage is based on the simulacra by blurring the borders between model/copy and good/bad.

At the same time, not everyone is captivated by the top-down plan, as deciding what to preserve is always associated with contests and conflicts (see H. Shin & Stevens, 2013). Property owners have been unwelcoming to the District Unit Plan because it polices not only hanoks, which are about one-fourth of Seochon's buildings, but also the rest of non-hanoks for the historical and cultural washing of Seochon as a homogeneous hanok village (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2016; S. Y. Yoon, 2016, pp. 61–75). The SMG financially supports hanok construction with subsidies and loans to mitigate this complaint.[4] To obtain this financial support, however, buildings should be certified as hanoks by the Hanok Commission. As I stated above, not all extant hanoks can officially become hanoks. Therefore, even though the SMG justified the plan with the large number of hanok buildings in Seochon, designated hanoks were only around 23% of total hanoks and less than 6% of total buildings in 2016 (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2019). Sooho (non-hanok owner-dweller, male, 70s) criticized the plan because it fails to reflect either the present landscape or local needs.

> Our neighborhood doesn't solely consist of hanoks. I don't think it is right if non-hanok buildings forcefully sacrifice their development to preserve hanoks. [...] With the plan, we should be able to develop our neighborhood as much as possible in a balanced way. If the plan goes too far with hanoks, I think, it also will break the balance. I agree that we need to curb so-called 'indiscriminate' development. But who decided what is indiscriminate?

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[4] The Ordinance on Hanok Preservation and Promotion was enacted in 2001 and revised over time. As of 2018, the SMG aids rebuilding hanoks with a maximum of 50,000 dollars (60 million won) of subsidy. When a non-hanok building is reconstructed as a hanok, the subsidy increases to around 66,000 dollars (80 million won).

Indeed, property owners have long insisted on modernist urban renewal and anticipated the accompanying profits. Thanks to their persistent demands since the 1990s, parts of Seochon—Ogin-dong, Chebu-dong, Nuha-dong, Pirun-dong—were categorized as Prospective Housing Renewal Districts and were highly expected to be redeveloped into condominiums before the designation of hanok village (S. E. Choi & Lee, 2014; S. Y. Yoon, 2016). For this reason, many hanoks have been neglected for decades because residents believed that their houses would soon be demolished and redeveloped. They have chosen to endure an inconvenient living in rundown houses while waiting for a new, modernist condominium.

Some residents have also doubted the aesthetic value of Seochon's hanoks by disagreeing with outsiders' romanticized views. Indeed, most hanoks in Seochon were built by real-estate developers in the early 20th century. Like Levittown in the United States, identical, small urban hanoks were constructed for low-income urban residents. Their structures, roofs, and walls have been irregularly altered over time depending on the practical need of that moment while not caring about the aesthetic look. Therefore, for residents, Seochon's extant hanoks are considered somewhat undesirable. Sunja (female, 50s), a non-hanok owner-dweller, degraded hanoks in Seochon by comparing them to other big, stylized, and beautiful hanoks in her imagination:

> Seochon's hanoks are tiny and almost collapsed. Is it maybe because I see them daily? I don't think so. Honestly speaking, they're just not pretty. I've never seen any hanok in our neighborhood that I think like, 'Oh, it is so good. I want to live in this honok.' *Such hanoks are elsewhere, not here* (emphasis added).

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For Sunja, good (authentic) hanoks are not in Seochon. They imaginarily exist elsewhere as the simulacra of ideal images and styles of hanoks.

Seochon was designated as a hanok village because it has a significant number of hanoks. However, ironically, neither the SMG nor residents regard those extant buildings as worthy of being preserved. What is cherished in historic preservation is not the extant buildings, but the simulacra of the idealized past that already murdered their own model and now generate *hyperreality* without having the real (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6). In other words, the reinvented images and styles of ideal hanoks become more beautiful and authentic than their models while screening the presence and/or absence of ideal hanoks in reality. In this sense, the authentic heritage is not necessarily squelched by the bad simulacra. Rather, authenticity itself is a fantasy, which constantly deludes people to believe that there is something more authentic (Knudsen et al., 2016; Ji, 2020). The authentic hanoks and authentic living in those hanoks—which people appreciate, value, and believe should be preserved—are not in Seochon; they are the simulacra of idealized images and styles. Those simulacra are important not because of their real presence but because of their real effect. Hence, what I demonstrate in the following passage is not whether the simulacra of Seochon hanok village are real or not, but what the simulacra really 'do' on the ground.

2.4 Simulating the Hyperreal Past: "*We can feel the old vibe. That is here.*"

Seochon became a famous tourist destination in the early 2010s. Its simulacra inspire people's imagination and nostalgia for an authentic urban village of the past and simultaneously enhance the brand value of Seochon. This revalorization based on

simulacra also motivates real estate speculation while increasing rental prices (see H. B. Shin, 2010). Bora (female, 40s), a local property agent who has run her business for 15 years, described historic preservation as a new name for development. According to her, despite the regulation and restriction on Seochon's properties, their prices have at least doubled, and at max quintupled since 2010.

> Most people think the District Unit Plan is a preservation policy. But, from my view, it is more about development. . . . Since the designation of hanok village, the price of property has constantly increased. Yes. There are more regulations and restrictions. But, you know what? More properties have been on the market, and lots of residential properties have become commercial. Why? Because the plan aims for development!

The SMG's efforts at authenticating and promoting Seochon hanok village have contributed to this cultural and economic revitalization. In the main street of Seochon, you can easily find newly constructed hanoks, which display some degree of authenticity in their façades. However, as I previously illustrated, the extant landscape of Seochon is not like its simulacra; neither are all buildings hanoks, nor are all hanoks stylized as 'good' hanoks. Rather, Seochon is visually miscellaneous with a wide range of buildings for various uses. Therefore, even Bora, who emphasized the speculative value of Seochon, admitted that Seochon is not yet an attractive heritage tourism destination, because it does not have many historical attractions to sightsee.

Nevertheless, on the ground, Seochon magnetize the public attention and visitors not only because of its visible spectacle but also its invisible hyperreality relying on the simulacra. According to Baudrillard (1994), hyperreality is a simulated and simulating world that keeps replacing reality. In Seochon, the imagined and performed past is a

hyperreal world. Through simulations, this hyperreal past becomes more sensible, affective, and real than the world in present (Eco, 1986). Indeed, simulating the past makes the real. As we have seen, the simulacra of ideal hanoks in the District Unit Plan actualize historic preservation while stirring the real estate market. Some oppose the plan, mostly due to its false representation, but the lack of the real is the very logic of simulation and its hyperreality. At the same time, the simulacra effectuate people's desire by allowing them to imagine and experience the hyperreality of the past (Bryce et al., 2017; Ong & Jin, 2017). The simulacra, as phantasms, teach people the ways to grasp the past with the coordinates (e.g. styles of authenticity and objects of desire) (Žižek, 2008a, pp. 7–8).

Urban adventurers, who seek to escape from the contemporary, modernized Seoul, visit Seochon to consume the past Seoul. Here, the hyperreal past is not a magical, exaggerated illusion (Lovell, 2019) that is separated from the present world and experience. As previous studies prove, the spatial practices and performances are crucial in generating hyperreality because the simulation is "always an embodied experience, one that is filled with sensational registers of affect and emotion" (Miller & Del Casino, 2018, p. 665; see also Pile, 2010). Seochon serves as a setting for those registers as the agency of both the landscaped simulacra and individual bodies emerges through encountering (Dewsbury, 2015). The simulation, therefore, is mediating and mediated by the hyperreal landscape where multiple encounters (of seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and eating) become more real (Wylie, 2005).

During interviews, visitors illustrated their experiences of Seochon based on various practices with/in hanoks, such as visiting official hanok heritages, learning about hanoks, taking photos of hanoks, being photographed with hanoks, eating food in hanok

restaurants, and spending a day in hanok accommodations. These encounters enable

visitors to become performers in simulating Seochon, as the imagined past, while distorting

the representational relations of the object seen and the seeing subject (see R. G. Smith,

2003). Put another way, the simulation consists of not only things but also beings who are

imagining, yearning, performing, and feeling Seochon. As we walked through narrow

hanok alleys, Namil (visitor, male, 50s), who had commuted to Seochon for 30 years,

enthusiastically talked about the beauty of hanoks by describing their roofs in terms of

form, line, and color. But, beyond those aesthetic styles, his simulacra embrace his

nostalgia. He explained why Seochon became famous:

> The fundamental reason is that, as the civic consciousness matures, people go up to the cultural level where they try to preserve old things. They are no longer sweeping out old building, but looking for a place where the old atmosphere still remains. [He pointed to the intersection of an old alley and a new driveway.] You can see the trails. How this place has changed over time. Old people, like me, love to see them because we can feel the old vibe. *That is here* (emphasis added).

What brought the hyperreality was not only his bodily performance of walking in the hanok

alley but also his own taste and attachment to the imagined past. In this way, he became

part of Seochon as simulacra.

Indeed, different perspectives, imaginations, and performances are made part of the

simulacra of Seochon. More importantly, those differences flee from the existing simulacra

while constantly reassembling them. This is because everyone has different and differing

points of view. To extent Deleuze's insight (1994), the simulacra include the "differences

in themselves." For instance, Minu (visitor, male, 30s) asked me: "Is Seochon really a

hanok village?" I answered him, "yes" and shortly explained how the SMG designated

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Seochon as a hanok village. He continued: "For me, it seems just a common neighborhood where just common people live. It's hard for it to feel like heritage." What inspired Namil's nostalgia fails to attract Minu who has different images and expectations about Seochon. Accordingly, variegated encounters of different spectators/performers continue to (de)form the simulacra of Seochon, which are never imprisoned in a simulacrum of hanok village.

Virtual encounters with Seochon via social media highlight how the simulacra are radiated and distorted by various spectators/performers. Indeed, Instagram has become the hyperreal landscape for encountering. Not surprisingly, the aestheticized (good) images of Seochon on Instagram easily replace their models in reality because Instagram posts "capture moments" which selectively exhibit "refined beauty and good vibes" (Boy & Uitermark, 2017, p. 616). Most Instagram user interviewees implicitly ranked the virtual Seochon as more attractive than what actually exists while admitting that they visited Seochon because of its images on Instagram. Yumi (visitor, female, 30s) was one of them.

> Usually, my first impression of a place is based on its Instagram photos. When I find an intriguing, I mean, visually attractive place, I decide to go there. And, if people uploaded a lot of photos of a particular place, I think that place must be nice because more photos guarantee the better quality of the place. But, I don't 100% believe Instagram. (laughs) There are a lot of fakes, you know?

As the certification of charming places, the virtual simulacra affect people's spatial practices (see Zukin et al., 2017). Although people recognize their potential fakeness, as Yumi mentioned, the uncertainty and discrepancy rather reinforce their adventurous spirit by motivating them to really visit and experience Seochon in person.

The cumulative online posts and comments about Seochon constantly reassemble its simulacra. After the interview, Yumi posted images of a café where we met. The café was not an 'authentic' hanok according to the SMG guidelines, although its hanok-style wooden ceiling generated a retro vibe. Drawing on a heterogeneous mixture of traditional and exotic items, such as exposed pipes, ceiling drapes, and European-style vintage teacups, its exterior and interior staged a feeling of the past that never existed in Seochon. But, at the same time, the café emphasized that its nostalgic atmosphere originated from Seochon, as the imagined past, with a graffiti sentence on an exposed concrete wall: "The slowest village in Seoul." Ironically, those newly opened, hipster-oriented cafés, labeling themselves as 'slow,' are symbols of Seochon's rapidly changing retail landscape. In this sense, to borrow Baudrillard's words, the hyperreal "no longer needs to be rational, because it is no longer [...] really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore" (1994, p. 2). The key is not what is real, but how people can feel some hyperrealities of the past through their ongoing imaginations, performances, and simulations.

Therefore, in simulating the past, it is no longer important what really existed in Seochon in the past. The divergent simulacra keep moving beyond their current boundaries because spectators/performers constantly reimagine and reenact Seochon. As one interviewee (visitor, female, 20s) vividly exposed, many visitors' motivations already escape from the simulacra of a hanok village: "I'm not sure about hanoks. I just came here to eat." The existing simulacra are stylized receipts that teach the way to simulate Seochon, regardless of whether it is a good hanok village or a village of good food. Nonetheless, like all cooking, there is no identical simulation: "always simultaneously more and less, but never equal" (Deleuze, 1983, p. 49). Those ongoing processes of making differences are

the emergent and divergent simulacra themselves. Thus, they are open to all possible simulacra of Seochon in historic preservation and/or retail gentrification.

2.5 All Possible Pasts: "*Seochon is getting wider.*"

We have explored how the simulacra of Seochon continue to be (re)assembled by multiple actors and their different imaginations and performances. This last section highlights how affirming those differences opens more inclusive historic preservation in relation to retail gentrification. While interviewees' narratives have expanded from historic preservation to retail gentrification, Seochon's shopping streets have transformed into hip, consumerist places, selling the hyperreal experiences of authenticity. Traditional and social media promote Seochon as Seoul's must-go-place with a long list of historic sites and local restaurants (H. S. Lee, 2014). At the same time of commercializing and simulating Seochon as an authentic urban village, those media narratives mourn its loss of authenticity due to gentrification. By highlighting how idyllic and peaceful Seochon was, the narratives identify the contemporary gentrification with various numbers showing the skyrocketed rental price and the displacement of residential and retail tenants (Eum, 2014). Paradoxically, these nostalgic narratives and feelings of missing authentic Seochon sustain the retail gentrification while further motivating the subjects of gentrification who "damage the authenticity" and thus "desire it more strongly because [they] miss it" (Ji, 2020, p. 15).

Meanwhile, residents have been affectively excluded from Seochon. This displacement is not always dramatic and aggressive, but sometimes slow and subtle while generating a new everyday rhythm (Kern, 2016) and mediating the process of un-homing (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). In the process, the gentrification disrupts the relations between

residents and their everyday spaces where they belong. More importantly, the experiences and feelings of displacement are emergent and divergent as all spectators/performers differently simulate and live through Seochon and its retail gentrification (see Doucet, 2009). Accordingly, what previous gentrification research conceptualized as "symbolic boundaries" (Sullivan & Shaw, 2011, p. 416) is not necessarily drawn between disgusted, shamed old-timers and hip, trendy newcomers (see Mazer & Rankin, 2011; Hubbard, 2017). Rather, the boundaries of the gentrifier/gentrified are blurred and distorted based on each actor's different emotions and embodiments of Seochon.

A group interview with middle-class, college-educated housewife residents (females, 40s), who largely share the same lifestyle, enabled me to capture those twisting gentrifier/gentrified moments. They first met each other several years ago at their kids' kindergarten and recently made a regular community club for making *hanboks* (traditional Korean dress). I asked them to compare their present, daily lives with the past.

> Doona: Recently, Seochon became a tourist destination. Many local businesses have disappeared. Laundries, piano academies, and Taekwondo academies were closed. Instead, only cafés and restaurants were opened.
>
> Hana: Right. Now I need to run through alleys to find a laundry. It is kind of embarrassing because the streets are full of tourists. And, many times, I'm the only one without makeup running with my dirty laundry! (laughs) Yet, I personally like new cafés. I love coffee, so I enjoy them, although they have made my life a little bit harder. But, I'm sure this change is not good for everyone, especially those who don't go to cafés.
>
> Sena: Well... even if I want to go, those new cafés are too expensive. It is over 6,000 won (5 dollars) per cup. For me, it is too much to patronize them.

They agree with the sentiments of inconvenience of commercialization, such as an invasion of privacy, the lack of resident-oriented businesses, and the crowdedness and noise of

tourists. However, their perspectives vary depending on their more personalized tastes,

habits, and willingness to pay more to enjoy new businesses, which are not always decided

by their socio-economic status.

Furthermore, interviewees did not necessarily see the recent retail transformation

as better or upgraded. Rather, they sometimes think of new businesses as fake, ridiculous

pollutions while positioning themselves on the aesthetically privileged side (see Pinkster

& Boterman, 2017). When our conversation went into the topic of media representation,

they expressed their discontent.

> Doona: Lots of new restaurants show up on TV shows. Because they are in
> Seochon, they seem like restaurants with a long history. But, most of them
> opened after Seochon became famous. They are not authentic local
> restaurants! Residents don't know about them although they are depicted as
> very famous in Seochon on TV shows. It's a little bit ridiculous because
> people come to Seochon to taste those fake restaurants.

> Sena: Seochon is represented as a commercial area in the media. Of course,
> it's unavoidable. But, these days, the commercialization is really...
> (hesitated and sighed, and continued to talk) I really don't like the
> commercialized hanbok rental shops (Figure 3). Those rental hanboks are
> neither traditional nor refined modern hanboks. They are simply too tawdry.
> Also, the rental fee is too cheap. Only 10,000 won (9 dollars). I think we
> should not sell our valuable, traditional hanboks in that way. I'm afraid that
> hanboks might be thought of as coarse and inexpensive clothes.

They think the simulacra that attract visitors are "fake" because they are too new or

too tawdry while implicitly distinguishing their community club for making better "refined

modern hanboks." However, both hanboks are simulacra of what each actor imagines more

authentic and attractive relying on selective styles of the past. Additionally, although

interviewees detached themselves from the recent commercialization, their community

club runs with the money from the SMG as part of the Seoul Community Support Project,

which aligns with the District Unit Plan for branding Seochon hanok village. Hana also explained the increasing competitiveness of being selected as a community club and getting the subsidy. In this regard, they seemed to understand what kinds of clubs the SMG desires to nurture in Seochon as they chose their theme to be hanbok-making. As spectators/performers, their practices of finding new laundries, patronizing new cafés, making hanboks, and complaining about the fakeness of the commercialization simultaneously and differently (re)assemble the simulacra of Seochon.

Figure 2.3 Hanbok rental shops in Seochon
Source: Photographs by the author in 2017

These ongoing simulations keep creating differences while opening the way for all possible Seochons. However, the temptation to create a 'good' identity of Seochon also coexists with the differences. Indeed, various stakeholders have competed with each other to claim that their own imaginations and performances are more ideal and/or better by excluding others. Shin argues that these continued conflicts and negotiations become a

"training ground for governance" where different actors and their preferences come "to be more inclusive than before" (2016, p. 3578; see also Heathcott, 2013). Notwithstanding the importance of the conversation between actors, we should carefully approach the 'negotiation' when it aims to fabricate one happy ending. For example, in 2016, the SMG revised the original District Unit Plan to negotiate with residents about historic preservation. In the revision process, the SMG has operated the Onsite Communication Office since 2013 and conducted hundreds of meetings with residents to collect their opinions about the plan and persuade them to understand the need for historic preservation (Atiek Suprapti et al., 2018; S. Y. Yoon, 2016). Funding for community groups is also part of this resident-friendly approach. Moreover, the revised plan in 2016 prohibited franchise restaurants, cafés, and bakeries in order to mitigate the negative impact of retail gentrification by large corporate capital. This seemingly anti-gentrification turn of the SMG during 2010-2016 reflected the new governorship of Mayor Park (2011-2020) who is a famous democratic, social justice activist (Douglass, 2016; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2015).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this turn has been questioned because the revised plan still focuses on the preservation and protection of selected, idealized images of Seochon and its imagined, vernacular life. In particular, Wonsik (café owner, male, 30s) expressed doubts about how controlling the chain stores would help alleviate the gentrification problem. He said: "Most Seochon visitors dislike the franchises. That's why they come here. Also, the franchise shops know that Seochon is not a promising location for making big money. That's why they are not here." He thought that the restriction on large, corporate capital would not make much local impact because Seochon's gentrification is more related to small, aesthetically unique businesses. Hence, the

restriction ironically solidifies the hipster- and foodie-oriented commercial landscape, as previous retail gentrification studies criticized (typically Hubbard, 2017). Certainly, labelling the chain stores as bad might grant a privilege to certain consumption tastes and practices that promote further gentrification.

Along the same vein, most interviewees pointed out the real problem is not franchise businesses but speculative landlords and property agents. Kitaek (non-hanok owner-dweller, male, 40s) suggested that the growing agreement about historic preservation among residents is not because of the SMG's efforts of persuading residents but because of the increased property value. He further highlighted how the local landlords, who were originally eager about the modernist urban renewal, become friendly to the SMG's plan on account of a commercial rental income based on the preservation-initiated retail gentrification. Indeed, some landlords—especially the ones who have real estate on main shopping streets—have achieved enormous rental revenues. Yet, many residents having old, small houses on back alleys still discontent with historic preservation, although the price of their properties has increased. Sunja stated: "Yes, my house value increased. But, if I don't sell it or move out, what can I do with it?" Consequently, the SMG's efforts of historic preservation have resulted in strengthening two pillars of retail gentrification: 1) the fantasy of an authentic urban village with a unique retail scene without chain shops and 2) the uneven distribution of costs and benefits from the commercialization.

We should note that historic preservation is inevitably complicit in the displacement of selected undesirable things and beings, and simultaneously, encourages retail gentrification when it is obsessed with being a good image of heritage. Therefore, I argue that we need to escape from the Platonic selection of good and bad in historic preservation

while recognizing and advocating all possible pasts (and presents) as simulacra. Indeed, as we have seen, all stakeholders take part in simulating Seochon with their different perspectives and lived experiences. For every heuristic category of stakeholders—residents, visitors, governments, media, and so on—there is no truly authentic, singular Idea of Seochon. Without the model and beyond its emptiness, all imaginations and experiences of hanoks, alleys, laundries, and cafés become part of Seochon as the simulacra where "[a]ll of this is simultaneously true" (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 17). Put another way, the simulacra of Seochon include differences in themselves, which are not subordinated to the Same as the negation, but ongoingly escape from any identification and idealization (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 28–69; see also Cockayne et al., 2017). In this sense, Seochon's simulacra, as movements of diverging, are not bad copies lacking resemblance to the ideal model of Seochon; there are neither ideal models nor good copies. All things and beings surrounding Seochon are simulacra and simultaneously true.

Here, Jungmin's (hanok owner-dweller, male, 50s) insight clearly shows the political possibility of "becoming" simulacra for more inclusive, capacious urban movements (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Jungmin, who spent his whole life in Seochon, has archived hanoks in the neighborhood since the early 2010s. A variety of hanoks have been marked in his hanok Google Map in terms of their location, estimated year of construction, and degree of renovation while avoiding aesthetic categories such as authentic/inauthentic or beautiful/ugly. Jungmin's hobby, according to what he humbly told me, showed how much he cares about hanoks and his neighborhood. During many talks with him, one interesting point was that he never defined what hanok or Seochon is, despite his genuine affection for them. He was open to all possible perspectives,

imaginations, and experiences, including those from the SMG, media, and urban tourists who fantasize and commercialize Seochon. While recognizing local problems caused by the recent gentrification, he did not romanticize residents, their real life, or the past of Seochon: "Locals are not much interested in local issues. Rather, we can learn from outsiders. Seochon is getting wider in that way." As Jungmin described, Seochon's simulacra keep expanding, diversifying, and ultimately becoming Seochon. He also explained that there has never been an ideal Seochon, as the neighborhood has always been full of troubles and quarrels throughout his lifetime. His insight taught me that a more capacious historic preservation is possible not by protecting the idealized Seochon but by jumping into the ongoing movements of simulacra and becoming part of them without selection and/or hierarchy.

2.6 Conclusion: Affirming Differences through Simulacra

Urban scholarship has criticized the political and economic motivations in heritage designation and production (Borges, 2017; W. Shaw, 2005). In the same vein, previous studies of historic preservation have supported the real need of local communities (Su, 2011) and the real process of creating local histories (Heathcott, 2013) by seeking more authentic representation and preservation of local communities and their pasts. The SMG has also pursued a more authentic cultural heritage of Seochon hanok village. The SMG's policies have preserved and promoted the authenticity based on stylized hanok buildings and romanticized local communities. However, this reinvention of 'good' Seochon has caused exclusion while naturalizing the selection of good and bad and marginalizing the

latter. Branding Seochon hanok village facilitates property speculation and local tourism as the idealization of the authentic past sustains its retail gentrification.

In this context, this article rethinks the concept of simulacra, which has been taken for granted as false copies of the ideal heritage (Hartley, 2018; Martínez, 2016). Inspired by Deleuze and Baudrillard, who have been relatively unattended in urban scholarship, I demonstrate the empty model of the ideal heritage and underline the hyperreality of (dis)simulating the past. This post-structural revisit enables us to witness alternative political possibilities of simulacra as divergent movements. We already glimpsed those possibilities through reviewing the ongoing simulations of Seochon and dismantling the dichotomies of good/bad images and gentrifier/gentrified people. In the process of (re)assembling the simulacra, the agency of multiple urban players keeps emerging through their different imaginations and performances of Seochon.

This perspective has pitfalls, of course. At one end, nihilism appears by killing all meanings and/or non-meanings, as Baudrillard (1994) addressed, and, at the other end, the material conditions of inequality among different actors frustrate revolutionary movements of simulacra, as Hallward (2006) criticized Deleuze. Certainly, on the ground, some low-income (bad) tenants are evicted without any opportunities to make their voices heard. At the same time, some residents contemplate the true meaning of their (good) neighborhood while being concerned about emerging noxious businesses, such as love hotels, which appear to degrade Seochon. How can we encompass these two contradictory poles of good/bad things and beings simultaneously without displacement?

In this article, I argue that becoming simulacra allows us to move beyond the exclusive nature of selection by including all emergent differences as simultaneously true.

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Nevertheless, I do not deny the ongoing discourses and practices regarding good/bad in historic preservation. Rather, my argument is that desiring a good, authentic urban village is just one type of simulacrum, together with a thousand other moments and movements within Seochon's simulacra. In the same context, there is no one way to challenge the selection and exclusion in heritage-led gentrification. Indeed, this article is itself a simulacrum that illuminates one overlooked way among many others to make a 'difference.' Therefore, the key is to keep making differences and avoiding the idealization of any singular urban norm. In doing so, we can become part of the divergent movements of simulacra that constantly affirm and support those differences.

Chapter 3 THE FANTASY OF AUTHENTICITY: UNDERSTANDING THE PARADOX OF RETAIL
GENTRIFICATION IN SEOUL FROM A LACANIAN PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

Since David Ley (1996) underscored cultural dimensions in gentrification by
focusing on the choice and agency of consumers, gentrification literature has frequently
employed the concept of authenticity to explain gentrifiers' preference for old, humble, and
underdeveloped urban neighborhoods (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Burnett, 2014; Lloyd,
2006) and their practices of commercializing and excluding original communities
(Hubbard, 2016; Kern, 2016; Zukin, 2010). In the same vein, emerging retail gentrification
studies habitually use the adjective 'authentic' when they describe middle-class, bohemian,
or hipster gentrifiers who seek "alternative consumption possibilities" (Gonzalez & Waley,
2013, p. 966). As tasteful consumers, these gentrifiers tend to eat exotic foods (Hyde, 2014),
drink craft beers (Hubbard, 2019), and live and hang out in old neighborhoods (Pinkster &
Boterman, 2017) in pursuit of an experience of authentic urban life. In these typical
narratives of retail gentrification, gentrifiers are reduced to their shared tastes and practices
of "consuming authenticity" (Zukin, 2008). Even though this heuristic use of authenticity
enables us to grasp elusive gentrifiers as conscious consumers, authenticity is more than
an object of consumption. Indeed, the ambiguity of authenticity intertwines with the
paradox of retail gentrification, which previous gentrification studies have barely discussed.

From a constructivist perspective, authenticity is neither a singular nor essential
quality (see Bruner, 1994; N. Wang, 1999). Rather, plural authenticities are socially
constructed and politically contested by multiple stakeholders through ongoing
authentications that decide what is authentic (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Therefore, in

gentrification dynamics, authentications should be analyzed as open-ended processes where heterogeneous relations and interests are constantly reworked. Although most gentrification studies agree with the social construction of authenticity, they pay scant attention to the psychic process of authentications and unexpectedly reproduce the problematic dichotomy between the authentic gentrified and the inauthentic gentrifier. For example, as manifestations of authenticity, local communities are often described as passive objects that are observed within the gentrifiers' gaze (typically Burnett, 2014). On the other hand, gentrifiers are regarded as observers who appreciate and consume the authentic communities where they do not belong (typically Brown-Saracino, 2007). However, various subjects of gentrification not only objectively consume external authentic others but also existentially desire internal authentic selves (see Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; N. Wang, 1999). They identify themselves with the authentic neighborhoods and criticize their own practice of gentrification because it might lead to the loss of authenticity that they pursue. Consequently, the psychological desire for existential authenticity blurs and distorts the boundaries of the authentic/inauthentic and the gentrifier/gentrified while creating the paradox of retail gentrification: gentrifiers continue to take part in gentrification by consuming authenticity, even as they recognize the indispensable risk of the gentrification-driven loss of authenticity.

In what follows, I examine this paradox of retail gentrification by revisiting literature regarding authenticity through a psychoanalytic lens. Particularly, with Lacanian concepts of subjectivity, desire, and fantasy, this article offers a nuanced interpretation of the paradoxical subjects of gentrification who constantly cross the borders of the authentic/inauthentic and the gentrifier/gentrified. Like a Möbius strip, whose inside and

outside are inseparable and keep reshaping one another, the Lacanian subjects of gentrification emerge in a twisted circuit of selves/others (see a topology of subjects in Secor, 2013). They desire and internalize others who are imagined more authentic than themselves; at the same moment, they mirror and externalize themselves onto those authentic others. Accordingly, the subjects' desire for otherness leads them to retain and change their positions of the gentrifier/gentrified. Here, a fantasy of authenticity sustains this ex/internal desirousness of the subjects, as it displays an illusionary unity of the gentrifier/gentrified and constitutes the desire for authenticity (Žižek, 2008a). The subjects continue to (re)imagine the authentic selves/others, and thus, perpetually renew their desire for something *more* authentic in and through the fantasy of authenticity (Fink, 1995; Homer, 2005). Therefore, the fantasy of authenticity facilitates the continuing retail gentrification by inspiring the subjects' endless desire for authenticity.

Based on this Lacanian theoretical framework and ethnographic research in one of the gentrifying neighborhoods in Seoul, South Korea, this article empirically demonstrates this psychic dimension of gentrification dynamics. To be specific, I explore how various subjects of gentrification—old-timers, newcomers, visitors, academics, governments, media, business owners, property owners, local communities, etc.—employ the psychological discourses and practices of (in)authenticity for their right to the neighborhood. As part of this process, they name the neighborhood differently—Seochon and Sejong Village—and claim that their own name is more authentic than the other. Aligning with different toponyms, the subjects mirror themselves onto the fantasy of the authentic neighborhood while excluding and simultaneously including their imagined (in)authentic others. In and beyond the authentications of place-naming, the subjects of

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gentrification defend themselves as the innocent guardians of the authentic neighborhood at the same time as they are complicit in its commercial reformation and upgrading. The fantasy of authenticity supports these paradoxical practices by allowing the subjects to continuously reinvent the authentic objects of desire, and thus, reinvest their eternal desirousness for authenticity. Ultimately, following the psychoanalytic revisit to authenticity, this article suggests a way to move beyond the paradox of retail gentrification. I argue that we, as the subjects of gentrification, should bear responsibility for our compelling desire for authenticity to break the cycle of the ongoing retail gentrification. And this would be possible only through *traversing* the fantasy of authenticity and challenging ourselves, not the others.

3.2 Achieving Retail Gentrification through Consuming Authenticity

Benjamin defined authenticity as stemming from the authority and permanence of the original, which exists in a particular "here and now" (2008, p. 21). He explained that because authenticity is irreproducible, it engenders *aura*, a "unique apparition of a distance" in a "strange tissue of space and time" (2008, p. 23). This aura's symbolic distance from the beholder requires authenticity, which makes the original symbolically unapproachable and thus imbues it with a magical and sacred force. This understanding of authenticity became controversial in the modern era, when the capitalist system of mass production allowed infinite replications of originals, thereby separating objects from their spiritual and moral power. Nevertheless, scholars in cultural anthropology and tourism studies have contended that this transformation has not necessarily diminished the

significance of authenticity, but instead has complicated the ways of understanding and pursuing authenticity (Comaroff, 2009; Xie, 2010).

Tourism studies, in particular, have contributed to developing a sophisticated concept of authenticity. As the most famous example, MacCannell (1973) defined modern tourism as one's moral journey in search for authenticity. Based on the division between front- and back- regions, he coined the term *staged authenticity*: a touristic front-region is "cosmetically decorated with reminders of back-region activities" to attract tourists who want to experience a mystified, authentic back-region (1973, p. 598). Cohen (1988) also highlighted the role of authenticity in tourism. Yet, contrary to the idea of staged authenticity, which somewhat assumes an objective authenticity of the back-region, Cohen considered authenticity to be a socially constructed, negotiable concept. By focusing on beholders' perspectives and interpretations of the authentic, he theorized *emergent authenticity*. According to this notion, patently inauthentic objects and performances can nonetheless become symbolically authentic once they are widely recognized and appreciated as vital components of local culture. In other words, authenticity in tourist destinations keeps being (re)constructed, experienced, and evaluated in relation to tourists' expectations and imaginations (see Delyser, 1999).

This symbolic (or constructive) authenticity expands a spectrum of authenticity by inviting individuals and societies into the creation and consumption of authenticity. Most retail gentrification studies—which focus more on the commercial upgrading of the former low-income neighborhoods than the demographic change of residents—have employed this symbolic authenticity in relation to gentrifiers' tastes and practices. Most notably, Zukin suggested that gentrifiers are "united by their consumption of authenticity" which is

the way of "performing their difference" (Zukin, 2008, pp. 745, 730). At this point, gentrifiers' consumption of authenticity entails the exclusion of others. This connection between consumption and exclusion has been explained with the classical logic of *distinction*. Bourdieu (1984) suggested that individuals' practices, typically consumption, aim to distinguish themselves from one another. Accordingly, practices of consumption bespeak one's *habitus*, which is a comprehensive personality structure, consisting of one's dispositions, lifestyle, values, and taste (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus is inculcated and embodied in individuals through everyday practices in a certain environment—the material and symbolic conditions of social relations. Hence, it mirrors one's socioeconomic status and vice versa. With their unique habitus, gentrifiers' tastes and practices have been dialectically analyzed not only as emancipatory aspirations in postindustrial society (Ley, 2003) but also as another class-based revanchist urban strategy of excluding others (N. Smith, 1996).

In archetypal narratives of retail gentrification, gentrifiers share a yearning for the *real*, beyond *fake* modernity. They discover old, disregarded urban neighborhoods and recover them to serve their own demands and pleasures. Neighborhoods have been upgraded as hip consumption places, while old retail stores that provided daily necessities and social space for residents have been transformed into hipster-oriented businesses. As a result, retail gentrification establishes exclusive social spaces that exclude old-timers who cannot afford to patronize them or who feel unwelcome in them (Mazer & Rankin, 2011). Here, it is noteworthy that this transformation does not explicitly exclude or physically displace the original community because the community is "part of [gentrifiers'] image of an authentic urban experience" (Lloyd, 2006, p. 78). The authentic community is

selectively preserved and socially, emotionally, and symbolically disempowered (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Burnett, 2014). Therefore, displacement happens in slow, subtle, and indirect ways by evoking a sense of "loss of place" (K. S. Shaw & Hagemans, 2015) or restructuring new everyday rhythms of neighborhoods (Kern, 2016). Consequently, consuming authenticity is hardly an apolitical ambition for self-expression, but rather a value-laden, socio-political process of more-than-physical displacement.

Gentrifiers initiate and naturalize this appropriation by drawing on a discourse of authenticity and highlighting their aesthetic taste and knowledge about neighborhoods and communities. Brown-Saracino (2007) describes them as "authenticators" who are inauthentic themselves, but have authority over authenticity; they are assumed to be able to recognize, analyze, and appreciate authenticity better than others. As rightful tasters, gentrifiers objectify and evaluate the authenticity of things, places, and experiences in accordance with certain criteria of quality, value, and meaning (Zukin, 2010). Through this social construction of authenticity, "only selected aspects of the authentic" are qualified and legitimized in the neighborhoods (Kern, 2016, p. 450). In sum, gentrifiers' capacity to identify and celebrate authenticity supports their right to recreate the authentic urban neighborhood. Overall, through applying the concept of authenticity, previous studies examine gentrifiers' tastes and practices as schemes for not only differentiating their aesthetic awareness but also justifying moral authority.

3.3 Revisiting the Concept of Authenticity

These previous studies succeeded in theorizations of retail gentrification by presenting the links between the motivations for and the results of retail transformation in

terms of authenticity. Although I agree with their arguments in general, these studies have rested on a limited understanding of authenticity. First, they have simplified the complicated processes of socially constructing authenticity. For this reason, the cultural politics regarding authenticity are frequently depicted as tacit victories for gentrifiers while marginalizing other struggles and possibilities. To be specific, the agency of long-time residents in authentication has been disregarded, although they actively mobilize the discourses and practices of authenticity on the ground. Tourism studies have shown how multiple stakeholders engage in the social construction of authenticity "behind the scenes" (K. Martin, 2010) by grappling and negotiating with each other in the "politics of authentication" (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Such work demonstrates that "natives" are important actors in the production and consumption of authenticity (Zhu, 2012). Therefore, it is important to take into account how various stakeholders construct plural authenticities within gentrification dynamics.

Secondly, previous studies have often overlooked the subjects' psychological desire for authentic selves, which continuously stimulates the subjects to consume authenticity. Retail gentrification studies usually take constructivist and consumerist approaches. Multiple qualities and styles of objects are socially constructed as the embodiment of authenticity and symbolically consumed through those 'authentic' objects—persons, things, places, or activities. However, the tastes and practices of consuming authenticity are fundamentally based on the existential aspiration of the subjects who desire to find and experience authentic selves with respect to others. Hence, authenticity is not only embodied in objects but also inheres in the psychological interaction between the subjects and objects. Relying on diverse philosophies from Marx

to Lacan, tourism studies consider this desire to be the authentic motivation of tourism (Knudsen et al., 2016; MacCannell, 1989). Nevertheless, gentrification studies tend to neglect this existential impetus of the subjects and the complex relations of the gentrifier/gentrified, which become a setting for the endless circuit of desire for authenticity beyond consumption.

Finally, flat assumptions about authenticity as a cultural commodity and gentrifiers as consumers of that commodity have obscured the nuances of ex/inclusion in retail gentrification. Gentrification inevitably requires a reciprocal relation between the displacers and the displaced (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). This relation of displacement is twisted in retail gentrification owing to the complex nature of authenticity: authenticity itself relies upon inauthenticity. As MacCannell addressed, an object "becomes authentic only after the first copy of it is produced"; thus, the authenticity of an "original object" is nothing more than the "socially constructed importance" that it grains in its juxtaposition to something inauthentic (1989, p. 48). From this view, authentic neighborhoods are constituted by and constituting inauthentic gentrifiers. However, once the neighborhood is gentrified, it becomes inauthentic, like the gentrifiers themselves. Authenticity thus dissolves at the same moment that it comes into being by gentrifiers who define it as authentic. Put another way, even though authenticity has been their constant driver, gentrifiers never have it and they never will. This paradox of retail gentrification distorts the relation between the authentic gentrified and the inauthentic gentrifier while creating various ironies on the ground. To sum up, the gentrifier and the gentrified do not represent fixed positions of inauthentic outsiders or authentic insiders. Rather, both continue to become (in)authentic by internalizing the Other and externalizing the Self.

3.4 The Lacanian Subjects of Gentrification

A Lacanian perspective offers a creative way to construe this paradoxical desire and ex/inclusion of retail gentrification. According to Lacan, *desire* is the essence of being, which positions the subject in relation to the Other (Fink, 1995, pp. 49–68; Homer, 2005, pp. 70–74). It is inspired by an irreducible lack of the subject based on *alienation* and *separation*. To be specific, the confrontation between the alienated, split subject and the Other's desire causes the subject's desire. In the Mirror Stage, the child realizes that s/he can never fully articulate nor fulfill the (m)Other's desire; this lack induces the child's own "desire to be desired by" (m)Other; meanwhile, a rift in the hypothetical mother-child unity "leads to the advent of *object a.*"

> Object *a* can be understood here as the *remainder* produced when that hypothetical unity breaks down, as a last trace of that unity, a last *reminder* thereof. By cleaving to that rem(a)inder, the split subject, though expulsed from the Other, can sustain the illusion of wholeness, by clinging to object *a*, the subject is able to ignore his or her division.
>
> (Fink, 1995, p. 59)

The subject tries to be associated with object *a*, as a "[f]antasmatic partner" which enables the subject to "sustain him or herself in being, as a *being of desire, a desiring being*" (Fink, 1995, p. 61). The subject can (re)cover its inherent split and absence by sticking to the rem(a)inder through a *fantasy* of wholeness. At this point, object *a* doesn't indicate a particular missing thing but is rather the cause of desire. It denotes an inevitability of missing itself, which the subject is unable to completely grasp but can constantly feel. In short, "there is always something more we desire; we cannot quite pinpoint it but you know

it is there" (Homer, 2005, p. 87). Therefore, object *a* is *something more* within the fantasy which ensures eternal *desirousness* of the subject.

Based on the Lacanian subjectivity, Knudsen et al. define authenticity as a fantasy which "can never be fully integrated into our lives, but is an always present motivation for seeking out the extra-ordinary" (2016, p. 35). Nevertheless, a fantasy of authenticity does not help us to escape from our ordinary reality in a hallucinatory way. Rather, it supports reality by constituting our endless desire for something more authentic and thus protecting us from our inescapable lack (inauthenticity). In other words, as the illusion of wholeness, the fantasy of authenticity positions the objects that "we encounter in reality" in fantasmatic (authentic) spaces to sustain our reality (Žižek, 2008a, p. 7; see also Kingsbury, 2011). This Lacanian perspective on authenticity offers vital insights into this study. Drawing on the fantasy of authenticity, the alienated, split subjects of gentrification (gentrifier/gentrified) continue to desire their ex/internal counterparts who are imagined more authentic and enjoyable than themselves. The fantasy of authenticity enables the subjects to maintain their desirousness by constantly reinventing the authentic objects of desire and renewing their desire for object *a*.

This subjectivity based on desirousness only *relationally* appears with respect to the Other; the gentrifier/gentrified is a desiring being toward the Other as well as a being of the Other's desire. Through this ex/internal desire, the subjects' intimate feeling becomes strange and exotic to them while they feel that the external others are more intimate with them (Kingsbury, 2007). This *extimacy* of the subjects is *topological* because the subjectivity is maintained under its continuous deformation (L. Martin & Secor, 2014; Shields, 2013). Put another way, the topological subjects keep enduring and switching their

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positions in the twisted circuit of the gentrifier/gentrified, like the inside/outside of a Möbius strip. This subjects' self-varying distortion constantly recreates external selfness and internal otherness while maintaining their integrity as a desiring being. Accordingly, the subjects of gentrification emerge in the topological processes of extimate desire and ex/inclusion between the gentrifier/gentrified.

This topological (continuing and changing) subjectivity of the gentrifier/gentrified stretches our understanding of the paradox of retail gentrification. Most retail gentrification studies have assumed that gentrifiers distance themselves from the existing community and stand in their position of "virtuous marginality" (Brown-Saracino, 2007) by objectifying, consuming, and preserving others' authenticity. Contrary to these previous findings, the subjects of gentrification do not always differentiate themselves from their counterparts, but rather sometimes identify with them; they internalize others through their subjective fantasies of authenticity—by mirroring others as well as they themselves—and thereby (re)imagining themselves to be authentic. Therefore, this paradoxical subjectivity of gentrification provides a new explanation for why gentrifiers adhere to their tastes and practices of pursuing authenticity at the same time as they criticize the gentrification-driven loss of authenticity. As the sublime object, the fantasmatic authenticity sustain—and simultaneously threaten—the subjects' desire and enjoyment in gentrification dynamics (see Žižek, 2008b).

Drawing on this theoretical framework and archival and ethnographic research, the following section addresses how psychological discourses and practices regarding authenticity intersect gentrification dynamics by (re)shaping relational and topological borders of the authentic/inauthentic and the gentrifier/gentrified. Collected data include

field notes of participant observation and transcription of 27 interviews with 31 participants from September 2017 to August 2018. Specifically, I partook in local communities, *Seochon Eaters* most prominently,[5] and worked at a newly launched restaurant, *Seven Fortunes*, as a server. These involvements in the neighborhood allowed me to create a good rapport with locals as well as regular visitors. Long-time residents appreciated—and sometimes suspected—my enthusiasm about 'their' neighborhood. At the same time, visitors treated me like a quasi-local who knows the neighborhood better than them and thus seemingly belongs to it. My ambiguous positionality was helpful to recruit a wide range of interviewees and to make them feel comfortable in talking about the neighborhood. As a result, I recruited interviewees consisting of 15 residents, 9 business owners, and 7 visitors, who were consciously and unconsciously associated with the discourses and practices of authenticity. All interviews were conducted in Korean and then translated by the author; a cultural consultant edited and verified the translation of quotations.

3.5 Emerging Retail Gentrification in Seoul

In South Korea, 'gentrification' was an unfamiliar loanword that people rarely heard until the 2000s. However, since the early 2010s, it has become an overused buzzword. According to Naver News Search, there was only one news article that mentioned gentrification before 2010, but the number has rapidly increased to 41 in 2014, and 3,941 in 2018. Undeniably, the discourse on gentrification, referring to the revitalization of old

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[5] Seochon Eaters is an online-based community, consisting of people who live in or love to visit the neighborhood. Its main focus is on restaurants, pubs, and coffee houses, but members also share living information such as traffic, festival, and house repair. I have joined in the online group chat and attended offline meetings. Other communities are untitled, causal gatherings of middle-aged women and young parents living in the neighborhood.

urban neighborhoods and the exclusion of original communities, has been extensively reproduced via traditional and social media. The dominant public narratives of gentrification have been distinguished from the large-scale, top-down residential urban renewal projects of the 20th century, which have been introduced as an indigenous Korean mode of gentrification in Western academia (typically H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). Rather, the contemporary gentrification is characterized as the small-scale, bottom-up retail transformation of urban neighborhoods, which valorizes the original, unique, and 'authentic' place identities of each neighborhood.

The West Side of Gyeongbok Palace (WSGP) is a typical example showing what Seoul's emerging retail gentrification looks like. This neighborhood in Jongno-gu, downtown Seoul, lies at a historically and politically significant conjuncture; it is right next to Gyeongbok Palace, the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty, and the Blue House, the executive office of the President of South Korea. For this reason, the development of WSGP was strictly limited by the government until the 2000s. Nevertheless, its marginalization from modernist urban renewal allowed the neighborhood to retain the unique, retro vibe of an old urban village. Since the late 2000s, its landscapes—including hanoks (Korean traditional houses), narrow alleys, and traditional street markets—have been applauded as a manifestation of authenticity in the concrete jungle of downtown Seoul (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Everyday landscapes of WSGP
Source: Photographs by the author in 2017

Its symbolic landscape (Meinig, 1979) represents a fantasy of an authentic urban village lodged in the past and simultaneously engenders nostalgic auras, thereby attracting people who want to discover and recover meaningful places by escaping from contemporary Seoul. Those urban adventurers have moved to WSGP and refashioned it based on their taste. Consequently, the hipster-oriented, socio-spatial transformation initiates the commodification of place identity and the comprehensive commercialization of the neighborhood. In other words, the intangible charm of authenticity becomes an asset that yields tangible profits. Meanwhile, various stakeholders of WSGP—old-timers, newcomers, visitors, academics, governments, media, business owners, property owners, local communities, etc.—have contested each other for the right to the neighborhood (S. E. Choi & Lee, 2014; H. J. Shin, 2015). To be specific, they create different names of WSGP and claim their own name is more authentic than others for promoting their diverse

interests (For critical toponym literature, see Masuda & Bookman, 2018; Peyton & Dyce, 2017).

3.6 Mirroring Authentic Selves onto the Fantasy of "Seochon"

WSGP consists of 15 legal districts. Even though these separate districts function as one neighborhood, there was no comprehensive place-name on behalf of the whole neighborhood. In this context, the shift of urban planning has driven the toponym debates. Originally, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) designated WSGP as the Prospective Housing Renewal District in 2004 to improve dilapidated housing conditions and infrastructures. However, during the 2000s, the SMG switched the urban planning agenda from urban renewal to historic preservation. Since this time, vast restoration and preservation projects have been implemented in historic downtown Seoul (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2000, 2008). This postindustrial turn aimed to draw more global investment and increase tourism by branding and marketing Seoul as a historic and cultural city (Križnik, 2012). Following the shift, the original renewal plan of WSGP was withdrawn and replaced by the District Unit Plan in 2010, which regulates the redevelopment and rezoning of old buildings (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2010). In the official documents about this new plan, the SMG tentatively named the neighborhood West Side of Gyeongbok Palace.

The term West Side organically emerged as a nickname of the neighborhood: Seochon. In Korean, Seochon literally means the west village which carries nostalgic, idyllic suggestions. In the 2010s, Seochon became the most well-known toponym representing WSGP and its symbolic landscape. This successful naming was made possible

through internal and external authentication processes. Numerous books and academic articles about the history, culture, and landscape of Seochon were published (Seoul Museum of History, 2010a, 2010b). Countless movies, TV shows, and newspaper and magazine articles have introduced Seochon and promoted its nostalgic atmosphere. Several local communities were created with the name of Seochon. Typically, the Seochon Neighborhood Society has hosted festivals, distributed newsletters, and provided local tour guides in an effort to inform residents and visitors about the meanings and values of Seochon. These discourses and practices of Seochon have supported the governmental shift towards historic preservation and vice versa.

Various individuals have contributed to the authentication of Seochon by sharing their knowledge and aesthetic senses. Dr. Fouzer is one of Seochon initiators. As an aficionado of hanoks, he moved into WSGP in 2008 and founded the Seochon Neighborhood Society in 2011 to protect the valuable landscape from the redevelopment (M. Kim, 2012). Based on his lived experience, he also published a book, Seochon-holic, which promotes hanoks as an attractive, competitive brand of traditional Korean culture (Hwang, 2016). Public media paid attention to this foreign preservationist, partially because of his interesting background as the first non-Korean professor in the Department of Korean Language and Literature at Seoul National University. Like Dr. Fouzer, Seochoners advocate the conservation of existing urban fabrics by branding Seochon as the authentic urban village. However, for them, the authenticity of Seochon is not an inherent, fossilized history; rather, it continues to be reshaped by and lived through people. For example, Dr. Fouzer rebuilt his hanok in 2012 to adapt it to his lifestyle and needs. Photos of his hanok were published in a famous lifestyle magazine in South Korea as an

example of a contemporary hanok that has been modernized but remains faithful to the traditional Korean-style in its ex/interior (Lim, 2013). Therefore, a fantasy of Seochon embraces the authentic lives of people in the present beyond the socially constructed, authentic objects reflecting certain styles of the past.

Here, 'people' refers not only to old-timers but to all those who constitute daily rhythms of WSGP. Captain Seol, another famous Seochon initiator, argued that:

> Residents are limited, but I think caretakers are infinite. For me, everyone who loves the neighborhood is the caretaker. Neither place of birth nor time in residence matter. I think the concept of native is too outdated for our generation. We need a new concept.
>
> (Oh, 2017)

Captain Seol refuses the exclusive boundaries between natives/newcomers and residents/visitors. His promotion of Seochon orients toward all caretakers of the neighborhood. For example, he restored the one-and-only game arcade in WSGP in 2015, which had been closed in 2011. He used a crowdfunding platform for financing and marketing while inspiring people's nostalgia for the old-style arcade with his own childhood memory (Captain Seol, 2015). The significant portion of donors consisted of those who were not residents yet felt affection for the neighborhood and its disappearing life history. Through successful fundraising, his renovated retro arcade became a playground for local kids as well as one of the most famous tourist destinations. In this sense, Seochoners—whether they are old-timers or newcomers—project themselves onto the fantasy by reinventing Seochon's authenticity.

Figure 3.2 The ex/interiors of a newly-opened, hanok-renovated restaurant
Source: Photographs by the author in 2018

Meanwhile, Seochoners' sweat equity, in the form of aesthetic renovation and economic revalorization, has facilitated retail gentrification. New restaurants, bars, and cafés opened up along winding alleys after old buildings were remodeled. According to the Seoul Metropolitan Statistics, the total number of restaurant and accommodation businesses in Cheongunhyoja-dong—one of the administrative districts of WSGP—increased from 91 in 2006 to 258 in 2016. As the aesthetically restyled WSGP magnetizes more urban adventurers, naming Seochon becomes a marketing strategy. Local stores reorganize their businesses to reflect and reinforce the fantasy of Seochon, which motivates customers' desire for authenticity. They implicitly and explicitly promote Seochon through their names and ex/interiors with new but retro items for the creation of authentic and attractive vibes (Figure 3.2). Junghee (shop owner, female, 40s) explained that "restaurants with a vintage atmosphere catch on with customers because they are harmonious with the nostalgic mood of Seochon." By referring to these new-retro businesses, numbers of interviewees highlighted the coexistence of traditional and modern styles as one of the distinctive charms of Seochon. Namil (visitor, male, 50s) stated that "Seochon is a place where the past and the present are well-mixed. It has a nostalgic atmosphere, but also a new culture."

To sum up, even though the authenticity of Seochon relies on the history, culture, and nostalgic landscapes of the past, it also involves Seochoners in the present who bring new cultures into the neighborhood and mirror themselves onto the fantasy of Seochon. Seochoners' desire is toward not only the authentic others but also themselves who are folded into the fantasy. On the one hand, the naming of Seochon has created it as a brand that denounces slash-and-burn urban renewal and advertises the historic preservation of

WSGP by underscoring its authenticity. Through the authentication, Seochon is socially constructed to echo the fantasy of the authentic village that must be protected and cherished in a distance. On the other hand, the authentication of Seochon legitimizes the domination of Seochoners' tastes and practices. They keep physically and symbolically refashioning WSGP by subjectifying the authenticity of Seochon and objectifying themselves onto it; and, the fantasy of authenticity mediates these topological processes of extimacy. As a result, naming and branding Seochon sublimate WSGP by placing the twisted (in)authentic gentrifier/gentrified in the fantasmatic authentic village.

3.7 Authentication of "Sejong Village" by Ex/including Others

Some welcome this retail revitalization of WSGP. Nevertheless, there are others who are marginalized in the process. Most notably, old-timer seniors—especially those who are house owners—express their displeasure with the name of Seochon as well as the associated historic preservation initiative (see senior residents' displeasure with gentrification in Pinkster & Boterman, 2017). In alliance with the Jongno District Government (JDG), they have been eager to redevelop WSGP from a pre-modern village into a modernized apartment complex. Yet, contrary to what they anticipated, the SMG implemented the preservationist urban policy and implicitly supported the brand of Seochon. Through the discourses and practices of historic preservation, Seochoners can maintain their fantasy of authenticity and authority over WSGP. As a result, the original resident association, which has been pushing for urban renewal since the 1990s, becomes politically and symbolically disempowered. In this context, the long-time residents and the JDG renamed WSGP to take back the power from Seochoners and to recover their pride.

The establishment of the Sejong Village Organization (SVO) led to intense debates about the toponym. During an interview, Sooho (resident, male, 70s), the head of the SVO, explained the naming of Seochon in vexation:

> They decided to call this neighborhood Seochon and to preserve hanoks. But, that decision is nonsense because it hasn't been discussed with residents. In deciding the name of the place where we live, we have been completely excluded and ignored from the beginning. [...] Our pride has been seriously insulted by that ridiculous naming. But, we, residents are not blind and neither are we fools. We cannot approve their name because it is far from the historical place-names and is without identity and authenticity.

The name of Sejong Village is taken from King Sejong the Great (reigned 1418-1450 CE) of the Joseon dynasty. On 15 May 2011, the SVO held a ceremony to declare the name, Sejong Village, relying on the historical fact that Sejong was born in WSGP. Through the reenactment of the Joseon dynasty parade, the SVO attempted to authenticate Sejong Village. Senior long-time residents participated in the ceremony as performers as well as audiences (Figure 3.3). The authentication also depends on publication and promotion. For example, the SVO published local guide books and maps with the name of Sejong Village. The JDG officially renamed one of the famous traditional street markets in WSGP as the Sejong Village Food Culture Street. Throughout the authentication, the SVO and the JDG continuously denounce the name of Seochon, as lacking historic testimony and resident involvement, and promote Sejong Village as the rightful name (J. S. Choi, 2015). Moreover, they often describe Seochoners as uninformed, foreign invaders, who have neither knowledge nor right to the neighborhood while condemning native Seochoners as the enemy within the gate.

Figure 3.3 The historical reenactment for declaring Sejong Village in 2011.
Source: Yonhap News (15 May 2011)

In their argument, the authenticity of the designation Sejong Village is entrenched

in the past, especially the Joseon dynasty. However, despite their stress on the historical

background of WSGP, the group does not necessarily aim to preserve the existing urban

fabrics. In an interview, Misook (resident, female, 60s), a member of the SVO, expressed

her thoughts and feelings on historic preservation and urban tourists. She said:

> People who really live in hanoks actually don't like the preservation plan
> because it is an infringement of private property. [...] From our view, hanoks
> in our neighborhood are too small, shabby, and not good at all. They don't
> deserve to be preserved. I really cannot understand people who come here,
> say "hanok is so pretty," and take a lot of pictures of our neighborhood.

In this sense, the naming of Sejong Village is not an apolitical, historically-oriented movement. Rather, it expresses the disappointment and discontent of old-timers with the recent transformation of WSGP. In short, the authentication of Sejong Village is the counter-branding by senior residents who aim to regain their self-esteem and control over WSGP by emphasizing its deeper historical roots in the Joseon dynasty and refusing the contemporary dominance of historic preservation, hipster-oriented businesses, and the name of Seochon that represents all these new changes.

Interestingly, supporters of Sejong Village learn and internalize the strategies of naming and branding Seochon. They acknowledge that comprehensive urban renewal is nearly impossible in WSGP because the economic benefits from the commercial revitalization fundamentally depend on historic preservation initiatives. Indeed, senior local landlords, most of whom take part in the SVO, have gained substantial profits since the late 2000s. Therefore, the SVO's goal is not to destroy Seochoners' desire for and fantasy of the authentic village, which have made real estate thrive, but to make them their own. In order to change the brand from Seochon to Seojong Village, long-timers actively participate in negotiations on authenticity while ex/including their (in)authentic others. Indeed, Sejong Village is pouring old wine in a new bottle; the authentication processes and contents of Seochon and Sejong Village are almost identical. Even though perspectives are slightly different—Seochoners focus more on the life history, whereas Sejong Villagers focus on the origins of the Joseon Dynasty—both emphasize the history and culture of the neighborhood, by showcasing the same cultural heritage sites in WSGP, and thus reinforce the fantasy of the authentic village. Consequently, the authenticity of Seochon and Sejong Village is a void itself; it continues to be socially constructed and reinvented. Because the

authentication allows participants to have political, economic, and cultural powers, the key is not what is authentic, but how it becomes authentic. Put another way, the fantasy of authenticity organizes a sociopolitical battlefield where diverse stakeholders compete with each other for the authority over WSGP.

3.8 Endless Desire for Something More Authentic

At the same time, the fantasmatic authentic village serves as a setting for people who consume and desire WSGP. Korean urban tourists are particularly inspired by that fantasy. In general, they first encountered WSGP with the name of Seochon through traditional or social media that present the must-go-hip-places of Seoul. Because their fantasy is based on a simplified and beautified version of Seochon, they rarely recognize the conflicts regarding place-names or even the name of Sejong Village. Indeed, the less knowledge they have about the neighborhood, the more it inspires their adventurous spirits. For them, WSGP is an interesting place not because of the names—although the brand of Seochon certainly draws them into the neighborhood—but because it stokes their imagination of authenticity. Hence, what matters most to the visitors is not how authentic the neighborhood is, in terms of its history or place-name, but how it gives them authentic experiences.

Yumi (female, 30s) is one of many visitors who are fascinated by the fantasy of Seochon. Since the early 2010s, she has frequently hung out in the neighborhood. For her, Seochon is a unique place where she can feel a retro vibe in contemporary Seoul. She appreciates the oldness of the neighborhood as a new attraction.

> In Seoul, I usually visit heavily urbanized places in my everyday life. So, Seochon is, for me, a strange place that is different but not too far from my everyday life. I mean it is right there, but still strange.

Yumi emphasizes the strangeness of Seochon as the motivation for her visits. Like Yumi, most visitors come to the neighborhood because they expect to experience an unknown authenticity. Through subjective fantasies, they consume certain objects and activities that they imagine to be authentic and enjoyable. Some drink a craft beer in a hip microbrewery (30s); some enjoy a view of hanoks and the scene's harmony with the surrounding mountains (50s); some eat street foods in a traditional market (20s); some take pictures of the neighborhood which seems like the old village in the 1980s (30s). Even though they have different preferences and sensibilities in consuming authenticity, they share a fantasy of the authentic village which is understood to be quiet, cozy, humble, warm, and thus extraordinary compared to their ordinary lives in bustling, soulless Seoul.

Nevertheless, their visits do not satisfy their fantasies for authenticity. There is always a gap between the "implicit" fantasy and the "explicit symbolic texture sustained by it" (Žižek, 2008a, p. 24). Yumi further explained her visits to WSGP since 2012 and how they have changed over time.

> At that time, there was not much information [about Seochon] on the internet. But, because I like to discover a strange place, I explored Seochon by myself on foot. [...] I visited Seochon very often from 2012 to 2014, but after that, this place became so famous, I haven't been by as much. Especially on the weekend. Because there are so many people on the streets! I don't want to feel crowded in Seochon. That's what I expect in Gangnam or other downtown areas, not in Seochon.

A number of visitors—especially those who considered themselves to be pioneers, discovering Seochon earlier than others—mentioned and worried about excessive commercialization and a loss of the unique charm. They described the ongoing retail gentrification with long line-ups for famous restaurants, rent increases, fast-changing retail stores, crowdedness, and rising levels of noise and pollution due to too many visitors. These visitors often located themselves on the side of the gentrified, not the gentrifier, although they themselves are one of those 'too many visitors.' They felt very distant from their practices of urban tourism and simultaneously showed strong sympathy for the gentrified neighborhood—which follows from their own practices—by expressing a sense of loss. Songju (female, 30s), another visitor, stated:

> As one of the consumers of urban culture and food, I think of gentrification negatively. After all, I do not want all the places to be changed and made the same by commercial capital. That reduces the cultural diversity we enjoy. I think the cultural diversity comes from the local atmosphere. I feel bad about losing that unique atmosphere due to gentrification.

These visitors see themselves as having lost something authentic that they once had and enjoyed. Yet, the authenticity of Seochon is their subjective fantasies; they have not lost it because they never had it in the first place. The main reason why they feel loss is that they become familiar with the strangeness of Seochon that first inspired them as an exotic authenticity: "now I feel a sense of familiarity with Seochon, rather than the new discovery which I felt three to four years ago" (Songju, 30s). This imaginary feeling of missing seems to threaten visitors' fantasies of Seochon and their desire for and enjoyment of it. However, it rather sustains their desire by renewing the authentic objects of desire. In the fantasy of

authentic Seochon, there is always impenetrable something more (object *a*) that motivates their never-fulfilled desire.

After an interview in a café, Yumi and I walked along the shopping street of Seochon. During the walking interview, she pointed out several stores that had been changed since her last visit and explained how fast this neighborhood is transformed and commercialized. On the way, we dropped by a bakery that I patronized during my fieldwork. I gave the baker a friendly greeting and bought my favorite roll cake as a thank-you gift for the interview. When we were about to leave the bakery, the baker gave us extra morning bread and wished me good luck with the interview. After leaving the bakery, Yumi said to me, "I think I should change my statement a little bit. Seochon still seems like a warm village which is really rare in Seoul, despite the commercialization." She said that she loved to see my close relationship with the owner because she has never experienced it in Seoul. I explained to her that it might just be because I visited that place a lot, to which she responded, "You're right. More visits seem to lead to a different experience." She believed that if she made a deeper connection with the locals, this would give her a new experience of Seochon, and thus, once more make Seochon strange and special to her. And so the circuit of desire continues. Her fantasy of authentic Seochon never goes away; it just continues to be reconfigured.

3.9 Conclusion: Beyond the Paradox of Retail Gentrification

I have explored the paradox of retail gentrification by reviewing the concept of authenticity through Lacanian ideas of subjectivity, desire, and fantasy. Revisiting authenticity through the lens of psychoanalysis enables us to expand our understanding of

retail gentrification and its subjects, who have frequently been identified based on their tastes and practices of consuming authenticity. Indeed, authenticity is not only an object of consumption, something that the subjects can have, but also a fantasy that veils their irreducible lack and motivates the endless desire for an elusive something more. In other words, longing for authenticity is more-than-consumption, which is inculcated in gentrifiers as a habitus for distinction. More notably, it is the existential desire of the subjects, which creates the various nuances and ironies of retail gentrification on the ground. For this reason, in gentrification dynamics founded upon authenticity, subjects cannot simply displace the Other. Subjects troubled by their own inauthenticity (lack) are constituted in relation to the 'authentic' Other—the Other whom they imagine not to lack and to be able to confer authenticity upon them.

This article dismantles the dichotomies of the authentic/inauthentic and the gentrifier/gentrified by illustrating the toponym debate in WSGP. WSGP vividly exhibits the scene of cultural politics taking place where various stakeholders claim the authenticity of different place-names to attain political, economic, and cultural powers over the neighborhood. For both names, Seochon and Sejong Village, authenticity is a socio-politically constructed and psychologically sublimated fantasy, which reflects and reproduces people's imagination of and desire for the authentic urban village. Through reinventions of the authentic objects of desire, various subjects participate in and live through retail gentrification in postindustrial Seoul. Even though urban pioneers play a critical role in the processes, local governments, long-time residents, business owners, visitors, and media are also heavily involved in the authentications. Of course, it should be noted that all subjects of gentrification relationally and topologically emerge; they

sometimes overlap with one another and sometimes split internally. Therefore, there is no fixed category of stakeholders, such as inauthentic newcomers in Seochon or authentic long-timers in Sejong Village. Rather, the subjects of gentrification keep internalizing others and externalizing themselves onto those others in and through the fantasy of the authentic village. Their extimate desire continues to ex/include the Other while facilitating retail gentrification and enduring the topological relation between the gentrifier/gentrified.

Finally, this Lacanian interpretation helps us to grasp the reason gentrifiers continue with their tastes and practices although they know its outcomes. To borrow Žižek's words, "they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it" (2008b, p. 25). We cannot overcome this paradox of retail gentrification without demystifying our desire for and fantasy of authenticity. Nevertheless, the critical point is not to devastate the fantasy of authenticity. This attempt rather provides important momentum of reinforcement of our desire. If we (imaginarily) damage the authenticity, we will desire it more strongly because we (imaginarily) miss it. Consequently, the matter is not how to destroy our fantasy of authenticity but how to deal with it.

In this regard, the first step to move beyond the paradox of retail gentrification is to concede our compelling desire by going through the fantasy. In a Lacanian term, it is traversing the fantasy; we need to confront ourselves, not the Other, by admitting that there is nothing behind our fantasy (Žižek, 2008a, 2008b). In retail gentrification, the fantasy of authenticity is actually invested with our own desire. Put another way, otherness is from ourselves who constantly desire something more authentic. Although we expect a friendly greeting from a local baker will make us authentic, our desire will still be waiting for more authentic things, places, and experiences. There are, however, again no authentic others

but ourselves on the other side of the fantasy. Therefore, we need to assume responsibility for our desire and challenge ourselves as the gentrifier/gentrified through traversing the fantasy (see Proudfoot, 2019). This would open up a new cultural politics that escapes the cycle of the ongoing retail gentrification.

Chapter 4 Topological In-betweens and Rhythms of Gentrification

4.1 A Sense of Being Trapped in Gentrification

Seochon is an old urban neighborhood in traditional downtown Seoul, South Korea. Since it was designated as a historic preservation district in 2010, with its nostalgic landscapes of aged buildings and winding back alleys, this neighborhood has undergone a rapid transformation into a trendy consumerist place. Kitaek (owner-dweller, male, 40s) has lived in Seochon since this neighborhood was designated as the Prospective Housing Renewal Districts. In an interview, he described the transformation of his neighborhood with discontent.

> Seochon was unknown to the public. It was a common residential area. But, so-called "gentrification" has changed this neighborhood dramatically. There are a lot of new restaurants and cafés for visitors. Rents have skyrocketed and, not surprisingly, almost every old mom-and-pop store has been kicked out. These changes have occurred in just a few years. Large-scale residential redevelopment now becomes impossible. From the standpoint of commercial landlords, it is beneficial not to redevelop this neighborhood because their old buildings have already given them more money with increasing rents. But, homeowners, like me, are in a dilemma. I came here because I knew this neighborhood would be redeveloped as modern condominiums. [...] I'm trapped! Gentrification and that ridiculous historic preservation are killing this place. If this situation will continue, some who give up on the condominium will just leave, and remainers will wither away.

His narrative displayed the typical actors of retail gentrification, such as an entrepreneurial city government selling historic attractions, urban adventurers patronizing new businesses, property owners seeking profit, displaced retailers, and frustrated residents (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Hubbard, 2017; Zukin, 2010).

Scholars have highlighted how these actors engage in gentrification and its controversial distinguishing feature of displacement (see Marcuse, 1985; Freeman, 2005; Slater, 2009; Billingham, 2017). They have examined diverse forms and processes of gentrification-induced displacements as the political, cultural, and emotional exclusion of original occupiers moving beyond physical relocation (Davidson, 2009; Hyra, 2015; K. S. Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). Studies identifying displacements and their scale and magnitude have contributed to growing attention to the negative consequences of gentrification and thus a call for solidarity in anti-gentrification movements (Easton et al., 2020). Nonetheless, these previous studies have frequently ended up assuming certain structures of winners and losers and unwittingly reproduced the invincible "monsters" of gentrification (e.g. S. Y. Lee & Han, 2019), especially in their relation to broader urban norms of neoliberalization and globalization (Lees et al., 2016; N. Smith, 2002). In this context, gentrification-induced displacements often take for granted the dichotomized battles between the haves and the have-nots whilst little is known about the liminal space between them.

This article aims to fill this void and develop a new framework that can account for veiled in-betweens. Indeed, the subjects of gentrification do not have essential positions. They are floating around the topological edge between the displacing haves (gentrifier) and the displaced have-nots (gentrified). This edge of in-betweens is an ambiguous but concrete space-time where physical and psychological displacements are embodied, expressed, and enacted. Furthermore, the edge allows the topological subjects of displacing and being displaced to keep transgressing their boundaries and becoming gentrifier/d (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Put differently, the liminal space mediates the encounters of the displacing

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and the displaced, like a Möbius strip's edge, and simultaneously distorts those encounters by making two opposite sides become one twisted surface of the displacing/displaced (Cockayne et al., 2020; Ji, 2020).

Kitaek's story illuminates how this liminal space constitutes and complicates displacements on the ground. In terms of a classic theory of rent gap (N. Smith, 1996), he is a speculative gentrifier who facilitates pricing up Seochon and potentially pricing out low-income occupiers. Certainly, what brought him to Seochon was the rent gap expansion that reflects his anticipation of residential redevelopment along with increasing property value and the better living conditions of a new condominium (see H. B. Shin, 2009). However, he became socio-politically and emotionally gentrified once the original redevelopment plan fell through due to historic marketing and retail gentrification of Seochon. During the 2010s, Seochon's old-time landscape and unique atmosphere of an authentic urban village brought urban tourists into the neighborhood. In the process, Kitaek was excluded from his everyday space-times:

> I don't like Seochon right now. It became too noisy and crowded. A few years ago, there were only us, residents, on the street. But, now, especially during the weekend, it's just going crazy with so many visitors. I can't even drive my car to my home.

This retail boom has led to intensive speculation on commercial property. Consequently, Seochon has become a symbolic place representing Seoul's retail gentrification as a battlefield between profit-oriented landlords and low-margin tenants (Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, 2018a, 2018b).

Kitaek has, meanwhile, found an alternative economic opportunity. Although he himself does not feel any charm from his old houses, he understands how their oldness and uniqueness attract people who desire authentic urban life. Now, he leases one of his two houses in Seochon to his brother-in-law and encourages him to sub-rent his house via Airbnb. Much research has revealed that Airbnb and other short-term lease are an undeniable contributor to gentrification (e.g. Spangler, 2019). From this perspective, Kitaek may become a gentrifier again, as a profit-oriented property-owner displacing prospective low-income tenants. Yet, he is still the gentrified who is faced with the symbolic and emotional exclusion from his everyday spaces as he narrated above. Then, how can we simply categorize Kitaek into the displacing gentrifier or the displaced gentrified? How can we understand his multidimensional experiences and practices of gentrification and displacement?

This article provides a more nuanced theoretical framework to answer these questions by unveiling the in-betweens and rhythms of gentrification. To extend Lefevrian and Deleuze-Guattarian ideas of rhythm (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Lefebvre, 2004), I explore how people feel trapped in gentrification while neither definitely displacing nor being displaced, but constantly taking part in the process. Specifically, this article is divided into two parts. The first half is dedicated to a critical revisit of displacements and rhythms in gentrification literature. After outlining the benefits and limits of the deterministic identification of the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified, I address how Deleuze-Guattarian rhythmanalysis can bridge the liminal space between them by shedding light on the topological in-betweens on the twisted edges of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced. Drawing upon 13 months of in-depth

qualitative research, the second half of the article empirically demonstrates how the in-betweens spatio-temporally embody and enact gentrification and displacement in and through the transcoding rhythms of emerging, diverging, twisting, folding, and thus becoming gentrifier/d.

This rhythmanalysis highlights the understudied mobile subjects and heterogeneous space-times of gentrification. Ultimately, differences within the monstrously imagined gentrification disclose great possibilities for the fight against gentrification from its porous inside, like sponge. In this regard, I argue that more capacious urban justice movements are possible not by solidifying the class-based and identity-based battles, but by recognizing the virtuality of in-betweens and their rhythms of becoming that continue to reshape the dynamics of displacements. Indeed, we are all part of gentrification as we move around the borders as in-betweens. At the same time as we academically criticize gentrification-induced displacements, we tend to pursue (in)direct economic and cultural advantages from gentrification in our daily life; like a cliché, we might desire authentic neighborhoods that have low housing prices and hip coffee houses serving a cup of nice cappuccino (see Marcuse, 2015; Schlichtman & Patch, 2014). A more powerful potential for anti-gentrification, therefore, does not exist outside of gentrification, but rather in its very inside.

4.2 In-betweens on Topological Edges

There is an ongoing debate over the relationship between gentrification and displacement. Some quantitatively showed that gentrification does not necessarily induce physical relocations of low-income, under-educated, non-white former occupiers (Freeman,

2005; Freeman & Braconi, 2004), whereas others insisted that an "absence of direct displacement cannot be interpreted as a lack of displacement altogether" (Davidson, 2008, p. 2401). In this context, Slater's (2006) critique of the "eviction of critical perspectives" from gentrification research brought back Marcuse's now-classic notions of "exclusionary displacement" and "displacement pressure" into the conversation and fostered the investigation of various forms of (in)direct displacements that are associated with the socio-economic upgrading and upscaling of disinvested areas (Liu et al., 2017b; Slater, 2009). Meanwhile, pro-gentrification discourses and practices in urban governance, such as "social mixing" and "urban regeneration," have been accused of causing more-than-physical displacements (Chaskin & Joseph, 2013; Lees, 2008; Newman & Wyly, 2006).

Furthermore, critical geographers have started to take into account people's lived experiences of everyday displacements (Davidson, 2009; Stabrowski, 2014). Gentrification research unravels how long-term residents feel the "loss of place" (K. S. Shaw & Hagemans, 2015) while remaining "in place" (Hyra, 2015). At the same time, the ways in which displacements are enacted become more visible through analyzing affective technologies of eviction (Baker, 2020; Lancione, 2017) and material assemblages of exclusion (Linz, 2017). To broaden these affective and material approaches, Elliott-Copper, Hubbard, and Lee (2020, p. 492) redefined displacement as a violent process of "un-homing" that "ruptures the connection between people and place." They diagnosed the malicious impacts of gentrification-induced displacements, especially to vulnerable populations, and urge the "right to stay put."

Following this critical turn in the gentrification debates, based on studies that uncover various forms and processes of displacements and measure their scale and

magnitude (e.g. Easton et al., 2020), the discourses and practices of planetary anti-gentrification movements have become widespread (Lees et al., 2016, 2018). Nevertheless, this call for global solidarity carries some pitfalls. Most notably, it might reduce heterogeneous local histories and contexts into the hegemonic urban patterns of gentrification and displacement (Maloutas, 2011; Smart & Smart, 2017). For example, Ghertner (2014) argued that the Euro-American gentrification theory cannot properly explain the urban dynamics and politics of slum demolition in India. Lees et al. (2018, p. 349) also recognized this danger of the erasure of diversities in (anti)gentrification because "there are many different forms and practices, and these need to be researched in context." To embrace this critique, they employ various cases of anti-gentrification movements in the global South and emphasize the micro-scale, everyday resistance to gentrification by scaling up, down, and in-between the practices of survivability.

Although these studies are attentive to the universalization of (anti)gentrification, another space has been generalized and barely addressed in the gentrification debates. It is the dichotomized relation of the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified and the liminal space between them. Roughly speaking, the former has been exemplified as a capitalist speculator who pursues economic interests, on the one hand, and a high-income white who seeks cultural diversity and authenticity, on the other hand. When research looks for the causes of gentrification, it analyzes these gentrifiers' motives and practices (traditionally Ley, 1996; N. Smith, 1996). Meanwhile, research focusing on the devastating effects of gentrification has represented the gentrified people as low-income, long-time residents who have limited economic, social, or cultural capital (see Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020).

In this sense, the differences and variations within the gentrifier and the gentrified have been partially recognized only within their separated positions, in terms of internal diversities (e.g. different types of gentrifiers in Kaddar, 2020) or outliers (e.g. the privileged gentrified in Pinkster & Boterman, 2017). Not surprisingly, research about the border-crossing has also been limited to the cases in which pioneer gentrifiers, such as artists and creative workers, are displaced by the upper-class, global elites due to their relative lack of economic capital (see super gentrification in Lees, 2003). In short, whilst the forms, processes, causes, and effects of gentrification-induced displacements have been diversified, their subjects who embody and enact gentrification and displacement on the ground have been highly simplified according to their socio-economic classes and cultural identities.

In the era of planetary (anti)gentrification and neoliberal urbanism, this oppositional identification of the gentrifier and the gentrified is obliged to make a concrete enemy outside and build powerful solidarity inside for the fight against gentrification. For instance, Shin (2018) documented how Seoul's counter-hegemonic urban movements have developed their capacity for protesting against the hegemonic state and elites. He emphasized the need for a "cross-class alliance" to enable more sustainable and inclusive urban movements. Yet, this call for solidarity remained inside the boundaries of "subordinate classes," such as low-income evictees and low-margin commercial tenants, as the counterpart to the outside enemies of ruling classes. Similarly, in their research of Seoul's art activism, Lee and Han (2019) described gentrifiers as "monsters"—to borrow their interviewee's word—and simultaneously addressed the diversity of the displaced people only when it supported the internal consensus of anti-gentrification.

This dualistic perspective, carrying classism and identity-ism to some extent, has motivated anti-gentrification movements and reinforced the division between the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified. Although I do value its activist contributions, this structural view has unwittingly undermined a possibility of escaping from a vicious cycle of gentrification, where that very dualism is rooted, by consolidating gentrification into an invincible superorganism. Put another way, although most studies have stressed that there are no clear winners and losers (see Arkaraprasertkul, 2018; Davidson, 2008; Doucet, 2009), the class-based and identity-based framework of the displacing winners and the displaced losers is persistent and thus makes the overthrow of gentrification-induced displacements more challenging and inconceivable.

Moving beyond this dilemma of the dualistic understanding, but keeping its advantage in urban justice movements, this article employs a topological lens. Topology indicates the qualitative relations of space that are unaffected by constant changes. Topological perspectives have underscored relationality, connectivity, and continuity in geographies (M. Jones, 2009; Malpas, 2012). Whereas topographical thinking focuses on identity and unity within certain spatial boundaries, topological thinking instead emphasizes self-varying spatial relations, which constantly transform and distort, but maintain their ever-changing relations (L. Martin & Secor, 2014; Shields, 2013). A Möbius strip is one of the most famous topological figures, having one surface with one edge and one boundary curve. If we hold the strip's surface with our fingers, we can feel two sides that are divided by one edge. Yet, once we sweep a finger over the loop, we soon realize that the seemingly separated, two sides of the surface are actually on the same side reconciled by one twisted edge. In effect, the Möbius's edge sustains the integrity of a

single surface by twisting itself and folding the inside onto the outside, and vice versa (Blum & Secor, 2011; Cockayne et al., 2020; Secor, 2013).

From this topological perspective, I conceptualize the subjects of gentrification and displacement based on their mobile relations and positions, rather than their classes or identities. They ceaselessly move on the Möbius's one/two sides of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced as they are becoming one another (Ji, 2020). Here, the topological edges (/) mediate their (in)separable sides. The key is that this topological understanding "poses a challenge to the more clear-cut" dualistic dynamics of gentrification; nonetheless "it does not displace or replace" those dynamics (Allen, 2011, p. 284). The topological edges keep supporting the dual relations in gentrification and, at the same time, twisting and folding them. Consequently, we can capture the (un)certain subjects of (anti)gentrification without losing the capacity and solidarity for the fight against the inside/outside enemies, as "differences in themselves" (Cockayne et al., 2017; Deleuze, 1994).

In this sense, the topological understanding is especially useful to reconceptualize the understudied in-betweens. They are the temporal and mobile subjects who float around the edges of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced. Here, these edges negotiate the encounters and border-crossings of in-betweens as the heterogeneous space-times where physical and psychological displacements are happening. Indeed, gentrification and displacement are enacted by floating in-betweens, not only by visible, leading characters such as merciless landlords and poor evictees who also virtually become in-betweens. In-betweens are on the side of displacing gentrifiers while seeking benefits from gentrification, yet simultaneously, on the side of displaced as they are disempowered in spatio-temporal

rhythms of their neighborhoods. Accordingly, the in-between itself does not indicate any discernable position. Rather, it embodies the *virtuality* of topological subjects in the middle.

> The middle is not an average; it is fast motion, it is the absolute speed of movement. A becoming is always in the middle; one can only get it by the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; *it is the in-between*, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both.
>   (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 293; emphasis added)

Urban players live through and participate in gentrification as in-betweens. They are neither gentrifier nor gentrified. Rather, they are continuously *becoming* gentrifier/d. Therefore, the aim of this article is not to demonstrate who they are, but how they become and what they do.

4.3 Rhythmanalysis of Gentrification

Drawing upon this topological reframing of in-betweens, this section explains how we can glimpse their passages and movements of becoming gentrifier/d through a lens of rhythm. Geographers have engaged with rhythms when looking for patterns and processes of space-times with special interests in temporalities, mobilities, and materialities (Cresswell, 2010; Edensor, 2010b; May & Thrift, 2001; McCormack, 2002; Mels, 2004; Simpson, 2008). Their studies have heavily relied on Lefevre's methodology of rhythmanaylsis. In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004), Lefebvre suggested rhythm to be "a *tool* for analysis" (Elden, 2004, p. xii) to extend his former works about capitalism and its production of everyday space and life (Lefebvre, 1991, 2014). For this reason, his focus on the interaction between linear repetition (rational, structural, socio-

economic practices, e.g. working hours) and cyclical repetition (natural, organic, spontaneous movements, e.g. bodily functions) reflects his lifelong investigation about how the "evil power of *capital*" (re)organizes everyday space, time, and life and (re)produces certain normative rhythms that serve for it (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 51). To be specific, he developed a basic framework of rhythmanalysis:

> Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**. Therefore:
> a) repetition (of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences);
> b) interferences of linear processes and cyclical processes;
> c) birth, growth, peak, then decline and end.
> This supplies the framework for analyses of the *particular*, therefore *real* and *concrete* cases that feature in music, history and the lives of individuals or groups.
>
> (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 15 emphasis in original)

Adopting and expanding this framework, including repetition, interference, and sequence, geographers have studied diverse spatio-temporal rhythms, such as migrant workers (Reid-Musson, 2018; Wee et al., 2020), the creative economy (P. Jones & Warren, 2016), the financial market (Borch et al., 2015), the nighttime economy (Schwanen et al., 2012), tourism (Edensor & Holloway, 2008; Sarmento, 2017), street performance (Simpson, 2008, 2012), and daily practices, such as shopping (Kärrholm, 2009), walking (Edensor, 2010b) and smoking (Marković, 2019). These studies have proved the usefulness of rhythm in analyzing more-than-representational details of everyday lives, especially in their reciprocal relation to the capitalist processes of neoliberalization and globalization. In this context, rhythm has been also embedded in the gentrification debates, although scholars have only implicitly dealt with it until recently. Indeed, the theories of rent gap, uneven development, and accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003; N. Smith, 1996),

as well as Marcuse's logic of abandonment and displacement (Marcuse, 1985), have shown how the rhythms of capitalist and governmental (dis)investment effect gentrification while facilitating the vicious cycle of displacements on the ground.

Rhythm has become a buzz word in gentrification research since scholars have started to pay more explicit attention to the affective, temporal, and animated aspects of gentrification-induced displacements. For example, Langegger (2016) borrowed Lefebvre's notions of "localised time" and "temporalised space," which imply the correlations between time and space within rhythms (see also Edensor & Holloway, 2008; Lefebvre, 2004, p. 89). In doing so, he defined gentrification as the "successful cultural reproduction of middle-class norms in [...] everyday working-class spaces" by displaying how the "rhythms of public space are changed to reinforce and reproduce gentrifier norms and practices" (2016, pp. 1805–1806). In the same vein, Kern (2016) explored the slow violence of gentrification via rhythmanalysis. She addressed how the routinization and aestheticization of new rhythms can temporally and slowly displace certain people and activities from social space. In her findings, a Lefebvrian concept of "synchronization," orderings of beings, things, and events in certain space-times (see also Kärrholm, 2009; Lefebvre, 2004, p. 67), played an important role in normalizing and depoliticizing daily displacements by making them less visible. These Lefebvrian ideas underscoring temporalities in tandem with spatialities have offered more nuanced interpretations of gentrification-induced displacements and their strategies of rhythm-making and place-making on the ground. In short, rhythmanalysis has helped researchers to unravel bodily, lived, time-based experiences of everyday displacements without neglecting their complex and continuous interconnections with the existing power relations.

However, scholars have also pointed out some drawbacks of Lefebvrian rhythmanalysis. On the one hand, there have been some doubt about the strong antagonism between the linear rhythms of capitalism and the cyclical rhythms of daily life (see Borch et al., 2015; Simpson, 2008). Most scholars have deployed those terms when they have depicted how the socio-economic system permeates and acts upon everyday space-times. In this context, the discussion has been narrowed to the degrees and scopes of ordering and disordering (e.g. Edensor & Holloway, 2008; McCormack, 2005; Wee et al., 2020) based on the oppositional relations between linear, imposed, habitual practices and cyclical, spontaneous, eventual improvisations. Likewise, many studies have framed "polyrhythmia," where multiple rhythms influence and interfere with each other, into two dualistic situations of "eurhythmia," where rhythms are harmonious, and "arrhythmia," where rhythms diverge and flee from synchronization (e.g. P. Jones & Warren, 2016; Marcu, 2017). These studies have unintentionally naturalized normative rhythms in achieving certain eurhythmia. As a result, Lefebvre's own insistence on the ongoing creations of new rhythms has been frequently downplayed as a simple tug-of-war between normative eurhythmic ordering and disruptive arrhythmic disordering. In gentrification, the former has usually been the winning side.

On the other hand, researchers have criticized Lefebvre's ignorance of bodily materialities and subjectivities. Although Lefebvre paid special attention to corporeal movements, performances, and experiences in and out of rhythms, human bodies tended to be discussed at the "epistemic level, around embodiment" (Simpson, 2008, p. 811) while their intersectional subjectivities remained in silence (Reid-Musson, 2018). In this context, Simpson (2008, 2012) analyzed street performances as affective assemblages, which are

potentially eventual and contextual, as well as eurhythmic and arrhythmic. Inspired by

Nancy (2007), he argued that the outside is "already in me and visa versa; we are opened

from without and within, folded in the echoing. [...] Rhythms are therefore not inside or

outside the body, but folded through it" (Simpson, 2008, p. 812). To sum, rhythms are

neither external social orderings nor internal natural disorderings, but emerge in the

Deleuze-Guattarian middle as becoming.

This article broadly invests in Simpson's insight of rhythmic folding, which is apart

from the Lefebvrian dialectic view, in accordance with my conceptualization of becoming

gentrifier/d. Simultaneously, I invite one more dimension into rhythmanalysis: difference.

Difference is not new, but has existed ever since Lefebvre defined rhythm as repetition

with difference:

> No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without reprises, without returns, in short without **measure**. But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference.
> (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 7 emphasis in original).

Clearly, Lefebvre and Lefebvrian scholars (typically Edensor & Holloway, 2008) have

attended to difference and its endless emergence in rhythms. However, repetition as a

measure has been at the center of Lefebvrian rhythmanalysis, whereas difference has been

treated as one quality that preserves a multiplicity and plurality *within* repetitive rhythms

(Lefebvre, 2004, pp. 78–79). Accordingly, Lefebvrian perspectives of difference have been

rooted in its measurable diversity in repetition.

Moving toward difference, I argue that we cannot capture the rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d only by scrutinizing their repetition. Rather, we should approach rhythm as difference-in-itself (Deleuze, 1994), which is "not negative or contradictory," but "generative and primary" in relation to repetition (Cockayne et al., 2017, p. 581). In other words, repetition is not rhythm, although it sustains rhythm. What makes rhythm rhythmic is difference, not repetition. In *A Thousand of Plateaus* (1987), Deleuze and Guattari explained how this seeming paradox is possible with the concepts of chaos and milieu. Chaos is a "tangled bundle" of aberrant, nonlocalizable, nondimensional lines whereas milieu is a "block of space-time" constituted and coded by the "periodic repetition of the component" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 312–314; see also McCormack, 2002). And, rhythm emerges between them.

> Rhythm is the milieus' answer to chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-chaos or the chaosmos. [...] In this in-between, chaos becomes rhythm, not inexorably, but it has a chance to. Chaos is not the opposite of rhythm, but the milieu of all milieus. There is rhythm whenever there is a transcoded passage from one milieu to another, a communication of milieus, coordination between heterogeneous space-times.
>
> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 313)

For Deleuze and Guattari, rhythm is not a coded, repetitive measure in one milieu of space-time. Rather, rhythm is becoming in transcoded passages, ruptures, and in-betweens by traversing heterogeneous space-times in the constant emergence of differences. Therefore, the repetition, "whose only effect is to produce a difference by which the milieu passes into another milieu," is not sufficient to be rhythmic; it is the "difference that is rhythmic, not the repetition" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 314).

By applying Deleuze-Guattarian rhythmanalysis to gentrification, my intention is to explore difference in itself, rather than repetition with difference: the differencing and differentiating rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d. While advocating Lefebvre's focus on repetitive space-times, I suggest folding and twisting those space-times of dis/ordering and dis/placing in order to illuminate in-betweens and their topological, endless becoming. Consequently, what I discuss below is about what takes place "between two milieus, or between two intermilieus, on the fence, between night and day, at dusk, *twilight* or *Zwielicht*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 313–314) and thus on the edge of gentrifier/d.

4.4 Rhythms of Becoming Gentrifier/d

This section empirically demonstrates the transcoding rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d, mainly with two questions: 1) how in-betweens *become* gentrifier/d and 2) what they *do* on the ground. With the first question about the *process* of becoming, I address how the mobile subjects of in-betweens spatio-temporally embody and express displacers and/or displacees. In doing so, I highlight differences in those subjects, which allow their ongoing emergence and divergence. With the second question about the *affect* of becoming, I underscore the virtuality of topological in-betweens by showing how they are affecting and being affected by others through the transcoding rhythms of continuous folding and twisting. Ultimately, these empirical findings enable us to encounter ruptures and lines of flight within and beyond (anti)gentrification.

Collected data is drawn from 13 months of in-depth qualitative research in Seochon, Seoul, conducted from July 2017 to August 2018. As one of the most famous theatres of the contemporary retail gentrification in Seoul, the Seochon neighborhood offered the

opportunity to witness the vibrant scenes of retail upscaling and pricing out, as well as psychosocial and emotional displacements. At the same time, I could catch less-visible, less-verbalized rhythms of gentrification and displacement by working at a hipster-oriented restaurant; participating in a local foodie community; patronizing trendy restaurants, pubs, and coffee houses; walking through winding alleys day and night; making friends in the neighborhood; and interviewing them. These repetitive practices generate endless rhythmic differences and let me realize myself oscillating between the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified.

It was especially fortunate that I was working in a restaurant, *Seven Fortunes*, which first opened in January 2018 and went out of business in May 2018. I experienced its short life in Seochon from the beginning to the end as a part-time server. In the process, I was one of the foodie displacers who reshaped the normative rhythms of Seochon for non-residents, and simultaneously I was one of the displacees, being fired while the restaurant was quickly replaced by another trendy café. Floating around these transcoded waves, I was becoming gentrifier/d as my body was affecting and being affected between milieus. Also, this lived experience uncovered the heterogeneous space-times and rhythms of gentrification. The coming sections illustrate those rhythms with vivid accounts of what I saw, heard, experienced, and felt. I draw on ample field notes, 47 interview transcripts, and traditional and social media coverage. I conducted, transcribed, and analyzed all interviews in Korean and then translated a few of them into English for direct quotations. Bilingual cultural consultants helped me deliver the delicate nuances of Korean to English.

4.4.1 Everyday Displacing and Becoming In-betweens

Narratives of retail-gentrification-induced displacements have been pervasive in Seoul. Contrary to the old-style urban renewals spanning from the 1980s to 2000s, which led to mass demolition and mass eviction for the sake of modern apartment constructions (Ha, 2004; H. B. Shin, 2009), this new-style gentrification (Jeong et al., 2015; Y. Yoon & Park, 2018), particularly in Seochon, does not physically erase old urban fabrics, consisting of dilapidated buildings, winding narrow alleys, traditional street markets, and close-knit local communities. Rather, Seochon's retail gentrification fundamentally depends on those nostalgic landscapes and affective atmospheres because they inspire people's "desire for and fantasy of authenticity" (Ji, 2020, p. 15; see also Brown-Saracino, 2007; Zukin, 2008). Indeed, the authentic Seochon has seduced urban adventurers by letting them hang out, eat and drink, and thus, spend money in the neighborhood.

The influx of visitors and newcomers, along with public attention, not only enhances the cultural and historic values of Seochon, but also encourages property speculation. In the process, the commercial real estate market flourishes; residential buildings are transformed for commercial uses, mainly as cafés and restaurants; and explosively increased rental prices facilitates the moving out of low-margin tenants. Public media has well documented this sequence of retail transformation and criticized its consequence of (in)direct displacement (e.g. Eum, 2014). Social media has also (re)produced the discourses of retail gentrification and its accompanying dislodgments of former retailers. For example, posts and photos about the replacement of local shops have frequently appeared on the Facebook feed of "Seochon" (Figure 4.1). Residents have posted various gloomy images of closed shops with their emptied façades, detached signs,

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piled up debris, and placards of new businesses. Their sentimental comments are also noteworthy.
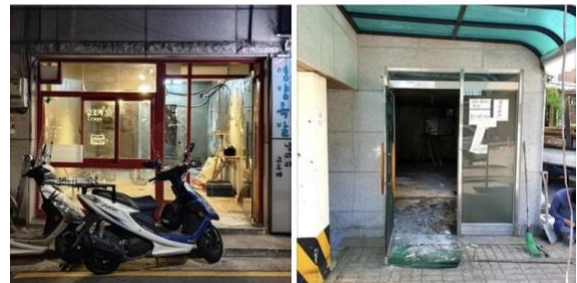

Figure 4.1 Facebook posts about closed shops.
Source: Facebook Gropu Seochon (2019, March 31)

Another local laundry has gone. (14 February 2019, the top-left)

This building was a tobacconist in the 80s, and then became a home, a warehouse, and an office for an online shopping site until last month.

Finally, it is now becoming a restaurant. (13 December 2018, the middle-left)

I think it was a rice shop... A new café-pub is about to open. (2 December 2018, the bottom-left)

I can't even remember what kind of store was here. Anyway, another is coming. (1 November 2018, the top-right)

routine (6 October 2018, originally written in English, the bottom-right)

As the succinct comment of "routine" clearly highlight, this retail transformation is associated with the routinization of serial events: "Another" old shop goes out of business and "another" new shop moves in. These repetitive replacements of resident-oriented, daily necessity stores by visitor-oriented, food and beverage (F&B) shops have motivated residents' sympathy as well as nostalgia for those closed shops that represent the past-spaces of their own (and sometimes imagined) everyday life in old Seochon. Hence, displacees are not only physically relocated retailers. Residents have also lost their sense of place as they have become no longer fully aware of the original shops and indifferent to the opening of new shops.

Whilst these repetitions of a coded dis/placing allow certain space-times of gentrification-induced displacements, they simultaneously effectuate differences in themselves. Put another way, there are constant rhythms of becoming between repetitions. On the edges of in-betweens, the mobile subjects of gentrification and displacement are spatio-temporally emergent and divergent as gentrifier/d. For instance, some residents welcome the commercial revitalization and upscaling of Seochon because this change brings nice food, coffee, and beer right in front of their homes. Seochon Eaters, a local foodie community, expresses this internal desire for the F&B industry, which is already in

Seochon by mirroring its popularity in traditional and social media. Local foodies feel the growing daily inconveniences due to commercialization, such as lack of residential facilities, crowdedness, and street noise; yet, at the same time, they are part of new retail space-times as tasteful consumers and sometimes producers. In short, they topologically embody and enact gentrifier/d.

On the other hand, residents, particularly those who are not acquainted with or interested in the hip and trendy F&B culture, are marginalized and excluded from the present-spaces of new Seochon. When I asked Sunja (middle-class, long-time homeowner, female, 50s) about her thoughts on newly opened cafés and restaurants, she replied that,

> Young people come here and open a lot of new restaurants. But, I've never tried those restaurants because I can't even guess what kind of food they are serving from their business names. (laugh) There are a lot of English names! I can't understand them even if I can literally read them. And, they keep being replaced by other new restaurants. That makes me quickly forget about them, again and again. They just can't stay in my mind.

Her reluctance to patronize new businesses was based on the moments that she saw them as incomprehensible and thus uncanny. Like Linz argued, this emergent "visual assemblage" of restaurants, including not only their English signs, but also bodies, things, sounds, and smells, play a "primary role in producing affective atmospheres" (2017, p. 135) that materially and psychologically affect Sunja's access to place. Therefore, Sunja, and other residents who cannot comfortably place themselves in those atmospheres, spatio-temporally emerge as displacees whereas new retailers and foodies become displacers.

Moreover, we should also pay attention to the volatile placement of new F&B businesses. The majority of my interviewees were conscious of the ceaseless displacing

and replacing of retailers. Certainly, commercial tenant interviewees, including newly opened bar and café owners, frequently revealed their concerns about the precarious situation. Wonsik (male, 30s), who runs a trendy coffee house, said that he is lucky to have a good landlord because the rent is not that much higher than other places. However, when I asked what he reckons will happen to his business, he answered, "I just keep worrying about the future. What if the rent will increase exponentially? Will I be able to sustain this business? Well, I don't think so."

Indeed, commercial tenants feel a strong "displacement pressure" (see Davidson, 2008; Slater, 2009) throughout retail gentrification, no matter whether they are part of the new commercial scene or not. Wonsik continued, "I saw several shops that were forced to move to other places because of the insanely hiked rent. I think it is too brutal to kick them out that way. They are hardworking people. And they diligently paid for rent." Everyday encounters with others' displacements heighten retailers' anxiety, although nothing has actually happened to them yet. This displacement pressure in new F&B businesses is likewise what places them between displacer and displacee as the topological edge. Even as they displace and replace old, resident-oriented businesses, they fear being displaced themselves, therefore leaving them stranded in between as neither—and both—the gentrifier and the gentrified.

4.4.2 Transcoding Rhythms and Virtualities of In-betweens

When residents and shop owners spatio-temporally and topologically emerge and diverge as gentrifier/d, one type of stakeholder seemingly remains in its persistent displacing position: the landlord. Profit-seeking landlords constantly appear as

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embodiments of capitalist ordering and coding in the discourses of retail gentrification. They are often blamed for the speculative practice of rent increase which causes the eviction of low-margin tenants. In Seochon, there have been several brutal eviction cases highlighting the role of absentee-commercial-landlords in the vicious circuit of dis/placing retailers. The landlords buy commercial properties on Seochon's main shopping streets to achieve reselling profits in the future, as well as to extract higher rents from their current tenants (see H. K. Lee, 2017).

Nonetheless, again, between the repetitive space-times of moving in and out, there are ruptures that allow the repetition to become differential and thus rhythmic. In other words, it is not rhythmic if the rent continues to rise or if the shops continue to be forced out. There are differential and differentiating space-times where rent is stable or even decreasing and shops are being secured. Indeed, what creates the transcoding rhythms of gentrification are the endless differences and movements of in-betweens. Mansu (resident, male, 50s) opened his property agency in Seochon over 10 years ago. In an interview, he doubted the media discourses around Seochon's gentrification.

> Property and rental price has risen a lot, if I compare it to 10 years ago. However, it wasn't a tremendous rise given the overall real estate boom in Seoul. Doubling and tripling are just common stories, you know? [...] There has been no big change in Seochon, especially in residential properties. I think the media only talks about some extraordinary cases. Four out of five owners are the same as 10 years ago. Of course, lots of commercial properties on major shopping streets have changed their owners. But, besides those streets, I would say Seochon's property market is stable, and even somewhat depressed now.

Mansu admitted that many former retailers have been displaced in major shopping streets. Yet, at the same time, by scaling up and down spatio-temporal lenses, he reshaped the

space-times of gentrification by distorting the dichotomized relations of winners and losers based on the heterogeneity in Seochon. While comparing Seochon's case with other areas in Seoul, breaking down Seochon into vibrant shopping streets and the remnant, dividing commercial and residential properties, and splitting retailers into competent trendy F&B businesses and incompetent others, his narratives highlighted the rhythms of gentrification flowing through the transcoded passages in Seochon and, more broadly, Seoul.

These transcoding rhythms not only exist in narratives, but also on the ground of multidimensional spatialities of dots/lines/faces and temporalities of past/present/future. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is any hierarchical (either vertical or horizontal) ordering or coding between each dimension of spatio-temporalities (Jones III et al., 2007; Marston et al., 2005). Rather, the rhythms are constantly folding and twisting dots (shops and homes), lines (streets and alleys), and faces (Seochon and its subdistricts) and past/present/future experiences and expectations, while the heterogeneous spatio-temporalities of gentrification are emergent in variation. This variation is "virtual, in other words, real without being actual, and consequently continuous" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 94). The actual space-times always mirror their continuous variation and thus virtuality. The virtual space-times are, therefore, "both the condition for and the result of actualization" (Cockayne et al., 2020, p. 200).

All shops have heterogeneous virtual/actual space-times while the multidimensional rhythms of gentrification ongoingly move through their transcoded passages. Wonsik, the café owner above, pointed out that,

> When retailers open their shops here, they expect more customers and more profits because this is Seochon. And, that's why they pay the high rent.

However, not every shop in Seochon succeeds in business. Even in the same alley, some shops are experiencing their golden age, but others keep disappearing due to low margin.

Not only Wonsik, but also most interviewees suggested that the high rental price in Seochon reflects the media representation of sugarcoated Seochon, not the actual business prospects. In other words, the virtual Seochon actualizes the high rental price over the neighborhood, even though it does not guarantee the high return for each shop. Accordingly, all shops differently experience the rhythms of gentrification because they have different landlords, business skills, attractions, and circumstances.

During an interview with Junghee (shop owner, female, 40s), I glimpsed a differential virtual/actual moment. She runs two shops in Seochon; one is a bar, the other is a clothing shop. Despite their similar location and the clothing shop's bigger size, the rental price of the clothing shop was only about two-thirds of the bar. She explained,

Seochon is getting so famous and it is bringing more and more visitors. So, some landlords dramatically increase the rent, because they assume all retail businesses in Seochon should return high profits. But, not every landlord is doing that. Actually, my clothing shop landlord has raised rent only 100,000 won (about 90 dollars) during the last two years. Compared to other places, the rent has been almost frozen. A more surprising thing is that recently he said 'I don't think the retail business is doing very well these days. Let's bring back the rent.' Then, he really lowered the rent!

According to Junghee's description, her landlord was a long-time senior resident. Therefore, his generous gesture seemed to draw on his lived, actual experiences, which allowed him to perceive and sympathize with the whimsical ebbs and flows of Seochon's retail businesses. She also mentioned that because he lives on the top floor of his commercial complex, he really cares about the building and does not welcome any

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uproarious F&B business in his building even if it will pay more money. We talked about several possible reasons, but we could not exactly pinpoint why the landlord decreased the rent and did not replace her shop with a more profitable F&B business. Yet, clearly, those virtual reasons actualized lowering the rent and securing her business while spatio-temporally blurring the edge between landlord/Junghee as displacer/displacee.

In this sense, Junghee and her landlord embody the virtual/actual in-betweens who are becoming gentrifier/d. Without clear coordinate, measure, departure, or destination, they are part of the transcoding rhythms of gentrification as topological in-betweens who are traversing heterogeneous space-times. These in-betweens animate and effectuate gentrification-induced displacements, but at the same time, ongoingly distort them. For example, in the interviews with shop owners, I found that their attitude toward their landlords is not necessarily hostile. Although all retailers share concerns about rent, they have different relationships with their landlords depending on their different situations. Hyoshin (restaurant owner, male, 40s), who runs one of the most famous restaurants in Seochon, delightfully mentioned his landlord in an interview.

> My landlord and I have had a nice relationship so far. We've never had any trouble in the rent agreement. If he would like to raise the rent a little more than it is now, I will be willing to match him. Actually, my landlord very much appreciates my restaurant because he can securely receive high rents every month.

Hyoshin's unique success in business twisted the displacer/displacee dynamic and put him in the equal, and even somewhat dominant, position in his relationship with his landlord. He strongly sympathized with a recently evicted shop owner in Seochon and criticized that landlord's merciless entrepreneurial mind. Nonetheless, Hyoshin sadly understood why

that landlord did that and related himself to the landlord by addressing everyone's economic desire and pursuit.

Certainly, chasing profits is the most prominent rhythm of gentrification, which is differently expressed in heterogeneous space-times. During the fieldwork, I witnessed various moments when the monetary impetus distorts the edges of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced, as Kitaek's interview quotation at the beginning of this article shows. For instance, some long-time owner-occupiers who were discontented with current gentrification did not particularly fight against gentrification and its accompanying commercialization. Rather, they attempted to utilize them for their benefits by being part of further commercialization. Sunja, the long-time resident above, was one of them. In several informal conversations, she repeatedly complained about the everyday inconvenience and nuisance caused by young visitors, while emphasizing that she cannot understand why they are attracted by such dilapidated, underdeveloped neighborhoods like Seochon and its old buildings. Yet, at the same time, she eagerly talked about her business plan to use those old buildings that she just described as "almost collapsed" and "not pretty." She could not understand the tastes and practices of hipster, foodie gentrifiers, but simultaneously, she recognized the chance to gain profits from those incomprehensible visitors by selling what they want. Indeed, I first met Sunja at Seven Fortunes when she started working in our kitchen. Although she did not patronize new F&B businesses by herself, she actively participated in the production of those businesses. In this way, outside gentrification, which Sunja accused, was already virtually/actually folded within her via the transcoding rhythms; she was constantly becoming gentrifier/d.

4.5 Conclusion: Porous (Anti)Gentrification

This article has reconceptualized the mobile and affective subjects of gentrification by theoretically and empirically rethinking displacements and rhythms in gentrification. In doing so, I have avoided identifying the displacing gentrifier and the displaced gentrified, and thus, highlighted the topological in-betweens who are ongoingly becoming gentrifier/d while traversing heterogeneous virtual/actual space-times. We glimpsed their movements of becoming via the rhythms of gentrification which flow through the transcoded passages and ruptures between a thousand emerging, diverging, folding, and twisting space-times. Consequently, the Deleuze-Guattarian revisit of rhythmanalysis has more effectively proved Lefebvre's argument that people "not only move alongside the monster but are inside it; they live off it" (2004, pp. 54–55) by dismantling the monstrously imagined enemies of gentrification and uncovering their sponge-like inside/outside. There are neither external enemies nor internal allies in the fight against gentrification; both sides are folded with one another by the twisted edges of gentrifier/gentrified and displacing/displaced.

This topological reframing might bear the impression of weakening the capacity and solidarity of anti-gentrification movements. However, if we epistemologically persist with the dichotomized identification and separation of gentrifying and gentrified subjects, gentrification that is already on the inside of anti-gentrification will continue the repetitive cycles of dis/ordering and dis/placing. Certainly, we cannot escape from gentrification-induced displacements without admitting our own subjectivities, participations, and ethical dilemmas in the process (Donnelly, 2018; Ji, 2020; Marcuse, 2015; Schlichtman & Patch, 2014). We are all spatio-temporally and virtually/actually part of gentrification and displacement. Therefore, we should recognize our potentials and becomings in

(anti)gentrification in order to open an alternative avenue to more persuasive urban justice movements.

In this sense, my aim is not to show the fakeness of revanchist relations in gentrification; those relations are real and lead to a wide range of vicious cycles and consequences on the ground, as much of the previous research has well documented (see Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). Instead of destroying the previous frameworks, this article twists them by shifting their focus from repetition to difference. In upholding the suggestion of Cockayne et al. (2017, p. 594), this turn to "difference-in-itself" will offer a "more capacious perspective from which to engage with the virtualities" of in-betweens and their "lines of flight that inhere in the constant unfolding" of (anti)gentrification. In the transcoding rhythms of gentrification, all newcomers and landlords have their own lived experiences, just as all long-time residents and retailers have their own desire for profits. They are all in-betweens who potentially become both—and neither—displacers and displacees. Ultimately, more convincing and capacious anti-gentrification movements are possible through articulating those in-betweens and mobilizing their agency to dissolve gentrification from its very inside.

Chapter 5 CONCLUSION: GENTRIFICATION TRAVELING BACK AND FORTH

Gentrification researchers have been attentive to the ways in which gentrification, coined in the global North metropolises, becomes generalized over the world through globalization, neo-colonialism, and neoliberal urbanism (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; N. Smith, 2002). However, postcolonial urban scholars have criticized this western-centric perspective, somewhat assuming the "linear development of gentrification as travelling from the global North to the global South," while calling attention to the plural geographies of gentrification and its "relational multiplicity" in "continual construction" (Lees, 2012, p. 166).

Drawing upon this global approach to gentrification based on comparative urbanism (see McFarlane, 2010; Robinson, 2006; Roy & Ong, 2011), scholars in the global South have fostered gentrification studies by revisiting various urban processes—such as urban renewal in Santiago (Lopez-Morales, 2011) or redevelopment in Seoul (H. B. Shin, 2009)—through a lens of gentrification, if they involve socio-spatial upgrading and, most importantly, displacement. Collectively, they have proved how multiple forms and processes of gentrification (and neoliberalism) have emerged depending on different local and historical contexts (Janoschka & Sequera, 2016; Lees et al., 2015; H. B. Shin et al., 2016). However, notwithstanding the merit of this "planetary gentrification" framework (Lees et al., 2016) in geographically expanding and theoretically enriching the gentrification debates, those studies have unintentionally contributed to the reproduction of the North-South division by highlighting how gentrification in the global South differs from (or is similar with) its counterparts in the global North because of its different local

contexts, and somewhat showing the academic value of the former in terms of its contribution to new insights into the latter.

This limitation is not caused by those studies themselves, but by the existing context of the Anglo-American academic hegemony. For this reason, some postcolonial urban scholars (typically Maloutas, 2011, 2018) have problematized the stretching application of gentrification—as a terminology, theory, or perspective—not only because of the danger of de-contextualization[6] but also the normalization of western-centric frameworks.

> Theory is usually generated in highly developed regions, and this is part of what makes of those regions the core in the academic division of labour. This implicit core contextuality of theory in human geography is responsible for not having to justify the international relevance of dealing with socio-spatial issues in London or New York and, on the contrary, to be obliged to do so for Naples, Recife or Nagoya; and even to do it on the basis of their relevance to theoretical discussions and concepts implicitly bound to a different context from their own, incidentally that of the former. Thus, the skewed contextual dependence of theory leads to a skewed theoretical dependence of context.
>
> (Maloutas, 2011, p. 43)

In the same vein, Smart & Smart (2017) pointed out that deploying the keyword of gentrification as an explicit signifier brings more international attention to research in Anglo-American academia and, simultaneously, displaces and erases alternative concepts, native vocabularies, and even long histories of local conflicts against displacement. As they pointed out, this critique might be relevant to some Asian cities where the word 'gentrification' is barely used in everyday, local discourses, whereas their urban changes are discussed in theories of gentrification in Anglosphere academia (e.g. Shanghai in He,

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[6] Scholars advocating 'planetary gentrification' denounced this critique regarding de-contextualization as fossilization (Lees et al., 2015, 2016) because adhering to a Anglosphere prototype of gentrification can reduce its theoretical openness and practical relevance in a global context.

2010; Hong Kong in Ley & Teo, 2014; Hanoi in Yip & Tran, 2016). However, I am skeptical about whether using the term itself can be an indicator of naturalizing the Anglo-American academic hegemony, given the contemporary popularity of gentrification in Korean public narratives as an everyday term indicating the very local urban changes and anti-gentrification movements (see the Introduction chapter).

This dissertation project has been advanced at the edge of these growing debates around postcolonial, comparative gentrification studies in the global South (see Ley & Teo, 2020) while oscillating between and distorting the borders of planetary-generalized and local-particularized approaches. On the one hand, the project contributes to stretching gentrification toward the outside of Anglosphere by illuminating empirical evidence from a non-western city of Seoul. On the other hand, my work is distinguished from mainstream, postcolonial literature of Seoul's gentrification that emphasizes an endogenous process of state-sponsored, revanchist, residential urban renewal (typically H. B. Shin & Kim, 2016). Instead, I focus on the hipster-led, foodie-led commercialization of old urban neighborhoods, which has received intense public attention in Seoul since the mid-2010s while popularizing the English loanword 'gentrification' in local conversations.

Certainly, there are plural gentrifications in Seoul, as in New York City. More importantly, the multiplicity and complexity of those gentrifications emerge in, but are not solely shaped by its bounded localities, as much as New York City's gentrifications are. In this sense, this dissertation's major aim is not to provide another example showing globalizing gentrification or to create a singular, local theory about Seoul. Rather, through the particularized realities of gentrification in Seochon, Seoul, I have engaged with generalized ontological and epistemological gaps in the gentrification debates, as other

ordinary (Robinson, 2006) and provincial (Leitner & Sheppard, 2016) Anglo-American gentrification studies have done.

Put differently, I have developed new frameworks of gentrification, not only by examining the everyday realities of localized gentrification on the ground of Seochon, but also by learning and thinking them "through elsewhere" (Robinson, 2016). To explain, my initial research interest was to show how Korean hipster gentrifiers—who assumed better economic, social, and cultural capital—colonize a neighborhood and naturalize their practices by drawing upon previous Anglo-American research of retail gentrification (Hubbard, 2017; Zukin, 2010). However, as this project continued, I encountered more complicated and often paradoxical dynamics of gentrification and displacement, escaping from the class-based, identity-based frameworks of gentrification. In and through the ever-changing, heterogeneous relations and space-times, urban players were constantly becoming gentrifier/d. Accordingly, this project became expansive in an attempt to engage more critically with the existing discussions about aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms of gentrification in Seoul, as well as elsewhere.

As a result, chapter two considered the issues of aesthetics based on urban scholarship around historic preservation and culture-led regeneration. I argued that the aesthetic pursuit of authenticity inevitably produces and excludes inauthentic things and beings. To challenge the dichotomy of authentic/inauthentic and its accompanying exclusion, I unfolded the socio-political and psychological processes of reinventing and reassembling Seochon as an authentic cultural heritage with examples of historic preservation and heritage tourism. Indeed, there has never been an authentic model of Seochon because it keeps expanding, diversifying, and thus becoming. Therefore, I

redefined all the simulacra of Seochon as true, rather than as false copies of authentic

heritage, and highlighted their differences and movements while suggesting their potential

for more capacious views on urban historic preservation.

Chapter three considered the issues of subjectivities based on the literature of retail

gentrification, tourism, and psychoanalysis. Specifically, I showed how the fantasy of

authenticity sustains the paradox of retail gentrification; gentrifiers "know very well what

they are doing, but still, they are doing it" (Žižek, 2008b, p. 25). Through the fantasy of

authenticity, the subjects of gentrification constantly renew their desire for something more

authentic while twisting the borders of authentic/inauthentic and gentrifier/gentrified.

Therefore, I argued that, to escape from the cycle of the ongoing retail gentrification, we

should concede our compelling desire and confront ourselves, not the imagined otherness,

by traversing the fantasy of authenticity.

Chapter four turned towards considering a rhythm as a tool for capturing the

dynamics of gentrification based on the literature of gentrification-induced displacements,

topology, and rhythmanalysis. By tracing the rhythms of becoming gentrifier/d, I

conceptualized the mobile and affective subjects of gentrification as the topological in-

betweens who run through the transcoded passages and ruptures between a thousand

emerging, diverging, folding, and twisting space-times of gentrification. In doing so, I

dismantled the monstrously imagined enemies of gentrification, and thus, underscored their

porousness while disclosing a possibility of more persuasive and capacious anti-

gentrification movements from the very inside of gentrification.

Consequently, this dissertation project urges more attention to the porous and

topological dynamics of gentrification and displacement that are often bypassed in favor

of cohesive solidarity for urban justice movements. Of course, this argument applies not only to Seoul, but also to other cities, especially those experiencing retail gentrification with hip F&B businesses. By demonstrating the unsettling aesthetics, subjectivities, and rhythms of retail gentrification which sustain and twist the ongoing dynamics of displacement, I argue that the subjects of gentrification are always becoming gentrifier/d. Gentrification is in inside/outside of us, as much as anti-gentrification is. Therefore, it is not possible to truly start challenging gentrification-induced displacements and their material and affective violence until we honestly admit our own participation in the processes and stop displacing our responsibility.

With this consideration in mind, I conclude this dissertation with a suggestion for urban and cultural geographers. As previous studies pointed out (Marcuse, 2015; Schlichtman & Patch, 2014), researchers often find themselves amid gentrification while dealing with an ethical dilemma. Throughout this project, I also have experienced this dilemma. When I first 'discovered' Seochon in 2010, I was deeply attracted by its nostalgic landscape and atmosphere. For me, the neighborhood seemed authentic, unique, and very different from other places of the concrete jungle of Seoul. At the same time, I was excited about the fact that people barely knew about this charming neighborhood. I secretly put Seochon on my idea note for the future research and hoped that Seochon and its authenticity would be 'preserved' as they were.

When I revisited Seochon in 2015, I witnessed its dramatic change; Seochon became one of the most famous places to eat and hang out in Seoul, as well as one of the most controversial places with its retail gentrification and its accompanying displacement. While walking through its famous traditional street markets with lots of urban tourists, I

felt that I 'lost' the charming neighborhood of Seochon in the past. Nonetheless, while

eating *tonkatsu*—Japanese deep-fried pork cutlet—in a hanok-renovated restaurant and

looking at an old laundry through a window, I also felt that this neighborhood is still

enjoyable and somehow authentic. Based on this experience, I developed this project to

understand my own paradoxical feelings and started the fieldwork in 2017.

Meanwhile, I faced various criticism about researchers in terms of their role in

gentrification. For example, Jang, the current head of Seochon Neighborhood Society,

criticized so-called "experts" in an interview with Pressian (K. D. Kim, 2016).

> At first, I welcomed external experts who were interested in our
> neighborhood because they tried to solve our problem [of gentrification]
> together. But I disappointed them because they left when they have done
> with their interests. Some used our society for building their careers in
> hanok construction, and others used it for their research.

His doubt about researchers has recurred in my mind throughout the fieldwork, in tandem

with the following Facebook post of Captain Seol (2018), a local celebrity that I addressed

in chapter three.

> I can see a lot of experts talking about urban regeneration on social media
> since the governmental budget for it has rapidly increased. Among them, I
> hate the most those who learned about the topic abroad and sell their fancy
> knowledge, as if they are doing a great job in solving gentrification.

This criticism has made me keep questioning myself—my presence in Seochon,

my practices of becoming gentrifier/d, as well as researcher/d, and my contribution beyond

academia. Many of these questions have remained unanswered. However, through

ceaseless self-questioning and looking at my complicity in gentrification honestly and

realistically, I have been able to broaden my understanding of the paradoxical subjects of gentrification—including Jang, Seol, all my interviewees, myself, and other gentrification scholars—and the ways in which we sustain (anti)gentrification by constantly crossing the borders of good/bad, authentic/inauthentic, and gentrifier/gentrified. As a result, this dissertation project was one attempt at illuminating our becoming, in-betweenness, and ultimately, virtuality in (anti)gentrification. My hope is that this dissertation echoes and contributes to ongoing efforts to challenge gentrification by highlighting its paradoxical processes, ruptures, and thus lines of flight.

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