OPEN SPACE? ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE
POLITICS OF BELONGING IN BOULDER, COLORADO

by

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Abstract

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Open Space? Environmentalism and the Politics of Belonging in Boulder, Colorado
Thesis directed by Associate Professor Emily T. Yeh

The goal of this dissertation is to explore how the construction of the ideas and actions around “nature” and “environment” are complicit and necessary in the maintenance of racial and class exclusion and white privilege in Boulder, Colorado. My primary research questions are: How did Boulder come to be seen by its residents as “so green” and “so white,” how do the two representations rely on each other in Boulder’s history and current articulation, and what articulations do those representations take in its residents’ lives? I conclude that Boulder came to be seen as “green” through a long historical reference to the beauty and purity of the natural environment, and it came to be seen as “white” in part through a marked class politics of exclusion and also through its characterization as green in the exclusionary racial politics of the early and modern environmental movements in the twentieth century. Boulder’s characterizations as green and white draw on one another throughout the city’s twentieth and early twenty-first century history, with 1) early environmentalist characterizations about the purity of nature and about nature as the heart of the nation, which relied on racialized understandings of nation and of the proper practices of conduct, hygiene, and self-improvement that were seen to lead to national progress, 2) mid-twentieth century and twenty-first century valuations of nature and versions of city history that hid the social process of the protection and management of open space, and 3) twenty-first century articulations of whiteness as the hegemonic racial and cultural norm in Boulder expressed in part through the politics of environmentalism and liberal-progressivism more broadly. In residents’ lives, these articulations take the form of a delight in the local environment and environmental goals and practices, paired with a political-cultural minority disdain for the same environmental politics, and they also take the form of complex expressions of exclusion of non-white residents and visitors to Boulder, often couched in well meaning desire for and efforts at “inclusion” of racial minorities and immigrants. Together, these articulations form a complicated coexistence and juxtaposition of environmentalism, progressivism, and racism in Boulder.
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Introduction

I began this research in 2008 with a small project investigating Hispanics’ perceptions and use of parks and open space in Boulder County. In the course of that research my conversations with local open space managers, Hispanic residents, and non-Hispanic residents convinced me that the issue of “perceptions and use of open space” is truly complex. Hispanic park users, including self-identified Latinos, *Mexicanos*, Chicanos, *Salvadoreños*, and others, expressed a range of opinions from satisfaction with parks and open space resources to requests for more shade trees and complaints that government officials do not listen to their complaints or requests. Claims of racism towards Hispanic park users were made by both Hispanics and non-Hispanics in the county. One claim referred to stricter enforcement of park rules about noise and public conduct with Hispanics than with misbehaving college students. Another referenced assumptions that park and open space officials made about Hispanics; for example, a park event reservation worker assumed that an organization with Hispanic businesspeople as members would prefer a specific park that is seen as the *Hispanic park* because it is closest to a neighborhood with majority poor, Hispanic residents and has occasional gang activity, even though Hispanics visit many parks in the area and the organization members do not live near that park.

Non-Hispanic park users who participated in the early research as well as other non-Hispanic residents expressed a surprisingly unified opinion that Hispanics need more access to parks, that Hispanics ought to expand their recreational activities out of city parks onto open space trails, and that Hispanics should take advantage of the extensive outdoor recreation resources available in the county. While this rather paternalistic sentiment that “we” want to share “our parks” with Hispanics was pervasive in non-Hispanics’ comments about Hispanics’ use of parks, I also noticed a subtle anxiety or expectation of conflict in the anticipation of a possible increase in Hispanics’ park use. This expectation is evident in one wealthy white resident’s comment about a city park frequented by Hispanics and other non-white or immigrant residents and tourists. He said, “It’s great how Latinos can come to this park, but you still feel comfortable walking through. It’s not territorial.” Though his tone was clearly comfortable and approving of the situation of Hispanics’ use of the park, it is clear that he expected some type of cultural conflict and territorialism.
Lastly, parks and open space managers and other government employees reinforced specific characterizations of Hispanics in the county as a population in need of outreach, services, and environmental education. Many non-Hispanic workers characterized the Hispanic county residents primarily as “underserved.” This characterization was applied to the realm of social services such as affordable housing and food assistance as well as to the realm of recreation, including access to and use of parks and open space in the county. Parks and open space employees were eager to foster an environmental ethic in the Hispanic community in the county through environmental education in Spanish and with Hispanic kids and families, including some programs already underway. One park ranger was especially passionate about the issue, and he expressed a specific two-part goal, getting the Hispanic demographic “behind the environment at the ballot box” and getting Hispanics to “interface with nature and find value in it.” This ranger, like most non-Hispanics I talked to, really wanted Hispanics to feel welcome in open space so that experience of it could increase their quality of life. The overall sense conveyed by employees was that the population of Hispanics in the county consists primarily of poor people and recent immigrants to the United States. In addition, they conveyed the sentiment that Hispanics had great potential to be good national and environmental citizens, but they needed social services to help them get by and education to help them learn how to access environmental amenities and how to enjoy them when they do access them.

These portrayals of Hispanics by non-Hispanics in Boulder County prompted me to see that there was much more to the question of “Hispanics’ perceptions and use of parks and open space” than which Hispanics (rich, poor, male, female, young, old) go to which parks (small, large, city, county, rustic, amenity-rich, parks, open space) with what frequency (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) and how they get there (walk, bike, drive).¹ These questions were relatively easy to answer, as posed, but I found the assumptions, expectations, and representations that prompted these questions and shaped the way they were discussed to be very complex, multi-layered, and intricately linked to representations of Hispanics and assumptions about race and culture that circulate at larger scales.

This early research prompted my realization that expectations about and representations of Hispanics (and other “others”) in Boulder, in reference to outdoor activity, matter. These representations make difference through reiterating assumptions and stereotypes about “others,” and they make a difference.

¹ I did answer these questions with a survey, but results are not included in this dissertation. See Hickcox (2008).
they do something beyond a statement of fact about who goes to what parks when, where, and how. This realization that the investigation of Hispanics’ park use did more than describe a set of activities led me to ask what other social meanings these expectations and representations expressed by non-Hispanics draw on. A closer look links these representations and expectations to racial meanings and understandings of difference embedded in contemporary U.S. racial discourse and inherited from historical racial discourses. Most important for this dissertation, I came to understand that these expectations and representations of others were, in fact, more informative about the non-Hispanics who expressed them than about the Hispanics surveyed in my early research project. That is how this dissertation came to be designed as an exploration of the material and symbolic landscapes of Boulder in which exclusion is enacted through constructions of racial, class, and gender norms, values, and meanings, particularly by well-meaning politically liberal white Boulder residents. I explore how the construction of “nature” and “environment” each play a role in maintaining the borders of social belonging and exclusion in Boulder.

**Research site**

Boulder, Colorado has a reputation for environmentalism, progressive politics, wealth, and whiteness. Many people call the city the “people’s republic of Boulder,” with a tone either sympathetic or hostile to its unique and leftist politics. Boulder’s liberal politics can be best summarized by two remarks made by interviewees during my research. The first remark is, “There is no apathy in Boulder; everybody has an opinion” because the people who live in Boulder are always thinking about and reflecting on the world around them. Boulder residents are curious about the local environment and about the broader world; they advocate for protection of local flora and fauna (including, infamously, the prairie dog⁸) and travel far and

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⁸ The issue of prairie dogs is one that typifies the stereotypes of Boulder as distinct from most of the rest of Colorado in its attention to bizarre or ridiculous issues. In most of the state (and most of the West), prairie dogs are seen as a pest that digs holes that cattle step into in range areas and that carries the plague. As a pest, prairie dogs are discouraged from settling on farmers’ or ranchers’ land (that is, they are exterminated). In contrast, in Boulder prairie dogs are a partially protected species. The city has a longstanding policy to avoid killing prairie dogs whenever possible. In addition, dogs (canines, man’s best friend) caught chasing the small, squeaky prairie dogs can incur a fine of up to five hundred dollar to be served to their human companions (the human-canine relationship of "companion" rather than "owner" established by the city is another case that typifies Boulder’s unusual view of the world). In 2011 the city attempted to relocate a prairie dog colony from Foothills Community Park in the city to open space on its outskirts, near the neighboring community of Gunbarrel. The relocation was estimated to cost $36,000 (Urie, 2011, May 12). Residents of Gunbarrel, opposed the move, citing prairie dogs as pests and expressed concern that the management of prairie dogs that includes a pesticide used to kill fleas that feed on the prairie dogs and can transmit the plague (ibid). This upheaval over prairie dogs led one Boulder resident to write in a letter to the local paper that stated, “Prairie dogs do not need protection, people do,”
wide to experience other cultures and environments. They advocate for immigrants’ rights in the city, state, and country. The city itself formed a partnership with the national program Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration of the National League of Cities to help documented and undocumented immigrants in Boulder access information about programs and services offered by the city and the state that immigrants can use (Uri, 2010, December 29). The District Attorney of Boulder County also stood up for immigrants in a 2011 statement that “[n]obody is more vulnerable than someone who has questionable immigration status….

They're afraid of the police, and they don't know the system. There's a perception that these people are fair game [for wage theft and scams], but they're not fair game while I’m DA” (Meltzer, 2011). This combination of environmental and global perspectives is distinctly liberal in the tradition of the 1960s and 1970s new social movements as well as its outward focus on international development and humanitarian efforts. That era was the historical moment when residents of Boulder, reacting to a growing population and a growing city, reflected on what they wanted the identity of their city to be. In this sense, Boulder came of age in the social and environmental turmoil and activism of the 1960s and 1970s, and that moment of identity formation has endured through the following half-century.

The second interviewee statement is that expresses Boulder’s liberal character is that Boulder has “a cause on every corner” with people asking you to “save this river, save this tree, save this beetle, don’t save that beetle,” including representatives from Greenpeace, Colorado PIRG, the American Civil Liberties Union (on the issue of gay marriage), and Planned Parenthood, among others. The activism is certainly influenced by the presence of the University of Colorado in Boulder, but it cannot be reduced to Boulder’s character as a college town. The type of political and environmental activism typified by on-the-street advocacy has the

referencing the lack of attention to the needs of caregivers of developmentally disabled adults, another issue addressed at the same meeting (Lewis, 2011). Finally, there is a racialized politics to prairie dog protection. Early in my research a black male resident of Boulder told me flatly, “Boulder cares more about prairie dogs than people of color.” His insistence points to the type of liberal politics in Boulder that prioritizes environmental issues over those of social equity.

3 Of course not everyone in Boulder conforms to the liberal norm, as visible in one letter to the local newspaper the Boulder Daily Camera. In the letter a Boulder resident described the actions and intentions of a civilian “border protection group” in Arizona thus: “All they are trying to do is stop a human flood from overrunning our country, something the Feds have refused to do for decades” (Waber, 2010). The author goes on to oppose amnesty of comprehensive immigration reform because it would only “strongly incentivize further invasions,” and to warn that “at the present rate, these illegals will be [not a minority but] a majority soon” (ibid). In addition to the distinct interruption of a liberal norm in Boulder in his adherence to a politically conservative stance on immigration, it is also important to note that the author of the letter himself reinforces the reputation of Boulder as liberal. He begins his letter, “Living in a liberal place like Boulder, I have come to expect false and trumped-up accusations of racism” (ibid). Even while he takes issue with the dominant politics of the place, he acknowledges them as decidedly (if unreasonably) liberal.
appearance of grass-roots support and causes for the people and for the earth. These are the issues championed by the political left in the United States, and their presence in Boulder reminds city residents of the liberal leanings of the city's population.

Boulder residents' claims that Boulder is a frontrunner in environmentalism are also based partly on its business base. Boulder and its surroundings are headquarters for numerous natural food groceries and producers, including the grocery store Wild Oats (recently purchased by Whole Foods) and specialty food companies such as Rudi's Organic Bakery, Silk, Chocolove, Izze Beverage Company, and others. Boulder also boasts a robust alternative energy sector and has stood out for decades for its environmental and city planning efforts. The wealth of the city, which facilitates its consumer character derives in part from the fact that the city is a business hub for scientific and technological research and an incubator for technological companies that specialize in the development of new software and Internet-based technologies.  

Thus, Boulder is seen as a special location of liberal and radical politics in Colorado, and residents repeat that reputation to one another in their speech and actions. That the city is not as liberal as it claims to be is visible in the specific type of liberal values upheld by residents, particularly values that focus on protection of the environment, at times precluding attention to and monetary support for other liberal causes such as affordable housing (which I discuss in chapter 2).

Dissertation goals, research question, and conceptual framework

The primary goal of this dissertation is to explore how the construction of the ideas and actions around “nature” and “environment” are complicit and necessary in the maintenance of racial and class exclusion and white privilege in Boulder. Part of this analysis is the examination of how exclusion is enacted through often implicit racial and class characterizations in the material and symbolic landscapes of Boulder. Another central component of my analysis is the examination of how racial and environmental meanings are mutually constituting in Boulder and beyond. The problem of understanding how people who claim not to be racist and actively speak out against racism perpetuate racial assumptions, meanings, inequalities, and exclusions also drives my research.

4 Crocs™ shoe company was also founded in Boulder, and the shoes were made in Boulder county until production was outsourced to Asia.
My primary research questions are: How did Boulder come to be seen by its residents as “so green” and “so white,” how do the two representations rely on each other in Boulder’s history and current articulation, and what articulations do those representations take in its residents’ lives? I gathered both historical and contemporary data to answer this question, from the early conservation era at the turn of the twentieth century, Boulder’s formative modern environmental era of the 1960s and 1970s, and current (2008 to 2011) views of environmentalism, nature, difference, and racism in Boulder.

I conclude that Boulder came to be seen as “green” through a long historical reference to the beauty and purity of the natural environment, and it came to be seen as “white” in part through a marked class politics of exclusion and also through its characterization as green in the exclusionary racial politics of the early and modern environmental movements in the twentieth century. Boulder’s characterizations as green and white draw on one another throughout the city’s twentieth and early twenty-first century history, with 1) early environmentalist characterizations about the purity of nature and about nature as the heart of the nation, which relied on racialized understandings of nation and of the proper practices of conduct, hygiene, and self-improvement that lead to national progress, 2) mid-twentieth century and twenty-first century valuations of nature and versions of city history that hid the very social process of the protection and management of parks and open space, and 3) twenty-first century articulations of whiteness as the hegemonic racial and cultural norm in Boulder expressed in part through the politics of environmentalism and liberal-progressivism more broadly. In residents’ lives, these articulations take the form of a (sometimes self-righteous) delight in the local environment and environmental goals and practices, paired with a political-cultural minority disdain for or self-mockery of the same environmental politics, and they also take the form of complex expressions of exclusion of non-white residents and visitors to Boulder, often couched in well-meaning desire for and efforts at “inclusion” of racial minorities and immigrants. Together, these articulations form a complicated juxtaposition and coexistence of environmentalism, progressivism, and racism in Boulder.

My conceptual framework is a post-structural position that incorporates a discursive and performative approach to my research question. I theorize “race,” racial identities, and environmental identities as discursive and performative. Before I discuss the production of racial identity through discourse, it is important to clarify what I mean when I use the term “discourse.” Widespread use of the term discourse
in the social sciences began in the 1970s, and by the 1990s it was remarked on as being one of the least well defined terms in use (Abu-Lughod and Lutz, 1990). The concept is widely attributed to Michel Foucault, but the general nature of the attribution (e.g. referring to Foucault, but not citing his work specifically) can be problematic for a clear use of the term (Sawyer, 2002). The term’s use in English-speaking social sciences has a lineage traced through the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, members of which, including Stuart Hall, aligned themselves with Marxist, Gramscian, and Althusserian theories of hegemony, ideology, and interpellation. In this realm, discourse is framed in its role in the analysis of the “actual process of ideological struggle” and the discursive organization and fracturing of ideological currents (Hall, 1986: 22-23). Gramsci called this analysis the study of a “discursive formation” (Gramsci, 1971).

For the most part, I have adopted Stuart Hall’s and Foucault’s theorizations of discourse, which focus on its active role in ordering the world. Hall defines discourse as a group of statements that “provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (Hall, 1997: 201). In this definition, Hall points out the important fact that discourse is not simply something said – a group of statements – but a group of statements that represent “a particular kind of knowledge about a topic.” Hall continues, “When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed” (ibid). In the same way, a discourse delimits what the realms of possibility of thinking and speaking about a topic are. Statements that point to the realm outside of these limits seem nonsensical. A discourse limits what is possible to consider in the realm of truth, what objects and relationships can exist in the world, and what questions can be asked about those objects and relationships. In summary, a discourse is a group of statements that influence and set the boundaries for the way a topic is discussed, and a statement is a speech act or use of language that functions to position objects in the world in a certain way in relation to each other.

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5 In The Archeology of Knowledge Foucault defines a “statement” as both “the ‘elementary unit’ of discourse” (Sawyer, 2002: 437) and a functional unit of language use, as opposed to language structure (ibid: 438). A statement, as a speech act or use of language, is functional not structural (ibid). Sawyer clarifies that although Foucault originally said in The Archeology of Knowledge that statements are not speech acts, it was because of his “misunderstanding of the speech act” which was later clarified by Searle, so later “Foucault changed his position and agreed that statements are speech acts” (ibid: 438). See Foucault (2002 [1972]), pages 99 to 118.
In addition to ordering the world in a specific way, discourse also constructs certain subject positions. As a group of statements, a discourse can be understood as a discursive formation of statements, in which “[t]he statements fit together because any one statement implies a relation to all others” (Hall, 1997: 201). In addition, because the constellation of statements within a discourse represents knowledge in a certain way, “every discourse constructs positions from which alone it makes sense. Anyone deploying a discourse must position themselves as if they were the subject of the discourse” (Hall, 1996: 202, emphasis original). Thus, articulations of discourse imply a set of assumptions about the world – a particular ontology – albeit not always logically coherent. And, in their articulation, discourses also position people in relation to those assumptions in the world around them, including its material and social organization.

A racial discourse, then, is a set of statements about race, racism, and racial identification that refer to an assumed object – “race” – which is variously presented as biological, somatic, moral, socially constructed, or, most often, a combination of these. Racial discourse is also bound by its conceptual organization around the concept of “difference,” which is articulated through understandings of “racial difference” that are not fixed, but shift over time, but always rely on the concepts of difference and similarity.

Understanding racial discourse as a part of the construction and maintenance of difference also allows a view of race as performative. Only a few scholars have advanced a theory of race as performative, following Judith Butler’s (1993a, 1999 [1990]) theory of gender and sex as performative. Louis Mirón and Jonathan Inda (2000) give the most involved exploration of a performative theory of race, tracing the concept of performativity from its originator J. L. Austin through Judith Butler, whose work on gender, sex, and queer identity, which, along with linguistic anthropology’s treatment of performative statements, brought the concept further into the social sciences. Mirón and Inda’s theorization of racial performativity is based most closely on Butler’s, with a focus on the way that discourse produces the subject that it names (e.g. "girl" or “white”) through reiterated acts (Mirón and Inda, 2000: 94). The repetition of these practices is compulsory in that it is the reiteration of social norms, specifically norms that correspond to the subjectivities named. Through the repeated statements and enactments of what a subject is (and what it ought to be, i.e. the norm) the subject “acquires a naturalized effect” or becomes “sedimented” (ibid). This naturalized effect describes

6 According to Foucault, to belong to the same discursive formation, statements must meet four criteria: “The statements refer to the same object, are made in the same enunciative modality, share a system of conceptual organization and share similar themes and theories” (Sawyer, 2002: 436, see Foucault, 2002 [1972]: 119-132).
the common conceptualization that the “I” – the subject – exists prior to and separate from the processes of identification, which both Butler and Mirón and Inda contest, citing Michel Foucault’s work (1990 [1978], 1995 [1977]).

Jacques Derrida contributes the concept of “citationality” to the theory of performativity. He points out that Austin’s earlier statement that a performative “must conform to a model and be recognized as a repetition” (Mirón and Inda, 2000: 91) requires that a speech act “repeat a ‘coded’ or iterable utterance... [or be] identifiable in some way as a ‘citation’” (Derrida, 1988: 17, cited in ibid). This repetition is not merely a series of isolated but identical pronouncements, but instead a statement that refers to an earlier statement or set of statements. In the case of racial discourse, racial statements often refer to a vast set of scientific, policy, and popular articulations of racial “truths.” Even those “truths” that have been proven incorrect continue to be cited, as false or true or some ambiguous combination, in racial statements.

Central to the repetition of practices is Butler’s argument that the subject is never fully formed but always in a process of becoming, always being constructed (Mirón and Inda, 2000: 94). For Butler, “the ‘girling of the girl’ does not end with the founding act of interpellation [‘it’s a girl!’], but must be reiterated by various authorities and in various times and places to reinforce the naturalized gender effect” (ibid, citing Butler, 1993b). Similarly, subjects are continually racialized through citational repetitions of racial truths, falsities, stereotypes, histories, assumptions, and resistances.

Specific to race as a performative, Mirón and Inda’s argument centers on naturalized racial differences and racial norms. The authors draw on a range of work to explain that racism has been constructed through colonial and scientific histories based on binaries (us / them, white / black, white / other, etc.) that draw on norms to distinguish some people as “acceptable” from others who are seen as “unacceptable” (Mirón and Inda, 2000: 96-97). Both the differences and the norms are naturalized. Thus, race as portrayed through naturalizing practices or as a fact of nature does not exist. The naturalization “gives social relations the facade of long duration, hence reducing, essentializing, and fixing difference” (ibid: 99). Further, race

is simply a name that retroactively constitutes and naturalizes the groupings to which it refers. Race... works performatively to constitute the racial subject itself, a subject that only procures a naturalized effect through repeated reference to that subject... [R]acial performativity... is not a singular act of racial subject constitution, but a reiterative practice through which discourse brings about the effect that it names. It is only through the force of reiteration that the racial subject
acquires a naturalized effect. And it is only through the continued interpellation of the racial subject that this naturalized effect is maintained. As such, there is no reference to a pure racial subject which does not itself add to the further constitution of that subject. (Ibid: 99)

This point that the naturalized effect is maintained through continual reiteration of naming the racial subject is central to a performative theorization of race.

In her use of a performative theory of race, Nadine Ehlers (2006) focuses on the repeated moment of reiteration of naming the racial subject. She calls that moment a moment of “crisis” in which, each time, the naturalized effect of race is either reinforced as natural or exposed as unstable. It is a crisis “of ensuring that the subject successfully embodies and represents racial truth,” a truth that represents a “supposed ontology” which is not actually a truth or fact but a naturalized discursive category (ibid: 150). According to Ehlers, the continual maintenance of the naturalization aims to prevent the looming crisis in which the rubric of race is exposed as inherently unstable (ibid). This maintenance includes not only brief speech acts or self-identification but also the development of interlinking scientific and legal systems that maintain racial fictions. Ehlers offers examples of anti-miscegenation laws and the promotion of the myth of pure “white blood” as the source for morality and civilization. These highlight the ways that “legal and social actors sought to maintain these [racial] lines of distinction and to avoid jeopardising perceived racial ontology – that is, the supposed ‘naturalness’ of the distinctions between blackness and whiteness” (ibid: 150).

For Ehlers, race is not only always in crisis; the condition of racialization of subjects is the ubiquitous possibility of the realization of a crisis in which racial ontology is questioned and racial categories are threatened or trespassed upon. Thus, Ehler’s argument for a performative theorization of race makes a strong claim that “race is at once policed through and predicated upon the very concept of crisis” (ibid: 149, emphasis original). Moreover, the “endless necessity to consolidate the phantasy of racial ontology, raced boundaries and norms” is built on a performative understanding of subject formation (ibid: 153). With a performatively constituted subject “the enunciation of subjectivity always involves the necessity to recite, in some recognisable way, the markers and norms that call the subject into being, and this is done so as to ward off the threat or risk of not ‘being’ the identity one supposedly is” (ibid). One’s racial identity is “not an articulation of what one is” but “something one does” (ibid: 155). With the omnipresent crisis of racial identification, “enactments of identity are always events marked by difficulty or danger” (ibid: 153). Consequently, moments of identification that avoid the dangerous realization of ontological crisis are viewed
as successful and even comforting as far as they reaffirm the naturalized effects of apparent ontological categories such as race. I explore this concept of ontological crisis through ethnographic data of discussions of race, culture, and difference in chapter 3.

Geographer Mary Thomas furthers Butler's claim that “context matters to the performative process” (Thomas, 2005: 1234) to demonstrate that this “context” must be “a central component of the processes of identity practice and indeed, as an integral, spatial component of identity and difference” (ibid). The difference between Thomas's arguments and others outlined here is that Thomas recognizes that racial difference is produced and policed not only through social practice but also through spatial practice (ibid, see also Anderson, 1988; Bonnett and Nayak, 2003; Delaney, 2002; Dwyer and Jones, 2000; Gilmore, 2002; Hague, 2010; Hannah, 1997; Kobayashi, 2003; Kobayashi and Peake, 1994, 2000; Natter and Jones, 1997; Peake and Ray, 2001; Pulido, 2000). Thus, Thomas articulates a spatial performative theory of race. Her study is an attempt to understand how high school girls, “as subjects, come to accept and reproduce the authority of race that configures social and spatial meaning” by analyzing race as both performative and spatial (Thomas 2005: 1247). Thomas's argument is that teenage girls reinstate racial difference through their everyday spatial practices through sitting with same-race friends in the racially segregated high school lunchroom and publicly identifying other high school students’ racial identities in the school. She analyzes the girls' narratives and practices as performative. For example, the girls “embody and repeat the norm of segregated seating” in the school cafeteria, and the repetition reiterates “race” as a social fact and naturalizes racial segregation (ibid: 1239).

While many scholars study particular forms of race and difference in relation to inequality and power, I take a specific look at the formation of race and the specific practices and processes that continually constitute racial subjects, that is, the processes of racialization. In chapter 1 I examine environmentalism and racism as moral discourses that constitute one another. This mutual constitution occurs in the overlap in the ethical pursuit of self-improvement through articulations of nature and race. I examine past Boulder summer visitors' desire to be good environmental, national, and racial citizens (improving the state of the nation and the quality of the white race through environmental inspiration and moral purity) and current Boulder residents' desire to be good environmental citizens and subscribe to anti-racist beliefs. The latter example is complex because of the ambivalent attitude toward racism embedded in liberal discourse, which allows a
particular alignment of environmentalism, progressivism, and racism even as it explicitly disavows racist statements and logics. I explore the contradictory nature of these discourses in chapters 1 and 5. In chapter 3 I explore Ehler’s theorization of the fundamental crisis in racial discourse and ontology using ethnographic data from Boulder. I examine cultural difference as a reassuring rhetoric in the face of this crisis. I analyze how racial discourse operates through the articulation of seemingly unrelated concepts like “culture” and “difference” that tend to avoid the discussion of power and histories of oppression that are indispensible in a discussion of “race.”

**Significance of the research**

This is the first project of its length using in-depth ethnographic methods to explore race and nature through white racial formation. I explore the specific processes of white racialization through environmentalism, that is, the formation of white racial subjects in part through environmental discourses. I draw on and contribute to the subfields of political ecology and cultural geography and to the literature on environmental justice.

I draw on the tradition of political ecology, an approach to human-environment relations and interdisciplinary sub-field that emphasizes the politics of natural resource management (Watts and Peet, 2004: 17). Political ecologists study social and material relations that shape natural resource access and governance and tend to focus on inequalities, particularly related to political-economic and global trends. Political ecologists have begun to study race explicitly in recent years, focusing particularly on the ways racial inequalities and power play out in case studies as well as the overlapping construction of race and nature. My research furthers this line of investigation by adopting a post-structural position to analyze the ways that environmentalism is framed as a social project that is in some ways racialized and necessarily overlaps with racial discourses.

I draw on postcolonial political ecology that explores the colonial and postcolonial components of nature protection, experience, and representation, which reconnect the “natural” and the “social” through the recognition of the power relations maintained through such actions. Much of this work focuses on Canada and the importance of representations of the Canadian natural landscape as representing the “essence of the Canadian experience” and the essence of the nation (Baldwin, 2009: 533). Bruce Braun deconstructs
Canadian artist Emily Carr’s anti-modern and apparently anti-colonial representations of and discussions about life of First Nations people in British Columbia as part of the construction of Indians both as “other” to the white tourist (and white artist or anthropologist) and Native culture as a “natural culture,” purified of “foreign or contaminating modern elements” (Braun, 2002: 204). Braun traces the histories of artists and anthropologists, as well as geologists and museum curators, in the region because he believes, “If we lose sight of these traces [of Carr’s Indian representation in her later rainforest images], we lose sight of the relationship between our present-day ‘environmental imaginaries’ and the colonial histories of seeing that remain embedded in them” (ibid: 205). As Donald Moore, Anand Pandian, and Jake Kosek point out, nature only gives the impression of being pre-historical because it erases the way it has been made (Moore et al., 2003: 3), and it has been constructed, in large part, through colonial discourses.

Recognized or not, colonial histories embedded in representations of nature and nation influence racial and environmental norms today. Baldwin shows that the concepts of wilderness and multiculturalism are tied together at many moments in Canadian history, through normative understandings of the purity of the nation and the need to “domesticate cultural diversity” (Baldwin, 2009: 530). In the paintings by Lawren Stewart Harris of both Canadian wilderness and urban Canadian landscapes (particularly immigrants’ neighborhoods) in the early twentieth century, Baldwin argues that ideas about wilderness and multiculturalism – and race more generally – are embedded in one another: “[T]he multicultural urban is an absent presence working invisibly through the image of wilderness, while this very same wilderness ideal is constitutive of Harris’s urban imaginary” (ibid: 534). In contexts outside North America, Roderick Neumann (1998) traces an extraordinary narrative of how the concepts of landscape and nature played an indispensable role in the Tanzanian state’s portrayal of the land of Arusha National Park as unspoiled and vacant that allowed it to cut off people’s access to the land and resources. The discourses of nature and environment are inextricably involved in the construction and maintenance of power relations, particularly as a part of colonial histories and the post-colonial present. Nature becomes a means for the exercise of power (Moore et al., 2003: 14).

Jake Kosek (2006) also traces legacies of colonialism in relation to discourses of nature and environmentalism in his excellent study of environmental politics in northern New Mexico. In his ethnographic study of the cultural politics in which understandings of nature and “forms of difference” are
embedded, he shows that forms of difference including race, class, and nation, are linked to the politics of nature, that nature “is infused with forms of social difference” (ibid: 22). Thus, it is necessary to “pay attention to the complexity and contradictions of the ways in which nature itself is produced” (ibid). I follow this line of argument, examining the historical social and material forms through which socio-spatial relations in and around Boulder are shaped in part through conceptions of nature and difference. I further the argument by examining the specific formations of difference articulated through environmentalism and the white privilege that attaches to, and in part constitutes, it in Boulder.

My research contributes to the existing research in this area in its in-depth ethnographic analysis of the processes of white racialization and the ways white racial subjects and environmental subjects are constituted through overlapping discourses. This is particularly relevant now, as the “green” movement grows and moves into the American mainstream. In my research, I use an in-depth analysis of the discursive formation of difference through subjectivation in local policy-writing and everyday speech not only to explore the forms of difference that articulate with and through forms of nature, but to examine the formation of racial difference articulated with and through the formation of nature. The ethnographic analysis highlights the ways that the discourse of environmentalism produces white subjects and secures white privilege in specific locations as ongoing processes. This allows me to show how the articulation of environmentalism by white racial subjects marks and excludes “others” from “green” spaces.

To the insights about the power-laden construction of nature offered by political ecologists, I add insights from cultural geography concerning the construction of “race,” the operation of racism, and the racialization of space. While Kosek (2006), Braun (2002), Baldwin (2009), and Moore, Pandian, and Kosek (2003) do draw on key concepts from cultural geography – indeed, some of them place an analysis of “cultural politics” as central to their work – they pass over key cultural geography works that examine the specific processes of the racialization of space and the spatialization of race.

Geographer Audrey Kobayashi offers the indispensable insight that “the ideological project of racialization is equally a project of spatialization. Both projects are a fundamental part of the construction of geographic knowledge” (Kobayashi, 2003: 552). She encourages geographers to be more reflexive about our own roles as complicit in the construction of “space” and therefore the construction of “race” and that we need to rethink and destabilize these normative categories to better understand their relationship each other.
Kobayashi outlines three conceptual shifts depicted in three “moments” in geographic thought in reference to “race” and “space.” The first moment is summarized in the concept of the “colonial other” and was formed in part through Immanuel Kant’s (along with other geographers’) racialization of space and place, delineating which races belonged in which spaces on a global scale, and which of those are most civilized (ibid: 544). Kobayashi argues that this racialization of geographic knowledge established a belief in the “scientific variability of racial difference,” lent credence to the theory of environmental determinism, and justified colonialism (ibid: 545). The second shift occurred after the second World War, when discourses of equality apparently led to an abandonment of the concept of “race.” At this moment, geography as a field abandoned the intellectual projects of environmental determinism and active justifications for colonialism and adopted a supposedly neutral or complicit stance that allowed colonialism and racism to persist despite the rise of the concept of human rights internationally (ibid: 546). This neutrality was soon abandoned as many geographers began to see race as a “problem” which they could help solve using the tools of positivist spatial science (ibid: 547). At this point, for many, “race” and “space” were left as static concepts with unquestioned ontologies (ibid). A few humanistic geographers, including Ceri Peach (1975) and David Ley (1974), pursued studies of everyday experiences of racialized communities (Kobayashi, 2003: 548).

Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, geography adopted a view of race as socially constructed and turned largely to a post-structural view of “race.” At this point, geographers theorized raced bodies that are constructed in historical, cultural, and place-based contexts (Kobayashi, 2003: 549). In particular, there was a “shift from the study of the [non-white] racialized to those who have perpetuated the idea of ‘race’; in other words, a shift from ‘race’ to racism” (ibid: 550, citing Jackson, 1987). This shift recasts the “problem” not as people of color but in the historical and ongoing process of discrimination (ibid). The study of racism must recognize, then, “not only historical forms of racism, which are self-evident to many contemporary observers, but also the subtle and often unobserved – even by the most critical observers – discursive forms that continue to script the process of racialization today through socially taken-for-granted means” (ibid: 550). Kobayashi defines racialization as “the process by which somatic characteristics... have been made to go beyond themselves to designate the socially inscribed value and the attributes of racialized bodies” (ibid: 549). This analysis of the process of racialization points to the co-constituting process of spatialization,
particularly the spatialization of race through the construction of hegemonic spaces, for example, of white privilege (ibid; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000). Such hegemonic racial and spatial constructions operate at the school, community, city, or national scale (Anderson, 1988; Delaney, 2002; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Peake and Ray, 2001).

Another insight I gain from cultural geography that is undertreated in political ecology works about race and nature is a detailed ethnographic analysis of the construction of whiteness. Cultural geographers have joined other scholars in the theorization of the specific processes of the production of white privilege and white hegemony. Cultural geographers’ major contribution to the conversation is the analysis of the ways white privilege and white hegemony are spatialized, and the ways that white spaces are produced.

As Kobayashi describes it, the study of racism, rather than simply “race,” leads to the justification of the study of whiteness and white privilege (Kobayashi, 2003). It contextualizes the shift to studying whiteness within the long history of theorization of racial and spatial truths in geography. Because studies of whiteness begin from a position critical of commonsense understandings of what “race” is (and is not) by questioning the racially “unmarked” category of whiteness and examining racism, many studies that examine whiteness also examine racialization. This cannot be said of even critical studies of non-white racial populations, which also fall under the category of studies of “race, space, and nature,” for example. Many well executed and useful studies of racial inequality that focus on non-white populations stop short of examining the social, material, and spatial processes through which subjects are racialized and through which the meaning of “race” and “racial difference” are continuously formed. In contrast, most scholars who study whiteness and white privilege deconstruct the historical and continuing practices of racialization that constitute white and “other” subjects, particularly in geography (Bonett, 1997; Bonnett and Nayak, 2003; Delaney, 2002; Dwyer and Jones, 2000; Guthman, 2008; Hartigan, 1999, 2005; Kobayashi & Peake, 2000;

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7 It should be noted that Baldwin (2009), Braun (2002), and Kosek (2006) attend to the histories of the construction of whiteness, and I borrow from them many insights about the ways nature and white identity are co-constructed. However, none of them attends to the extent I do to the ethnographic details of the production of white privilege through discourses of environmentalism in everyday life.

8 Whiteness scholars point out that although whiteness is not often seen as a racial identity, it most certainly is. Likewise, when many scholars refer to “racialized populations” they are talking about non-whites, using “racialized” to indicate the people who have been “marked” by race, a process from which whites are often exempt. Because I am examining the socio-spatial processes of racialization in the everyday lives of white people, I depart from this common usage. Instead, I use “racialized” to refer to all people who embody racial subjectivities, including white people. This is also a theoretical intervention, as it insists that, because racism pervades American society (Omi and Winant, 1994), all people are affected by the processes of racialization.
Mollett, 2011; Peake and Ray, 2001; Reitman, 2006). However, because of the flexible and robust nature of racial discourse, even these studies that historicize whiteness can still work to solidify white racial privilege (Hartigan, 2005; Kobayashi, 2003; Mohanram, 2007; Wiegman, 1999). Thus it is important to attend not only to the history of racialization but the ongoing social and spatial processes of racialization that produce and maintain racial identities, the concept of “race,” and dynamics of racial privilege. Many cultural geography studies of whiteness also incorporate ethnographic methods to analyze the specific articulations of belonging and exclusion as well as spatialization of white racial identification, which help to deconstruct the process of racialization (Guthman, 2008; Hubbard, 2005; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Mollett, 2011; Reitman, 2006). However, mine is the first in-depth ethnographic study of this length to examine the discourses of environmentalism and processes of racialization of white subjects as co-constituting processes.  

As described in detail above, I view racialization as performative, and this theorization is a significant contribution to cultural geography. Few scholars have shown how a theorization of “race” and racialization as performative (Butler 1993a; Ehlers, 2006; Mirón and Inda, 2000) allows race to be seen as always-changing, context dependent, and citational as well as capable of interruption and change through disloyal reproductions of racial truths. Fewer have supported these theoretical insights with ethnographic analysis of socio-spatial data. In geography, significant exceptions are Minelle Mahtani (2002) and Mary Thomas (2005, 2011), the work of the latter being a particularly substantive and significant intervention.

Mahtani’s work attempts to use the concept of performativity to theorize the way “mixed race” women “contest and produce their own racialized and gendered locations, challenging racialized readings of their bodies” (Mahtani, 2002: 425). Her interview data shows that women in her study “felt hypervisible, constantly judged and evaluated, weighted down by the stresses of having to explain why they look the way they do, over and over again” (ibid: 429) and that they “choose among a multiplicity of invented identities that accommodate various situations, dependent upon their reading of their encounter, and their temperament at the time” (ibid: 431). She uses this evidence to analyze the precariousness of racial identity and the possibilities of subversion at the moment of racial performance. Despite this insight into the

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9 It should be noted that many excellent works treat the theorization of race and nature with primary source historical and case-study data, but few to none draw on ethnographic data gathered in fieldwork, including interviews and participant observation. See the volume Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference edited by Moore et al. (2003) for examples of essays that address the topic.
processes of racialization and instability of racial categories, Mahtani's use of the concept of performativity omits the citational, repetitive, and compulsory nature of the performative production of subjectivity. Consequently, her analysis offers more choice in individual performances of racial identity in relation to the repetition of racial norms than Butler's (1993a) theory can be seen to extend. Reading the norm of whiteness through Butler's theory as I do requires closer attention to the compulsory and repetitive nature of racial norms as articulated and embodied in everyday contexts. Thus, Mahtani's analysis offers an excellent exploration of changing and ambivalent identities, to which my analysis adds a close reading of the ambivalent nature of choice within racial identity, especially in light of whites' efforts at anti-racism that are so often accompanied by racist assumptions and stereotypes that reiterate the sedimented racial norms.

As I describe above, Mary Thomas's work not only thoroughly applies a performative theorization of race to ethnographic data, she also adds a spatial dimension to the understanding of the performative. In her studies of high school girls' racial practices and articulations, she argues that the girls "reinstate racial difference through their everyday spatial practices" and that a theory of "performativity must account for the normative spatiality of social and racial practice" (Thomas, 2005: 1233). In her study, girls enact spatialized racial norms including segregated seating at lunch, despite the fact that the girls say that they "do not know what unmarked forces guide their bodies to their respective sides of the lunchroom" (ibid: 1240). The spatial performativity of racial subjectivation persists through "unremarkable, regularized, and embodied rituals" in the everyday spaces of the girls' lives, spaces that are also reproduced through their repeated actions (ibid). These racializations persist despite the girls' immersion in discourses of humanist multiculturalism (ibid; Thomas, 2011). The girls use the articulation of multicultural and humanist values (e.g. "despite racial differences, we are all the same," Thomas, 2011: 47) to elide the ongoing role of racialization in their lives:

[T]he use of multiculturalism in the girls' narratives is a disavowal of the ways that racial-ethnic identities can operate along a spectrum of difference. Thus, analyzing the multicultural idealizations in the narratives that proclaim identity without difference can highlight the gap between the girls' ideal identities and selves as postracial and nonracist and their practices of racism, segregation, and ethnic violence that performatively produce their subjectivity. (Ibid: 47)

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10 On the spatial nature of performativity, see also Gillian Rose (1999). Rose contributes the idea that space does not exist prior to action, space is "doing" and is practiced and "produced through citational performance of self-other relations" (ibid: 248). Rose critiques Butler's theorization of the subject as too totally discursive, lacking a complex understanding of bodies as well as fantasy and desire. She insists that the body is a space that needs to be understood as more relational than Butler theorizes it.
This observation is part of Thomas’s project to “understand how [girls], as subjects, come to accept and reproduce the authority of race that configures social and spatial meaning” through complicated, daily enactments that result in the appearance of racial performativity as “natural” (Thomas, 2005: 1247).

Like Thomas, I examine ethnographic textures of racial performativity and the ways they intersect and also conflict with discourses of multiculturalism (in chapter 3) and liberal-democratic values (in chapter 1) through performative socio-spatial relations. I extend on her analysis to offer in-depth examination of white racial identification through the overlap in these discourses as well as through the discourse of environmentalism. Focusing on the normative socio-spatial practices of the white racial subject who subscribes to a liberal-progressive position of racial equality allows an analysis of the discursive production of racial difference through the mobilization of apparently indifferent or even progressive social positions, including environmentalism and liberal positions on racism in the progressive, environmentalist space of Boulder.

Finally, as I explain in chapter 1, my research contributes to environmental justice in its critical view of processes of racialization in relation to environmentalism. Much environmental justice literature focuses on specific cases of inequality and the structural racial injustice that maintain it. They do not tend to draw on works that theorize or deconstruct processes of racialization, but insight into these processes offers a deeper analysis of the social structures and everyday occurrences of racism. By specifically studying liberal-progressive whites’ construction of environmentalism as exclusionary even as they attempt to include people of color, my work prepares the way for more honest discussions of inclusion and belonging within the mainstream environmental movement and between the mainstream environmental and environmental justice movements. Recognition of exclusionary actions could lead environmentalists to transform the discourse of environmentalism to be more open and inclusive, affirming different ways of practicing environmentalism and of valuing the environment. This would open a larger social space within which the

11 As explained above (“Research site”), Boulder is seen as a politically liberal city. In addition to analyzing this particular socio-political formation, I also draw on theoretical explorations of “liberalism” as a rationality of rule developed in the 1700s in Britain and developed through political, philosophical, and scientific thought (Foucault, 1990 [1978]; Goldberg, 1993; Mehta, 1999; Stoler, 1995). Because the two terms are the same but the two concepts are different, I distinguish one from the other, particularly when I am discussing both as in this paragraph, by referring to the former – liberal politics – as “liberal-progressive” and the latter – a rationality of rule – as “liberalism,” “modern liberalism” or using the descriptor “liberal-democratic.”
mainstream environmental movement and environmental justice movement can collaborate in furthering the goals of environmental protection and social justice.

**Methods: Data collection and analysis**

Boulder is positioned at the forefront of conservation planning trends that are growing in popularity and will soon be, or have already been, adopted in many other U.S. cities, including its urban and environmental planning efforts centered on quality of life and its establishment of the Open Space Program funded voluntarily by residents through a sales tax in the 1960s. This position, along with its long history of environmental values and environmental conservation make Boulder America’s “paradigmatic green city.” Jan Nijman (2000: 135) defines the paradigmatic city as “the city that displays more clearly than other cities the fundamental features and trends” of the urban system. The paradigmatic city is an extreme case because it is ahead of the curve and exceptional because of the extent to which it demonstrates general trends. In the same way that Los Angeles is seen to be “the first purely American (capitalist) city” and Miami as the first American global city (Nijman, 2000: 136, 140), Boulder is one of the first green American cities, with its century-long history of open space preservation and its smart growth planning initiatives including mixed land uses. This dissertation explores how its green characteristics are linked to its practices of racial exclusion.

This dissertation research project consists of the investigation of three historical moments in Boulder, which I provide a brief introduction to here. The first moment is the turn of the twentieth century, when a summer assembly known as a Chautauqua was founded in Boulder to promote life-long learning in a beautiful natural setting. The land purchased by the city to host the Chautauqua is often cited today as one of the most important early efforts at environmental conservation undertaken by the paradigmatic green city. The second important environmental era I examine is the 1960s and 1970s, the time when the city of Boulder established its Open Space Program and rearticulated its environmental values and reconfirmed its identity as a “green” city. Finally, I look at contemporary expressions of environmentalism, characterizations of the city as green and white, and everyday experiences of racial and cultural difference, tracing the historical themes through today. Fieldwork and text collection took place primarily between April 2008 and August 2011.
Conservation decisions have played a prominent role in city identity and policy for more than a century, and since 1900, the amount of city-owned conservation land has increased from 1,000 to 45,000 acres (City of Boulder, 2008b). These purchases required two hundred million dollars of taxpayers’ and donors’ money (ibid). The study of the Colorado Chautauqua Association located in Boulder provides an in-depth, historical focus on the relationship between Boulder’s conservation history and its practices of racial exclusion, especially in light the history of racial exclusion in the American conservation movement (Cronon, 1996; Kosek, 2006; Taylor, 1997). The Colorado Chautauqua Association was founded in 1898 as part of the American Chautauqua Movement, which focused on education and love of nature. The Chautauqua Movement began in New York state in 1874, and is comparable to the lyceum movement that also focused on life-long learning (Rieser, 2003). Chautauquas were built in beautiful and inspiring environments to host summer assemblies for people who wanted to further their education on a well rounded array of topics, including sciences, languages, religion, health, music, art, and physical education. The Chautauqua in Boulder was founded by a group of school teachers from Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, as a site of intellectual pursuit and a retreat from the heat of Texas summers (Ricketts, 1926). The Colorado Chautauqua Association’s presence is often foregrounded in Boulder’s conservation legacy as the city’s first open space acquisition, and it plays a central role in Boulder’s identity as a city always on the cutting edge of conservation.

I examine key texts from 1898 to 1902, focusing on the monthly journal published by the Colorado Chautauqua Association, for articulations of the particular environmental qualities of Boulder and the effects and influences those had on producing racialized subjects. I found that Boulder’s characterization as a city surrounded by extraordinary natural beauty indeed has deep roots in the founding of the Chautauqua and that the moral discourse of environmentalism expressed in the early Chautauqua journals connects with the moral discourses of race and racism through themes of purity, beauty, order, etiquette, and belonging projected onto and drawn out of the landscape.

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12 The Colorado Chautauqua Association was originally the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association from its founding in 1898 through 1900, when its organizational leadership shifted to a majority of Coloradans, rather than the Texans who instigated its founding. Since 1900, it has been the Colorado Chautauqua Association, but I often refer to it as the “Boulder Chautauqua” to emphasize its location and for ease of reference.

13 I also evaluated Chautauqua papers, including meeting minutes, budget reports, histories of the Boulder Chautauqua, local histories, and tourism and promotional materials for Boulder from the early twentieth century. A list of Chautauqua archival materials accessed is provided in Appendix A.
During the 1960s and 1970s, environmental values of land protection coalesced in Boulder to form solid support for the city to establish an Open Space Program, designed to purchase and protect open space in the mountain landscape west of the city and on the plains and along rivers north, east, and south of the city. I examined policy documents, reports, internal memoranda, meeting minutes, correspondences, newspaper articles, and scientific reports related to the acquisition and management of open space by the city from 1963 to 1974. In 1973, the city passed an ordinance establishing the position of an Open Space Director and Board of Trustees to oversee the acquisition and management of open space lands, which, in 1974 wrote an Open Space Plan. Thus, this marks the time when the formative era of the Open Space Program became solidly institutionalized. I am most interested in the formative era because during that time, values were openly discussed, debated, and ranked in general and in relation to the lands acquired. I focused on the values and decisions made by the City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space (CMACOS) and memoranda and reports by the City Manager and Assistant City Manager concerning open space acquisition priorities, processes, and values. I traced the themes of open space, pristine scenery, environmental values, recreation, aesthetics, environmental protection, nature, landscape, open space management, green reputation, class and affluence, “quality city” and quality of life, technology and research, population growth, development, sprawl, and city planning in the data to explore the debates and discussions about the valuation and protection of Boulder’s open space.

I conducted the contemporary portion of the research in four parts. My main source of data was through volunteering with a local organization that trains volunteers to teach English to immigrants in Boulder. *Intercambio de Comunidades* (Intercambio)\(^\text{14}\) is a non-profit organization the goals of which are to broaden opportunities for immigrants through English language education and foster community respect through cultural exchange events such as camping trips, picnics, and park clean-ups. It is an organization intentionally created for cultural exchange between volunteers who teach English and students who take second-language English classes. With its explicit focus on cultural exchange and frequent outdoor social activities, the organization creates a social space in Boulder where social difference intersects with environmentalism.

\(^\text{14}\) After I completed my research, Intercambio changed its name to Intercambio Uniting Communities. I refer to it throughout the dissertation as *Intercambio de Comunidades* or simply Intercambio.
Through Intercambio, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty volunteer English teachers and several staff members, and I supplemented interview data with extensive participant observation. While some volunteer English teachers conducted class in an organized, large class setting, most volunteers conducted individual, one-on-one classes with a single English student in the students’ homes twice per week. Semi-structured interviews are a method designed to take advantage of the structured nature of the interview setting through pre-formed interview questions and also to allow flexibility to ask follow-up and exploratory questions on themes that interviewees introduce during the interviews (Longhurst, 2003). Interviews with Intercambio staff focused on the formation of the organization and its role in the Boulder community. Specifically, staff were asked about: motivations to form the organization, the organization’s major contributions to the Boulder community, types of community support the organization receives, and why cultural exchange is a central goal of Intercambio. Interviews with volunteers focused on their experiences with the organization and how those have changed their experience living in Boulder and their views about Intercambio’s role in the Boulder community. Specifically, they were asked: how they heard about the organization, how they benefit from working with Intercambio, what is difficult about working with Intercambio, how participation in Intercambio’s activities has influenced them, whether they think the organization is successful at facilitating cultural exchange and if so how, what values they have concerning environmental conservation, and in what ways they see Intercambio as similar to or different from other places in Boulder. I conducted interviews with Intercambio staff and volunteers between June 2010 and March 2011.

I supplemented the interviews with participant observation as a volunteer with Intercambio. Participant observation involved volunteer teacher training, teaching English to an immigrant from Mexico, conducting in-home class evaluations with other teachers’ students, participation in periodic events and gatherings, including workshops, volunteer socials, hiking trips, a camping trip, a book club, and the major yearly fundraiser La Fiesta as well as other fundraising events. Participant observation was conducted from February 2010 through August 2011. While more formal interview settings are conducive to exploring people’s thoughts and opinions about environmentalism and exclusionary practices in Boulder, they miss subtle everyday events and practices. Participant observation is a method of data collection tailored to

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15 See Appendix B for interview questions. See Appendix C for a descriptive table of Intercambio volunteers interviewed.
everyday settings (Laurier, 2003). It is structured around the researcher’s observations, which are systematically documented in extensive research notes. Research notes catalogue conversations, remarks, activities, and body language related to the research topic, in this case, environmentalism, racialized practices, and normative narratives of belonging. Most of my data concerning English students with Intercambio was gathered through participant observation, primarily in class with my English student, in home visits, and in organization events. Through participant observation I was able to observe and participate in Boulder residents’ quotidian practices of environmentalism and racism through Intercambio’s events and everyday functions.

My second source of contemporary data were interviews conducted with city and county of Boulder employees (of open space departments, social services departments, and diversity coordinators) and open space documents produced by the city of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks department. Documents included: City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks websites and brochures, Open Space Program inventory reports, management policies, focus group reports, and visitation study reports. I use these reports to connect to themes from past eras and highlight contemporary environmental values, assumptions, and exclusions.

My third source of contemporary data was the major daily newspaper of the city, the Boulder Daily Camera. I gathered articles from the paper during 2008 through 2011 that addressed concepts of open space, parks, wildlife, environmental management, city planning, racism, inequality, housing, exclusion, liberal politics, the local organic food industry, the local information technology sector, elite athletics (including bicycling), outdoor activity, and characterizations of the city.

Finally, I drew on participant observation living and working in Boulder from 2006 to 2012. I had multiple insightful conversations with people who live in and outside of Boulder about the city’s characterizations as green and white, especially after I told them what my dissertation research was about. This last part of my research does not figure prominently in my analysis or writing, but it is important that Boulder was my home, where I lived in a neighborhood, went to school, hiked, biked, bought groceries, ate in restaurants, and volunteered in the years before and during conducting my research. I was very much a member of the city I was studying.
In addition to keeping daily field notes of participant observation, I documented my own reactions to interviews and recorded observations, for reflexivity. I audio-recorded interviews and documented observations about people’s apparent physical and emotional reactions (e.g. surprise, discomfort, exasperation, anger, amusement), and body language. In general, Intercambio is an extremely friendly and open organization. Working with the organization opened many doors for me in the community and offered a level of trust that would otherwise have been impossible, both with volunteers and immigrants I met while conducting my research. As a white woman sympathetic to environmentalism and progressive politics, I found it easy to connect with many of the white volunteers I interviewed. I began my interviews several months after I began teaching English classes, which helped me better understand volunteers’ experience as teachers, as well. While I did not interview very many men (many more women than men volunteer with Intercambio), several that I interviewed were in joint interviews with their wives. With the older men, especially, I think this helped establish a more open conversation. One of the older men I interviewed on his own did answer my questions frankly, but he did not tend to expand on his answers as much, particularly in the realm of everyday life in Boulder, and I wonder if he was somewhat reserved because of the gender dynamic in the interview.

I also connected relatively well with immigrants I met through Intercambio, particularly Spanish speaking immigrants, because of my ability to speak Spanish. Most immigrants whose homes I visited were very welcoming and willing to spend time filling out the institutional materials, completion of which was my volunteer work. Originally in planning my research I had hoped to conduct semi-structured interviews with immigrants living in Boulder. I did conduct one of these, but I found that my language abilities, though sufficient to understand what was said, was not sufficient to carry out the discursive analysis that I did with English speaking volunteers. In addition, while I am very well versed in the vocabulary and logics that liberal whites employ when discussing race, racism, and racial difference, I did not feel confident in my familiarity with Spanish language or Latin cultures (especially the variation among cultures) to explore racial subjectivity in-depth with immigrants. Consequently, I did not feel I could speak sufficiently to the specific processes of racialization to justify more interviews, and I relied instead on the participant observation to inform my research.
Finally, I grew up in a racially diverse suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, which, at least in my view that focused on the white subsection of the city, was dominated by liberal-progressive politics and environmentalist values of conservation of resources and preservation of nature. My parents were professors, and most of my friends’ parents were highly educated and politically liberal. In adulthood, I lived in Portland, Oregon and Madison, Wisconsin before I moved to Boulder. In each of these cities, I socialized with well-educated liberal whites. By the time I moved to Boulder I noticed a pattern in the way white liberals talked about difference and racial diversity that, coming from the South where people talked about race more often and, to me it seemed, more honestly, I found strange in its well-intentioned but shallow nature. In Boulder I found that this way of talking about race and diversity intersected with environmentalism in a way that fascinated me. It could be said, then, that I went looking for racism, so that is what I found. And perhaps that is true of anything in America, as racism is pervasive in society (Omi and Winant, 1994). Yet, the point of this study is not that racism exists in Boulder, but rather to uncover how it operates and how it is invoked and disavowed in everyday conversation, expression of beliefs, and actions, particularly through understandings of nature and environmentalism. I hope that my study informs the lives of other places and people, especially liberal-progressive whites like those I met in Portland and Madison, and encourages them to take a closer look at the ways race, racism, racial difference, and anti-racism shape and are shaped by their often mundane everyday beliefs and practices.

As stated in the opening pages of this introduction, this research project is not an attempt to research, describe, or analyze the outdoor practices of racial-ethnic minorities or immigrants in Boulder. Rather, I focus on the construction of difference and processes of racialization as articulated and performed by white Boulder residents. Choosing to study white people raises the dilemma for me as a researcher of the possibility that I could be reinforcing the dynamics of racial power and privilege by choosing to focus (yet again) on whites, leaving people of color in the background of the study, and allowing whites to speak for people of color and immigrants in this narrative. That is indeed a dangerous possibility, with which I have struggled throughout the duration of the research project. On the one hand, I see that it is of utmost importance to focus on the racial practices and performativities of whites and white privilege not only to make those processes visible as racial (rather than simply “normal”), but also better to understand processes of racialization as they are mediated by discourses such as environmentalism, which seem racially innocent
or remote from the issues of race and racism. On the other hand, an in-depth exploration of the specific environmental practices, ethics, and values of people of color and immigrants, such as those presented by many environmental justice studies, particularly a study that attends to the discursive and performative overlap of processes of the formation of racial and environmental subjects, has the potential to contribute to the transformation of the racial boundaries and norms of environmentalism as a movement and as a social discourse. I found that I could not do both in one dissertation. I chose the former research project, with an eye towards the latter in my practices of participant observation. What was most clear to me was that the two research projects were discrete; one was not merely a reflection nor even a contestation of the other. Forms of environmentalism, formations of race and nature, and processes of racialization through environmentalism take multiple distinct forms on both sides of the racial (white / non-white) divide. For example, among immigrant residents of Boulder who lived in the city less than fifteen years, I never detected a causal connection between racial exclusion and environmentalism in what they said about Boulder or environmentalism or in their engagement in or lack of engagement in environmental practices. In contrast, some Mexican Americans who grew up in and went to college in Colorado condemned Boulder for its intellectual and class elitism. This condemnation took on racial meaning, as in one case when the speaker said emphatically in Spanish that he went to the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley with the Mexicans, not the university in Boulder, in a bilingual (English and Spanish) conversation between Hispanics.\textsuperscript{16} It is clear that the complexity and variation of opinions and subjectivations even among Hispanics is vast.

It is equally clear that the perception of this complexity is minimal among the white residents of Boulder who participated in my research, except under a vague and universal concept of “diversity” or “individual difference” in which “not all Hispanics are the same.” The specifics of intra-ethnic difference and diversity are conceptualized weakly at best and understood only in terms of a flattened field of social difference in which “different things” happen to “different people” that make them “who they are.” Because this particular lack of understanding and simplified yet universal portrayal is so far from the complexity of

\textsuperscript{16} Though other people, including me, were standing near having informal conversations of their own, this conversation was primarily between two Hispanic men, one who asked the other whether he went to the University of Colorado. He asked partly because I was present at the event, as a student from that university conducting research. When the second participant replied something like “No! Yo fui al UNC en Greely con los Mexicanos! [No! I went to UNC in Greely with the Mexicans],” they both laughed a little at what was clearly meant to be a joke but distinguished his experience from that of the elitist Boulder students. Then the one who made that remark turned to me and said in English, “I’m sorry. I don’t even know if you speak Spanish.”
non-whites’ lived racial-ethnic social, spatial, environmental realities, the study and deconstruction of whites’ representations of “others” and of “difference” itself is indeed necessary.

The dissertation chapters

Chapter 1 presents an overarching analysis of the moral discourses of environmentalism and racism that lays the foundation for the other four chapters. By moral discourse, I refer to the norms with which people align themselves to achieve a certain state of happiness or perfection, and the practices they undertake to align with the norms (Foucault, 2003 [1982]: 146; Mahmood, 2005: 28). In the case of racism, subjects of the discourse are positioned ambivalently; they attempt to align with anti-racism, but in the process often draw on racist stereotypes, norms, and sedimented meanings. The moral discourses of environmentalism and racism overlap in their themes of beauty, order, purity, and belonging that are exercised through practices of self-improvement in all three of the time periods I examine in the dissertation. People strive to be good environmental, racial, and national citizens by modifying their behavior to adhere to norms shaped by beauty, order, purity, and belonging that are expressed in both environmental and racial discourses and filtered through gender norms. In the process they performatively enact the environmental, racial, and national subjectivities. I also argue in chapter 1 that the historical structure of racial meanings sets up the impossibility of a simple and genuine “inclusion” of people of color in the modern environmental movement (even though whites and even non-whites do genuinely pursue that goal). Until we come to terms as a society with the comprehensive nature of racial injustice in U.S. history, we will not be able to move “past” race or even work around it through efforts at “inclusion.” A desire to move “past” race and efforts at “inclusion” work to reify racial difference and elide the histories of inequality that have been and are constitutive of race itself. That is, instead of pointing out that race is a social construct used for political ends and dismissing it or even attempting to remedy the inequalities it reproduces, new racial discourses need to circulate that recognize the complexity and pervasiveness of racial meanings and their necessary attachment to social dynamics such as poverty, wealth, gender, sexuality, and even environmentalism, which tends to remove itself from the realm of the social to the realm of the natural. “Race” is even present in “nature” because both were constructed ideologically to reproduce power inequalities inherent in colonial projects (Kobayashi, 2003; Moore et al, 2003) and in modern liberalism itself (Mehta, 1999). In chapter 1 I trace a
significant part of the genealogy of this simultaneous emergence of “race” and “nature,” focusing on the early Chautauqua period and the 1960s and 1970s. Analyzing the role of racial exclusion in and through environmental discourse is not simply an exercise in nit-picking every social movement about its lack of racial diversity. It is a necessary step in understanding our current racial predicament of racial inequality and persistent exclusion.

In chapter 2 I argue that the self-apparent nature of Boulder’s conservation landscape hides the social histories that brought it into being, including histories of exclusion. Here I speak specifically to cultural geography’s tradition of studying landscape as both material and representational to make the argument that Boulder’s effortless characterization as a green city and as a white city are actually related through historical exclusions. Thus, the “whiteness” and wealth of Boulder that planners see as a contemporary problem that stems from planning decisions, including the establishment of a “buffer” of open space around the city that raises property values, is better seen as a partial cause of earlier planning decisions that moved industry and working class populations out of the city. Central to this confusion of cause and effect is the ideological nature of the “natural landscape” as something that always already exists separate from people’s management of and interaction with it and the political stance that protecting this treasure is a morally good and healthy thing to do. These assertions about morality, health, and quality of life carry racial assumptions and exclusions even when they are paired with lamentations about the overwhelming whiteness and lack of racial diversity in the city. The performative enactment of open space as “natural” and of Boulder as “white” are intricately related.

The pervasiveness of racial meanings and the importance of recognizing them even in discursive silences around race are the focus of chapter 3. Racial silences are enacted through what people say that refer to race or rely on racial meanings without explicitly addressing race and through embodied presence and performance of racial identities. I use discourse analysis of data from workshops, interviews, and news media to highlight racial discourses that are explicit (though rarely) and implicit in discussions of culture, diversity, belonging, and inclusion. This analysis demonstrates how racial discourses necessarily overlap with other discourses and argues, more broadly, that to understand the ways that discourses such as cultural difference and environmentalism circulate and shape power relations in the U.S., racial discourses must also be examined. Thus, when emptied of discussions of power, even socially progressive discourses such as a
discussion of “cultural difference” can reinforce the differences they attempt to bridge by hiding racial meanings embedded in them and can maintain structures of privilege by reassuring people that engaging in simple social acts such as “not judging others” is sufficient in promoting social equality. I apply a performative theorization of subjectivity to examine the specific moments in which white subjects are repeatedly racialized and the ontological crisis of race (Ehlers, 2006) is resolved.

Chapter 4 turns its focus to the central geographic analytic of space. I use the key geographic tenet that all social relations are spatial to examine important moments in the reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations in Boulder’s social, racial, and environmental histories. Through analysis of volunteer interviewees’ description of a “hidden” Hispanic community in Boulder and the open space planning era of 1963 to 1974, I examine two key moments of socio-spatial reorganization in Boulder. In the 1960s and 1970s, the acquisition and management of open space around the city gave the city a new identity as a green city in which there was a strong normative expectation that land would be protected. In the present, I show that even as white residents joyfully discover the presence of Hispanic immigrants in Boulder they reinscribe immigrants’ status as “different” and “outsider” in the city using spatial observations and metaphors. Using the concepts of belonging, exclusion, and white privilege, I argue that the characterization of Boulder as “so white” and the identification of a “hidden” Hispanic community are spatial and performative processes of subject formation. Hispanics’ status as “hidden” depends on and reinforces racial, class-based, and environmental coding of urban space and open space as well as white privilege in Boulder. This analysis of spatialized articulations of difference and belonging in the context of the creation of the “quality” green city as processes of subject-making offers new insight into processes of racialization and the maintenance of white privilege in a socially progressive context where racism and white privilege are ostensibly rejected and their effects resisted. In this way, I show how the establishment of the norm of environmentalism and progressive politics can create a social space for a certain type of racism, which I analyze using ethnographic data.

In chapter 5 I debunk the myth that immigrants in Boulder do not participate in quintessential “environmental” activities such as hiking and recycling as a discursive enactment of exclusion of the immigrant and racial-ethnic minority population in the city. Interviews and participant observation with immigrant city residents show that they do participate in environmental activities and at times even articulate their activities as a moral or ecological obligation. Volunteers’ disbelief that immigrants, especially
Hispanic immigrants, hike, recycle, or participate in other environmental activities performatively reinforces immigrants’ status as “outsiders” in Boulder through cultural stereotypes reinforced in the white geographical imaginary of the Third World. Whites simultaneously reinforce their own environmental subjectivities and their status as “insiders” who belong in Boulder. They see themselves as sources of information for their students about the environment and environmental activities and proper conduct. This insider / outsider division reinforced through the performativity of environmental discourse is a specific example of how exclusion is enacted through the construction of the environment and environmentalism as well as racialization and class in Boulder. This example demonstrates the performance of racial identity, racialization of space, and policing of racial boundaries through environmentalism.
Chapter 1: Environmentalism and racism as moral discourses

Introduction

This chapter begins a story of people who try to do good deeds for the land, for people’s health, and for others. It is the story of American liberal-progressives who protect the environment (for its own sake and for ours), who respect racial-cultural-ethnic diversity, and who support social programs for equality, well-being, and inclusion. But the story is a complex one, in which liberal intentions do not always accomplish socially progressive goals. Instead such intentions get caught up in and deflected by the illusion of a post-race era and reality of a structure of thought and government saturated with racial meanings, values, and inequalities. Logics of racism underlie, pervade, and co-constitute modern liberal discourses of environmentalism.

Though we often imagine “race” and “nature” to be wholly distinct, we can sometimes glimpse racial understandings embedded in environmental values. These moments are surprising because the recognition of race seems out of place in discussion of nature. Our commonsense understandings of race and nature separate them from one another, but this separation hides the thoroughly racialized nature of “the environment” and environmentalism. “Race” is most visible in environmentalism when it means “not white.” Making white racial subjectivity and white racism visible in the historical development of the concept of “nature” and “the environment” and thus in the environmental movement is an important project whose time has come. Environmental justice activists and scholars have begun the work of drawing attention to the environmental injustices wrought along racial lines, with racial minorities disproportionately affected by environmental toxics and pollutants, even controlling for class. Critical race theorists have traced the idea of race through its destructive colonial, scientific, and everyday history through the present day. Some (few) scholars, activists, environmentalists, and planners have even begun to attempt to shift the paradigm to combine efforts at environmental sustainability with efforts at social inclusion through “just sustainability,” “social sustainability,” and “civic environmentalism” (Agyeman, 2008; Agyeman and Evans, 2004; Shutkin, 2000). But, like many environmental justice studies (and studies of race or multiculturalism, cf. Kymlicka, 2011), though productive, these efforts are constrained by the commitment to racial equality without the examination of the process of racialization, recognition of the complexity of the social construction of race, or
acknowledgment of the ways racial values and meanings overlap with and pervade other social discourses, including environmentalism. This chapter and those that follow attempt to address that gap.

By analyzing the overlap between the ethical practices and norms of the moral discourses of environmentalism and racism, I demonstrate that they are performatively mutually constitutive, particularly in practices and norms of beauty, order, health, purity, and etiquette. Subjects of both moral discourses “transform [themselves] in order to achieve a particular state of being, happiness, or truth” (Mahmood, 2005: 28). These “technologies of the self” compel subjects to conform to the moral discourses of environmentalism and anti-racism to become good environmental, national, and racial citizens. I analyze the moral discourses of environmentalism and racism expressed in the early Boulder Chautauqua literature and trace shifts in the discourses in the 1960s and 1970s in both Boulder and at the national scale. Each period is marked by significant racial anxieties that are at times expressed through environmental discourses. These analyses allow me to echo environmental justice advocates who argue that attempts by much of the mainstream environmental movement to include racial “others” fail because the effort at inclusion fails to shift from its point of view to include the radically democratic participatory values within environmental justice, an argument I expand on using ethnographic data from 2010 through 2011 in chapters 4 and 5.

Liberal-progressive whites’ attempts to conform to the moral discourse of anti-racism often bring a corresponding conformity to the moral discourse of racism. By “racism” I mean historically shifting forms of prejudice, hierarchical differentiation, discrimination, and inequality that result from essentialized understandings of race (even as a social construction) as a determining factor in one’s traits and abilities (Kosek, 2009). Race and racism must be understood in their social contexts (Hall, 1986). The “moral discourse of racism” refers to the constellation of statements about race that reference the hierarchies and racial truths that define racism, including those that directly oppose racism, and which together delimit the realms of possibility of thinking and talking about race, racism, and anti-racism. The racist baggage of liberalism can be attributed to the Janus-faced character of the moral discourse of racism within both liberal-progressive and liberal-democratic ideologies (Mukherjee, 2006) and the complex ways in which the discourses of environmentalism and racism constitute each other.
Environmental justice and the problem with “inclusion”

Environmental justice

The environmental justice movement has roots in many efforts for social justice and environmental protection in the twentieth century, including the American civil rights movement, the anti-toxics movement, academic studies of environmental pollution and inequalities, Native American struggles (from much earlier than the twentieth century), and the labor movement (Cole and Foster, 2001). Some trace the movement’s origins back to the arrival of European settlers in the Americas, and others trace it to the community-based struggles of the 1960s around the issues of toxics and waste, including farm workers’ struggle against pesticide poisoning and the garbage workers’ strike in Memphis in 1968 that garnered Martin Luther King, Jr.’s support (ibid: 19-20).

With separate grass-roots community efforts across the country, especially in the 1980s, two events marked formative, unifying moments for the environmental justice movement. The first was the publication of Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States by Charles Lee, as part of the United Church of Christ’s Commission for Racial Justice (Cole and Foster, 2001: 21-22). The second was the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit from October 21-24, 1991 attended by 300 delegates and 400 observers in Washington, D.C. (ibid: 31). Though the focus of the summit quickly became the organization of an event for people of color to “actively put forward their own environmental agenda,” (ibid: 31), the impetus for the summit was the resolution of a conflict with the mainstream modern environmental movement that caught the attention of the national media. In 1990 Richard Moore and Pat Bryant, two major leaders in the environmental justice movement, sent a letter “ultimately signed by more than 100 community leaders, to the ten largest traditional environmental groups in which they accused the groups of racism in their hiring and policy development processes” (ibid). Subsequently, another leader in the movement, Reverend Benjamin Chavis, called for the summit to reconcile the conflict (ibid).

The summit played an important role in bringing together the disparate parts of the environmental justice movement into a unified understanding of purpose and principles and as a separate, independent

17 Dorceta Taylor (1993) points out that two other significant conferences on the topic of environment, health, and justice were organized before the 1991 summit. She names the Urban Environmental Health Summit in 1985 and the Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards Conference in 1990 as the most significant, but indicates that there were many other such conferences and roundtables in the 1980s.
movement from the mainstream modern environmental movement. In terms of unity of the movement, “[u]nprecedented alliances were formed at the Summit, and participants made conceptual linkages between seemingly different struggles, identifying common themes of racism and economic exploitation of people and land. Many there came to understand their [local or particular] issues in the context of a larger movement, and on a deeper level than before” (Cole and Foster, 2001: 32). In addition, the seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice were agreed on at the summit (ibid). Though some mainstream or “traditional” (ibid) environmentalists did play a role in the development of the environmental justice movement, the conflict that spurred the 1991 summit is indicative of the general relationship between the two movements. Some who attended the summit remarked, “I don’t care to join the environmental movement, I belong to a movement already” (ibid: 31). This statement points to the importance of self-determination within the environmental justice movement, summed up in the phrase “we speak for ourselves” (ibid: 27). Brought to the movement by Native Americans who asserted their self-determination and their autonomy from state and federal governments, to many others in the movement “the slogan was an attempt to take back environmental policy decision from traditional environmental groups” (ibid).

Because the environmental justice movement is based in social justice, it has a different conceptual foundation and different set of assumptions from the mainstream environmental movement. I agree with Luke Cole and Sheila Foster’s assessment that though “[s]ome have described the grassroots movement for environmental justice as the third wave of environmental activism, […] we see the Environmental Justice Movement as separate from and as transcending the environmental movement – as a movement based on environmental issues but situated within the history of movements for social justice” (ibid: 30-31). Environmental justice activist and scholar Vernice Miller sees the movement as a culmination or concentration of social justice. She says, “[E]nvironmental justice has come to symbolize every aspect of the discriminatory and unequal treatment that we [people of color] have been experiencing all along” (Miller, 2002: 129).

The principles agreed on at the summit illustrate the fundamentally different values and the autonomy of the environmental justice movement. Two of the principles of environmental justice are similar to statements issued by mainstream environmental organizations:
1) Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.  
3) Environmental Justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things. (Hofrichter, 2002: 237-238; People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, 1991)

Emphasis on a spiritual connection to nature and on ecological principles of unity and interdependence in the first principle and on ethics, balance, and responsibility in the third principle resonate with values of the mainstream modern environmental movement.

Six of the principles illustrate how the environmental justice movement focuses primarily on social justice in the articulation of the problems of and solutions for environmental pollution, destruction, and exclusionary decision-making:

4) Environmental Justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.  
5) Environmental Justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.  
6) Environmental Justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.  
7) Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.  
8) Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.  
9) Environmental Justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care. (Ibid)

The focus on justice is visible in: principle four, which not only calls for an end to nuclear testing and use of toxic materials but calls for it in terms of the “fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food”; in principle five, which also focuses on rights; in principle six, which moves beyond rights to accountability in environmental remediation; in principle seven, which articulates the right to participation; in principle eight, which highlights the work environment as a space of environmental justice; and, in principle nine, which focuses on social as well as environmental accountability in environmental and health remediation.

Six of the principles are explicitly political, and they engage in political and policy debates beyond environmental issues:

2) Environmental Justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.  
10) Environmental Justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on
Genocide.
11) Environmental Justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
12) Environmental Justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.
13) Environmental Justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
14) Environmental Justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
15) Environmental Justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms. (Ibid)

These principles rearticulate the connection between environmental issues and social justice issues by anchoring the environmental matters in terms of social and political justice. Because the environmental justice movement puts social justice, equality, and health first in its agenda, its members tend to prioritize different environmental issues, including environmental health, toxic contamination and hazards, pollution, workplace safety, and toxic waste disposal, instead of wilderness, waterway, and open space preservation, on which much of the mainstream movement has focused (Taylor, 1997).

The history of the relationship of the mainstream environmental movement with both the environmental justice movement and people of color in general is marked by key moments and powerful expressions of exclusion. Dorceta Taylor locates a major impetus for people of color and working class people to form separate environmental movements and alternative environmental agendas, including the environmental justice movement, in the “inability of the white middle class environmental supporters of the reform environmental agenda to recognize the limits of that agenda” (Taylor, 1997: unpaginated). Though the modern (or “second wave”; Cole and Foster, 2001) environmental movement incorporated principles of social justice early in its history, for example, in the content of the speeches at the first Earth Day in 1970 (ibid: 29), it has moved away from broad-based, participatory strategies for environmental action (ibid). Strategies of litigation and policy that draw on legal and scientific expertise have taken the place of social justice or broad-based participation as the foci of the movement (ibid). This is not to say that facets of the environmental justice movement do not draw on expertise or use litigation as a tool (Miller, 2002) or that even the largest national mainstream environmental organizations do not draw on such social justice principles or participatory tactics, especially at local or regional scales, but that the resources and energy of the latter are primarily channeled through actions that require expertise rather than widespread support,
while environmental justice keeps a broadly defined social justice as its conceptual base. And, at various times, as Moore and Bryant claimed in their 1990 letter, mainstream organizations have made key exclusionary racial and class decisions, such as the de-prioritization of “problems of... special groups such as the urban poor and ethnic minorities” (Cole and Foster, 2001: 30), and racially controversial policies, such as a resolution proposed by the Sierra Club to tighten immigration controls to control population in the 1990s, discussed further in chapter 4.

Taylor summarizes the difference between the mainstream environmental movement and the environmental justice movement. She characterizes the mainstream environmental movement as a “reformative movement,” which seeks limited or incremental change at the societal scale (Taylor, 2000: 521). It does not reject the current system, but "seek[s] to work within the system to neutralize or amend wrongs or to reduce or eliminate perceived threats" (ibid). In contrast, the environmental justice movement is a “transformative movement,” which "seek[s] broad or sweeping changes in the social structure and its ideological foundation” (ibid). Thus, environmental justice criticizes “modernist and colonial philosophies of unlimited progress, unchecked development, the privileging of Western scientific notions of objective truth and control of nature, and the hierarchical separation between nature and human culture” (Di Chiro, 1996: 310). Environmental justice advocates "contend that the mainstream environmentalists’ invention of a universal division between humans and nature is deceptive, theoretically incoherent, and strategically ineffective” and instead see people as “an integral part of what should be understood as the environment” because they merge social justice and environmental interests (ibid: 301). Miller points out the difficulty mainstream environmental groups have incorporating people of color in their work, even when serious attempts are made: “Like many other national environmental groups, NRDC [Natural Resources Defense Council] has come a long way from where it was in the early 90s or before... but elitism and parochialism of traditional environmentalism is deeply embedded in the culture of these organizations, and it will take some time, perhaps decades, before public interest environmentalists truly speak for and represent all of the public, especially people of color” (Shutkin, 2000: 117, interview with Miller). The difference between the mainstream and environmental justice movements is thus more fundamental than the issues they address. It reaches to the foundational assumptions and values of each movement and their purview of attempted change.
The making of race and the process of racialization are not typically subjects of discussion or examination in environmental justice literature. Racism figures prominently, as do racial justice and equality, as well as justice issues related to class and income disparities. Reading the principles and initiatives of the environmental justice movement makes clear that a primary focus is on equity, and the form of equity conceptualized takes as a starting point the realities of race and racism in the U.S. The struggle is for equal treatment, equal participation, and true representation of local social, racial, class, and cultural groups in environmental decision-making. Racial inequality is the starting point and the focus for remediation; equal treatment and truly equal opportunities are the goals. Given that environmental justice writing and activism is most often directly addressing a specific violation of equity and a specific manifestation of environmental racism, it is inherently critical of social, political, economic, health, and environmental disparities as well as specific policies or actions. The critiques sometimes explicitly and often implicitly draw on what David Goldberg and Philomena Essed call the “history of racial theorizing in the critical tradition” which includes W. E. B. DuBois’s “double consciousness’ and Frantz Fanon’s critique of racism as experienced by individuals as part of colonial domination (Goldberg and Essed, 2000: 5-6), but they rarely take a critical look at the processes of racialization in everyday life.18

The ecological and the social: Incorporating people of color in environmentalism

There is a growing literature that takes on the issues of sustainability and social inclusion. These works vary in their engagement with the environmental justice movement and its principles, some mention only “diversity” in a pass-over gloss of desire to include “all people” and others draw substantively on environmental justice. Unfortunately, although many express the goals of inclusion and equity and some even draw on environmental justice goals, they do not often explicitly address race or racism, steering instead towards terms such as “social and cultural diversity” (Beatley and Manning, 1997: 35). Beatley and Manning, in particular, do not mention the environmental justice movement at all and only discuss racism as a historical cause of urban flight and subsequent suburban sprawl (ibid: 41). They do mention social justice as an ideal goal in the vision of social inclusion of all people in vibrant cities and towns, and access to services by

18 I thank Jill Harrison for pointing out this important difference between “critical” in the social-political realm and “critical” in the academic realm.
all members of a community and the goal of tolerating and encouraging diversity (ibid: 1, 189). Besides a short discussion of the importance of the role of affordable housing to decrease social segregation and to allow lower-income workers the option to live closer to their work, Beatley and Manning avoid specific discussion of historical or current racial exclusion or the effects of structural racism, including the cumulative and intentional disenfranchisement of people of color from home ownership for decades (Lipsitz, 2006 [1998]). Like many liberal-progressives, in fact, they rarely use the words “race” or even “racism” but rely instead on “diversity” and “integration” that lack the important but implicit modifier “racial.” The discussion is dominated by good intentions about social equity, increased integration, and increased diversity, but almost no recognition of specific histories or examples of racial segregation or inequality.

Unlike Beatley and Manning, William Shutkin (2000) does acknowledge parts of the racism in the history of the country. He focuses on the disproportionate effects of environmental hazards and toxins in communities of color. Shutkin promotes a new “civic environmentalism” that “is fundamentally about ensuring the quality and sustainability of our communities, economically, socially, and environmentally” (Shutkin, 2000: 128). Civic environmentalism “marries a concern for the physical health of communities with an understanding that part and parcel of environmental quality is overall civic health” (ibid: xiv). As Shutkin articulates it, the concept draws on fundamental tenets of environmental justice, most significantly the need for environmental movements to be democratic, which is a key characteristic of his civic environmentalism.

Despite the central role of environmental justice as one of the six core concepts of civic environmentalism (along with democratic process, community and regional planning, education, industrial ecology, and place, Shutkin, 2000: 240) and his own experience with grassroots environmental organizations, Shutkin’s discussion of racial inequality, racism, and people of color is too shallow historically and theoretically. He locates the source of the problem of racial inequality in segregation, particularly residential segregation, the persistence of which fifty years after the civil rights movement demonstrates that “we have yet to achieve the kind of democracy that most of us claim to want” (ibid: 37). According to Shutkin, segregation, which is a result of racial inequality and prejudice, allows the siting of “undesirable land uses” like waste processing facilities and landfills in communities of color (ibid: 80). Placing the blame on segregation is a strange discursive choice; perhaps he is trying to account for the structural, rather than personal and intentional, nature of racism, but instead he deflects focus from societal roots of racial
inequality. The only reason behind racial inequality that Shutkin names is a lack of democracy, which is seen as the cause of segregation and of racial and economic disparities. Thus democracy is the solution, specifically a democracy that also treats environmental quality as a goal through the full accounting of industrial and environmental costs in capitalism. For example, Shutkin describes a history of "civic decline and economic and racial disparity [that] result in pervasive negative environmental effects, such as contaminated urban land (‘brownfields’), air pollution from the endless stream of cars on America’s roadways, and the development of pristine rural areas.... [which] corrode the fabric of American democracy across the borders of race, ethnicity, and class" (ibid: 17, emphasis added). The threat to the environment is a threat to American democracy and a threat to all of us. Even though some people (of color) are disproportionately affected by these environmental harms, everyone – “ordinary citizens” must participate in the new civic environmentalism to save our democracy, our society, and our world (ibid: xv). Thus, Shutkin mentions racial disparities in power and environmental injustices, but deflects his analysis to a more color-blind need for everyone to participate in improving the quality of the environment, the quality of social democracy, and, consequently, everyone’s quality of life. He also deflects attention away from the performative nature of racialization and racial inequality that persist through people’s everyday actions and practices of subject formation.

The environment and “environmental harms” play a major role in Shutkin’s narrative of urban decline and racial inequality. He says that a “degenerative social and environmental cycle” in communities of color runs thus: “Racial inequality invites environmental harm, which perpetuates racial strife and polarization, which in turn exacerbates racial inequality” (Shutkin, 2000: 81). The insinuation of environmental inequalities in this cycle has a progressive sound to it (despite the suspect use of the word “degenerative” to refer to inner-city communities of color, see Goldberg, 1993: 200-201), borrowing an issue central to the environmental justice movement. However, Shutkin’s cycle also distracts from the actual processes of racialization and reiteration of structural racial inequalities that exist in such areas of “environmental and social decay” in cities. Instead, in Shutkin’s telling, “environmental harm” has a destructive effect that echoes environmental determinism of a century earlier, a description of a place (the city, or the tropics) where dark-skinned victims of unfortunate environment (toxic dumping, or a vaporous climate with brain-baking sun) live. In his narrative, both the environment and “the minorities” are victims of
amorphous forces of environmental harm, ushered in by segregation (which is also caused by whites’ desire for a pleasant physical environment that is only found in suburbs, resulting in a new white flight based on quality of life issues, Shutkin, 2000: 81) and unspecified “economic and social forces” including “economic growth” (ibid: 3).

Throughout his argument, though he criticizes the mainstream environmental movement for its anti-democratic nature and class elitism, Shutkin is loyal to the concept of wilderness as a key element in American identity, particularly in the current modern era. He muses,

We have thus arrived at the beginning of the twenty-first century at a place far afield from eighteenth-century America’s pristine agrarian villages. A largely increasingly urban society, we seem to have lost our traditional moorings and the accompanying sense of confidence about who we are as a people and where we are headed. Once a proud agrarian republic, then a pioneering industrial democracy, we inhabit today what many call, for want of a better descriptor, the postindustrial order, an unstable alloy of old metropolises and new, of edge cities and third-ring suburbs, of factories, malls, and subdivisions, and of working farms and fields. As always, there remains that awesome space, the American wilderness, an endless source of national mythology and pride amid the wrenching changes in the American landscape of the past half-century. (Ibid: 3-4)

Shutkin laments the unmooring of America in modern times in this “postindustrial order” full of “factories, malls, and subdivisions” that are entirely separate from the “awesome” space of American wilderness from which the nation’s identity flows, and in which Americans can place their pride. Despite his condemnation of mainstream environmentalists, he clearly shares their romantic and nationalist views that value “pristine” landscapes and the awesome space of wilderness.

How does Shutkin’s radical commitment to democracy and his experience with local environmental justice actions fit with his passive racist discourse that refuses to identify the centrality of racism in American history? Shutkin believes that the political and social structure of the U.S. is based in equality, freedom, and rights, and that those concepts can be (and are) free of racial meanings and racial inequalities. Thus, in his view, inclusion of racial minorities in the liberal rubric of equality, freedom, and rights ought to eliminate the problems of racial segregation and racial inequality, despite the racial meanings and inequalities embedded in those exact practices of liberalism. Exactly this contradiction is what I call the problem of inclusion.

The problem of inclusion

Charles Taylor argues that the “vocation of inclusion” in democratic political structures, which are predicated on government by and for the people, is accompanied by a tendency toward exclusion (Taylor,
The exclusion often occurs through articulations of national unity, collective identity, and “common belonging” (ibid: 145) that often rely on racialized realities and assumptions of the past. Taylor makes this process sound relatively innocuous, saying that “in societies with a high degree of historic ethnic unity, the sense of the common bond has been bound up for so long with the common language, culture, history, ancestry, and so on, that people feel a certain discomfort about accommodating fellow citizens of other origins.... [and] are still so used to functioning politically only among themselves that they find it difficult to adjust” (ibid). Despite the apparent innocence of the process, Taylor emphasizes that with the “drive in modern democracy toward inclusion... there is a standing temptation to exclusion, arising from the fact that democracies work well when people know one another, trust one another, and feel a sense of commitment toward one another” (ibid: 146). The magical political unity Taylor describes thus can be interrupted by the arrival of “different” people to the political conversation.

Though aware of the historical shifts in the boundaries of who belongs where, Taylor does not problematize the making of difference through the dynamic processes of national belonging. In the United States, Taylor outlines a brief history of immigrants from Ireland and southern Europe who were only slowly integrated “into Anglo-American political culture” because for a time they operated politically in blocks that supported local bosses or other “political machines” (ibid: 147). In the end, though, “a transition was successfully navigated, and a new democracy emerged in which a fairly high level of mutual understanding, trust, and commitment (alas, with the tragic exception, still, of African-Americans) was recreated” (ibid). Here Taylor’s own discourse is strangely exclusive in his discussion of inclusion. Taylor’s description of African Americans’ exclusion from the political process in the U.S. frames it as a long-standing and stubborn exception to the rule of inclusion. A more radical and more productive reading of this history is the “tragic exception of African-Americans” in the process of democratic evolution of United States as a constitutive exclusion, through which white (or, as Jared Sexton emphasizes, nonblack; Sexton, 2008: 6; see also Yancey, 2003) American national unity and “common belonging” are forged. This central role of racism in liberal government is addressed in the following section.

In reference to the environmental justice movement itself, Kristin Shrader-Frechette (2002) takes the position that a procedural and participative approach is necessary to democratize decision-making in reference to environmental risk and achieve true inclusion. She locates environmental injustice in the neglect
of those who make decisions about environmental risk to consider existing local inequalities that are relevant to the decisions (ibid). Decision-makers must take distributional impacts into account and place the environmental decisions within both a local and broader social context. For “inclusion” to be an effective tool of social change and social justice, it must extend beyond a surface level involvement to a deeper level of participation. As David Schlosberg points out, environmental justice groups “are insisting on a fundamental change in the processes of environmental and economic decisions that affect their communities” not just focusing on changes in particular policies (Schlosberg, 1999: 163). In the case of environmental and sustainability organizations and efforts, this distinction demands a radical inclusion of, for example, environmental justice advocates who subscribe to a broader concept of “the environment” (something environmentalists have attempted, at least in terms of geographic area of their projects) and to a more anthropocentric – and less misanthropic (Shrader-Freshette, 2002) – set of environmental goals and framing of environmental problems. This is a tall order not only because it demands a reconsideration of organizational goals, but also because of the larger social dynamics of multiculturalism in which having “many faces at the table” is considered a sufficient accomplishment, even if the conversation of goals or how to frame environmental problems are never discussed at that table.19 As Vernice Miller, in an interview conducted in 1998, said, “Both the ideology and methodology of mainstream [environmental] groups... often undermine genuinely democratic environmental activism because, focused on wilderness on the one hand and law and policy on the other, they fail to resonate with most working-class and lower-income Americans” (Shutkin, 2000: 117).

The concept of inclusion often reinforces the concept of the other and of exclusion as a cultural and national norm, even as it papers over racism. Allan Pred 2000 emphasizes the freedom “inclusion” attempts to portray for individuals, while at the same time delimiting the discursive arena in which diversity and difference can be discussed:

[Cultural racism] is [a]lways subject to being further reinforced by discourses that obscure the operation of power relations by at one moment glorifying individual rights, freedom of choice, and personal initiative, or by praising the unlimited possibilities for individual achievement and diverse lifestyles offered by the free operation of market forces; and in another proximate moment by

19 Julie Guthman briefly makes a similar argument in reference to racial minority participation in alternative food movement groups: “Justice can only be achieved with substantive participation in defining the terms and conditions by which those burdens and benefits exist in the first place” (Guthman, 2008a: 389). See also Schlosberg (2002) for a discussion of a “critical pluralism” he sees necessary to transforming the way environmental movements operate.
employing a language of multicultural tolerance that wittingly or unwittingly resorts to images of cultural uniformity that serve to collectively disqualify, serve to collectively shut out from the labor market, serve to collectively drown in suspicion, serve to collectively portray as an economic burden, serve to collectively Orientalize and pathologize, serve to collectively condemn to the “underclass” and de facto social apartheid. (Pred: 2000: 70)

Identifying “others” who have been excluded from past privilege or social protections and blaming them for their lack of privilege is a persistent American practice. Linda Williams points out the irony in this double-movement: “Thus we find an ironic situation: the American welfare state has denied people of color the social protections it has provided white Americans and then stigmatized them as welfare ‘dependants.’ This result is an outgrowth not simply of racially motivated exclusion but also of the particular and differential patterns, styles, and levels of racial inclusion and the way pejorative stereotypes are attached to some social policies and favorable ones to others” (Williams, 2003: 2). This practice of naming, excluding, blaming, and including marks much of the racial “truths” and norms around which American cultural politics centers.

Inclusion operates within the promotion of racial and cultural diversity and within the discursive bounds of cultural racism, a doctrine discussed at length in chapter 3. Both racial discourses deflect attention from race and lean heavily on a relativist conception of culture. For example, Agyeman (2003), in an attempt to operationalize cultural diversity within environmental education to achieve “culturally sensitive research approaches,” elides discussions of racial inequality and reifies and reduces culture to a static entity. These relativist conceptions of culture pretend to transcend racist stereotypes and judgments but in fact performatively reinstate them under the new rubric of culture as the vehicle for difference. Inclusion fits perfectly within this presentation of diversity, as it assumes that one who is included is already automatically excluded based on some particular condition of “otherness.”

**Racism and liberalism**

Modern liberalism is not a backdrop to racism or the rules within which racism is perpetrated. Rather, race and racism are central to the historical development and current logics of liberalism. Liberalism can be defined as the hegemonic organizing logic of Western societies, as it “has become the defining doctrine of self and society for modernity” (Goldberg, 1993: 4).

20. Its basic ideals include individualism (weighing the

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20 Liberalism is a tricky term to define because there are in fact many liberalisms, and the meaning shifts depending on the time and place under consideration. Here I am talking about a general, modern liberalism that developed partly in
“moral, political, and legal claims of the individual over... those of the collective”), universalism, humanism (in the sense that all human beings share a basic humanity or human nature), rationalism (the potential of each human to be led by his or her “rational core” or by reason), potential for individual and social reform and progress, and fundamental equality despite differences (ibid: 5). It is necessary to recognize these logics and examine their role in racism rather than simply taking them for granted as a neutral setting for the definition of race and the process of racialization. Michel Foucault, Ann Stoler, David Goldberg, and Uday Mehta elucidate the ways in which these basic ideals of liberalism were formed in tandem with and through racial ideas about bodies, blood, nation, order, and otherness.

Liberalism developed at the time when society transitioned from organization around absolutism and monarchy to new political and social relationships. Racial understandings played an important role in this shift. Foucault describes this transition in his larger discussion of the ways discourses productively regulate bodies in space (Stoler, 1995: 36-37). He identifies the time of transition to liberalism as the time when the earlier control over sexual practices managed through matrimony shifted to control over sexuality itself as a mode of “penetrating and annexing individual bodies in ever more comprehensive and intrusive ways” (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 106, cited in ibid). This same process is one that Foucault describes as a shift in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from a "symbolics of blood" to an “analytics of sexuality” (Stoler, 1995: 49), but Stoler emphasizes that this shift was one that involved a long overlap, nearly two centuries during which a “preoccupation with blood” (ibid) “haunted the administration of sexuality” (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 148, cited in ibid). This long overlap played an important role in the development of racism through the reordering of society around the central notions of blood, sexuality, and reproduction (Stoler, 1995: 49-50). Foucault expounds on the role of the concept of blood in managing sexual and reproductive practices as a racial practice:

Racism took shape at this point (racism in its modern, “biologizing” statist form): it was then that a whole politics of settlement (peuplement), family, marriage, education, social hierarchization, and contrast to political conservatism in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (following Uday Mehta, 1999), but central features of which have become hegemonic across the contemporary political spectrum, including those listed by Goldberg (1993). Mehta (1999) emphasizes liberalism’s focus on rationality and its arrogant and totalizing assumption that the unfamiliar is at some level derivative of universal truths and logics and thus immediately recognizable and legible to imperial powers.

21 While these descriptions of liberalism’s presuppositions and ideals are Goldberg’s (1993: 5), I have reworked his order and explanation of them to some extent.
property, accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life, received their color and their justification from the mythical concern with protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race. (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 149)

Stoler reinforces this point with the fact that during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, “discourses on miscegenation combined notions of tainted, flawed, and pure blood with those of degeneration and racial purity in countless ways” (Stoler, 1995: 50). The shift to the organizing principles of liberalism took place in part through racialized discourses of conduct; the reorganization of society in accordance with liberalism was a racial process.

Goldberg also highlights the “racist undercurrents” in the rise of modern liberalism (Goldberg and Essed, 2000: 9). According to Goldberg, liberalism insists that race is a “morally irrelevant category” because it is not chosen or alterable (Goldberg, 1993: 6). This assumption of moral irrelevancy “masks a much more complex set of ideas and experiences” than most modern liberal thinkers acknowledge (ibid). In short, “[l]iberal modernity denies its racialized history and the attendant histories of racist exclusions, hiding them behind some idealized, self-promoting, yet practically ineffectual, dismissal of race as a morally irrelevant category” (ibid: 7, emphasis in original). The claim of “moral irrelevance” often leads to a position of color-blindness, which further obscures liberalism’s racial history. Goldberg demonstrates that race is central to liberalism’s development and even definition: “By working itself into the threads of liberalism’s cloth just as that cloth was being woven, race and the various exclusions it licensed became naturalized in the Eurocentered vision of itself and its self-defined others” (ibid: 10). Goldberg meticulously traces the historical presence of race in philosophies of the western moral tradition, and he shows that it is precisely through the philosophical and moral values of “virtue, sin, autonomy and equality, utility, and rights” that race is embedded in the heart of liberalism and modern western society (ibid: 36). He summarizes, “So the irony of modernity, the liberal paradox comes down to this: As modernity commits itself progressively to idealized principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as it increasingly insists upon the moral irrelevance of race, there is a multiplication of racial identities and the sets of exclusions they prompt and rationalize, enable and sustain. Race is irrelevant, but all is race” (ibid: 6). This is the process of race being set at the center of the logics of liberalism and simultaneously erased from view or dismissed as irrelevant.

In Uday Mehta’s view, modern liberalism as developed by British political theorists in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was so wedded to rationalism and universalism that adherence to it by
theorists and agents of the British empire prohibited a view of any reality beyond the limits of that rationality and abstraction (Mehta, 1999). Mehta draws on Georg Simmel’s essay “The Stranger” in his explanation of the British encounter with what Mehta calls the “unfamiliar” subjects of empire in India, through abstractions: “[T]he consciousness of having only the absolutely general in common has the effect of putting a special emphasis on that which is not common... [so] strangers are not really perceived as individuals, but strangers of a certain type,” (Simmel, 1971: 148, cited in Mehta, 1999: 34). Mehta explains, “This is the predicament of liberalism... in the context of the empire. The unity based on what is common does not dissolve the barrier of strangeness but merely articulates a starting position in which each views the other as embodying the abstraction of a certain type” (Mehta, 1999: 24, emphasis in original). In India and throughout the empire, the British liberals viewed “the stranger merely as the embodiment of an abstract type that is then judged, reformed, and often assessed as moribund in his extant situation; all this, by reference to another set of abstract ideals of rationality, individuality, the morally sanguine, the imperatives of politics, and most generally, to the requirements of progress” (ibid: 25). Racial understandings, as abstractions and “certain types,” were not separate from but bound up with these ideals of liberalism in the context of empire.

British political ideology encountered what came to be understood as racial difference through the empire (Mehta, 1999: 15). Race was encountered and reinforced as an abstraction through the liberal expansion and rule of empire, but even in that process, Mehta argues that it was rarely spoken about by political theorists of the time. Instead, it was subsumed into familiar universal categories of rational rule that had reform of imperial subjects as their goal. The “role of imperial pedagogy,” it was thought, was to operate “in the malleable and concealed space behind the starkness of blood and color to reproduce the familiar, even if somatically refracted, category of being English.... [These were] arduous processes through which the effortless, the rational, the gentlemanly, and the civilized are made to appear natural, via the complex interdictions of liberal education, and all of them by working behind the scene” (ibid: 15-16). Thus, Mehta shows how the British in India encountered difference largely through the attempt to make an abstract type familiar through rational reform. Moore, Pandian, and Kosek view Mehta’s unfamiliar colonial subject as a “constitutive outside” to British empire’s liberal realm, an outside that is recognized only on the terms of rational universalism and is continually coerced into its rule through both imperial conquest and educational reform (Moore, Pandian, and Kosek, 2003; Mehta, 1999).
In the late twentieth century, the fact that racism was central to the organization of society was no secret, but the question was whether and how to reform such a society. Howard Winant explains that both black radicals and right-wing populists in the 1960s "grasped the deep truth that white supremacy was not an excrescence on the basically egalitarian and democratic 'American creed', but a fundamental component of U.S. society. To destroy it meant reinventing the country, the social order and the government. Indeed, for the U.S. to come to terms with its own history of conquest and enslavement would have involved a deep national reckoning. It would have severely threatened the foundations of the nation-state" (Winant, 1997: 77). A widespread hope pervaded liberal-progressive thought that the recent policy shifts effected at great human cost by the civil rights movement would resolve the problem of a racially organized society. But Winant points out the flaw with this logic. Even despite their vision for a “substantive equality, linking class and race,” the liberals of the 1990s “fail to recognize the ongoing racial dualism that prevails in the contemporary period, perceiving civil-rights era conflicts between whites and racially defined minorities merely as strategic problems, and paying less attention to the deep-seated structural racial conflicts endemic to U.S. society” (ibid: 84, emphasis original). Liberalism remains a racialized and racist logic of government and rationale of rule. As liberal-progressives make social and political arguments within the modern liberal rationale of rule, even their socially progressive political efforts are steeped in racism and confined by racial logics.

Not only is racism a constitutive feature of historical and contemporary liberalism, many forms of racism are hidden or denied through that form of government. Barnor Hesse points out a "conceptual double bind" of racism in liberal-democratic societies, in which racism is denounced generally and widely, but certain claims of racism are excluded from being categorized as such (Hesse, 2004: 10). In this double bind, racism is represented by the extreme racist event of the World War II Holocaust, and this kind of extreme racism is seen as paradigmatic (ibid). “Particular” or specific examples of racism are always compared with paradigmatic ones, and in the process the racism constitutive of colonial governance is denied (ibid). The double bind is a constant process of revealing and affirming the paradigmatic or extreme instances of racism while concealing and denying those embedded in routine governmentality and liberalism (ibid: 14; see also Goldberg, 2002).
Similarly, Robyn Wiegman points out that most whites in the U.S. form their white identities through “disaffiliation from white supremacy” and from racial segregation, another form of paradigmatic racism (Wiegman, 1999: 121, 129). Thus, all racial projects aside from the few explicitly biological forms of racism, are framed “within the official national discourse of integrationist equality” (ibid: 120), and “white disaffiliation takes shape as ‘liberal whiteness,’ a color-blind moral sameness” developed for the purposes of nationalism in the aftermath of the social upheaval of the civil rights movement era (ibid: 121). But while separating themselves from the paradigmatic form of racist white supremacy and falling in line with “integrationist equality,” Wiegman shows that whites continue to reinforce racial privilege through changes in political and social policies, including the demise of welfare and affirmative action and intensification of restriction and policing of immigration and immigrants in the late twentieth century (ibid). She takes specific examples from popular media to argue that the historical understanding of segregation in the U.S. is being reworked to no longer be specific to black bodies, but as a more a more general discourse of injury, also affecting whites (ibid: 127). In the process of this reimagining of the era of segregation, media representations “define that injury as private, motivated not by a social system but by the prejudices and moral lacks of individuals who seem simply not to know better” (ibid). Like Hesse, Wiegman criticizes this common view of racism only in particular and extreme instances that ignores the systemic and institutional forms that racism takes.

Reducing racism to individual injury is one way in which the navigation of difference is depoliticized in liberal democracies. Wendy Brown (2006) examines the way the discourse of tolerance produces subjects. Her project is to “analyze tolerance... as a strand of depoliticization in liberal democracies” that stems from its popular construal as a universal value and impartial practice (ibid: 7, 15). She extracts the idea of tolerance from the realm of the universal to examine it as a “political discourse and practice of governmentality” (ibid: 4, emphasis in original). The imperial characteristics of universalism and rational impartiality imported to tolerance overlap with the ideological structure of modern liberalism (Mehta, 1999), and Brown identifies

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22 Here I believe Wiegman is referring to whites who subscribe to a liberal-progressive point of view, rather than to modern liberalism as a rationale of rule (what I am also calling the liberal-democratic view), which is the main topic of this section. But in pointing out the “color-blind moral sameness” of liberal whiteness, Wiegman highlights the point at which the liberal-progressive view of race and the liberal-democratic view of race coincide. In the post-civil rights era, both have developed a relativistic argument of sameness and difference that focuses on equality and rights that elides not only persisting structures of racism in society (that were presumably left in the past) but also the ongoing discursive and performative enactment of difference itself.
both as “sources of discursive depoliticization” (Brown, 2006: 17). Liberalism works to depoliticize discourse through the assertion that “most of what transpires in the spaces designated as cultural, social, economic, and private is considered natural and personal... [and] independent of power and political life” (ibid). This depoliticization reduces social conflicts and inequalities to the individual scale, reduces the conceptualization of freedom to a matter of individual rights, and reduces the understanding of equality to “equal standing before the law” (ibid). These reductions hide multiple “sources of subordination, marginalization, and inequality that organize liberal democratic societies and fashion their subjects.... [and through which] liberal ideology ... always already eschews power and history in its articulation and comprehension of the social and the subject” (ibid: 17-18). At the individual scale and through structures of formal liberalism, tolerance evades histories of power and inequality embedded in the very “difference” that is tolerance’s object.

The depoliticization of tolerance hides its function as a political discourse. As a form of governmentality – “that which organizes the ‘conduct of conduct’ at a variety of sites and through rationalities not limited to those formally countenanced as political” – tolerance “positions subjects, orchestrates meaning and practices of identity, marks bodies, and conditions political subjectivities” (Brown, 2006: 4). This process of subject formation through governmentality is particularly important in the examination of the central role of racism in liberalism because it refers to a subject who is repugnant or abnormal who must be tolerated. Brown explains that “[a]lmost all subjects of tolerance are marked as deviant, marginal, or undesirable by virtue of being tolerated, and the action of tolerance inevitably affords some access to superiority” (ibid: 14). As a depoliticized discourse, this positioning of subjects renders a relatively stable object of “difference” as the major problem to be overcome through tolerance, rather than positioning tolerance as a discourse that itself creates abject subjects (ibid: 15-16, 28). Further, “difference” is reinforced as a stable and operational concept through which society productively operates. The toleration of individuals as a political discourse operates through their position as “representatives of particular groups” (ibid: 34) or strangers of a “certain type” who represent certain abstractions (Mehta, 1999). This is significant not only because it contradicts the fundamental independence of the individual, in which liberalism is rooted, but also because it expands and obscures the role of the liberal state in the governance of tolerated sexual, ethnic, racial, national, and religious subjects (Brown, 2006: 34-35). “As the executive of a tolerant regime, the liberal state adopts a
formal (but disingenuous) posture of secularism or neutrality in relation to each of these markers of power and stratification [i.e. religion, ethnicity, culture, sexuality]” (ibid: 35).

Unlike with religious belief, the realm in which the idea of tolerance was created in the West, the application of tolerance to abstracted identities that are perceived as both inherent and abnormal hides the instability of liberal (in)equality while it buttresses its effects (Brown, 2006: 36). Tolerance in this sense acts as an assistant or supplement\(^{23}\) to liberal democratic equality, “making up for and covering over limitations in liberal practices of equality, completing what presents itself as complete but is not” (ibid). The difference through which the discourse of tolerance operates as a mode of rule by the state conflicts with the liberal equality or sameness on which liberalism relies, and through which it operates (ibid). Tolerance “is deployed to handle the differences that liberal equality cannot reduce, eliminate, or address” (ibid). Moreover, the deployment of tolerance alongside formal equality “manages the demands of marginal groups in ways that incorporate them without disturbing the hegemony of the norms that marginalize them” (ibid). Tolerance aids liberalism by quelling or diverting situations of potential crisis in its legitimacy, “crises that threaten to reveal the shallow reach of liberal equality and the partiality of liberal universality” (ibid) such as those instances of racism that do not fit the paradigmatic rule, but which constitute liberal unequal government (Hesse, 2004). It also points to liberalism’s fundamental need for, containment of, and relationship with its “Other” (Brown, 2006: 24), its constitutive outside.

Racial ideology of modern liberalism, rooted in imperialism, hides the way becoming a good environmental, national, and racial citizen supports racial hierarchy, racial power, and unacknowledged racism that is embedded in liberalism and fundamental to liberal thought. The specific examples of the moral discourse of racism that I examine in this chapter are inextricable from the norms of liberal rationality and its constitutive concepts of universalism, freedom, liberty, and individualism. The same dynamics of liberal thought pervade conceptualizations of nature. Liberal rationality is fundamental to both the science of the environment and the framing of nature as separate from culture and as “wild,” which “makes it accessible for the pleasure and appreciation of world-weary urbanites” (Neumann, 1998: 17). Colonialism and empire were key settings for the incorporation of both “unfamiliar” others (Mehta, 1999; Mohanram, 2007; Stoler, 1995;)

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\(^{23}\) Brown uses Derrida’s concept of a supplement as “that which completes a putatively self-sufficient or coherent whole yet is simultaneously disavowed as it does so” (Brown, 2006: 218, note 19; see also pages 27, 215-216).
and unfamiliar, “wild” nature and disorderly environments (Braun, 2002; Kosek, 2006; Neumann, 1998; Moore et al., 2003) into the rationalizing purview of liberal rule.

**Ethics and moral discourses**

*Ethics as modes of subjectivation: Ethical practices and norms*

Following Mahmood and Foucault, I see ethical practices and norms as modes of subjectivation, which constitute subjects of moral discourses. Mahmood borrows Foucault’s concept of ethics from his later work that draws on an Aristotelian tradition of ethics (Mahmood, 2005: 27). This theorization is a “positive conception of ethics” because it views ethics in a realm “beyond notions of norms, justification, legitimation, and meaning to include the consideration of the practices, selves, bodies, and desires that determine (and are codetermined by) ethics” (Colebrook, 1998: 50, cited in ibid). In this view, ethics are “practices, techniques and discourses” that subjects use to change themselves to get to a particular state of being, happiness, or truth and a “modality of power” that allows people to change themselves so they can become “the willing subjects of a particular moral discourse” (Mahmood, 2005: 28). Moral discourses are comprised of moral injunctions and codes, which are delimited in advance, as well as a historically specific set of formative practices (ibid). Ethical practices include corporeal or bodily techniques, spiritual exercises and ways of conducting oneself that are manifest and immanent in everyday life (ibid: 29). Foucault calls these moral codes and formative practices “modes of subjectivation” or limits within which a subject is formed (ibid: 28). Subjectivity is an effect of a modality of power operationalized through a set of moral codes that summon a subject to constitute himself or herself in accordance with its precepts and through ethical practices that do work to constitute the individual (ibid: 28-29). The body is the substance and tool through which the embodied subject is formed (ibid: 29). This subjectivation is a performative process, in which norms and truths of certain discourses are cited and repeated in everyday speech and action, which in turn strengthen or potentially disrupt the coherence and normative quality of the discourse and of the subjectivity.

*Technologies of the self*

People use ethical practices to adhere to moral codes and become subjects of moral discourses, through which their subjectivity is continually constituted. The process of self-transformation to conform to
moral discourses and “achieve a particular state of being, happiness, or truth” (Mahmood, 2005: 28) is best understood in terms of a theorization of techniques or “technologies of the self” within a performative framework. Mahmood defines techniques of the self as the process of “operations one performs on oneself in order to become an ethical subject” (ibid: 30), following Foucault’s longer definition that they “permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault, 2003 [1982]: 146).

Thus, positive ethics, moral discourses, and technologies of the self form a conceptual framework through which people’s ethical practices can be paired with norms (moral codes) and both can be analyzed in terms of the desired effects or desired state of being, happiness, wisdom, or truth. I use this framework to analyze the ways Boulder residents talk about environmentalism and racism in the context of the local and national histories of environmentalism and racism, viewing each as a moral discourse, and how those discourses performatively constitute subjects through adherence to ethical norms and practices in their everyday lives. Thus, the normative values of environmentalism and of racism and opposition to racism can be seen in the context of subjects’ performative attempts to become better environmental, national, and racial citizens. These environmental and racial norms of values and behavior are articulated through each other and through other social values, including culture, civilization, beauty, order, etiquette, and belonging. Examining these articulations in terms of the moral discourses of environmentalism and racism gives further insight into everyday performative processes of racialization and formation of environmental subjects.

The process of self-improvement is also a form of governmentality. Nikolas Rose says that in advanced liberal democracies “[t]he regulation of conduct becomes a matter of each individual’s desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximization of a version of their happiness and fulfillment that they take to be their own, but such a lifestyle maximization entails a relation to authority in the very moment as it pronounces itself the outcome of free choice” (Rose, 2006 [1996]: 159). Thus, even as they strive to be good environmental, racial, and national subjects by adhering through very personal choices to the moral discourses of environmentalism and racism, people performatively legitimate the liberal-democratic government with racism embedded in it.
The moral discourse of racism

Understandings of beauty, order, etiquette, and belonging shape people’s racial understandings, values, and practices and thus comprise the moral discourse of racism. Racial subjectivity is forged through the performative articulation of racial norms through these values in everyday language as well as early natural science, which posited classical Greek aesthetics as the perfect norm (West, 2000 [1982]). These norms were expressed through the values and boundaries of social etiquette, which shape racial discourse. After the civil rights movement in the U.S., the moral discourse of racism shifted to a purportedly accepting and egalitarian norm, at least in its liberal-progressive form. This shift had important implications for individuals’ conduct for self-improvement, enforcing an alignment with values of racial equality and practices of opposing explicit acts of racism or white supremacy.

Stoler (1995) rereads Foucault’s History of Sexuality (1990 [1978]) and his lectures Society Must Be Defended (1997), demonstrating the key role of the colonies in creating the gender, racial, and class identities of Europe in the 1800s. She shows that the moral order of the time and the moral boundaries of bourgeois identity were intimately tied to racial understandings of order, beauty, etiquette, and belonging. For example, referring to Foucault’s four objects of knowledge, the masturbating child, the “hysterical woman,” the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult (Foucault, 1990 [1978]), she asks, “Did any of these figures exist as objects of knowledge and discourse in the nineteenth century without a racially erotic counterpoint, without reference to the libidinal energies of the savage, the primitive, the colonized – reference points of difference, critique, and desire?” (Stoler, 1995: 6-7). The very formations of identity through which power operated on subjects at that time were articulated in racial terms or in opposition to an often implicit conceptualization of a racial other which was characterized by disorder, ugliness, moral repugnance, and lack of self-control.

The classification and ranking of races formed foundational moral norms of race attached to and articulated through ideas about culture, intelligence, beauty, and order, and spawned ethical practices of racism deeply embedded within the natural and social sciences and humanities. Cornel West (2000 [1982]) argues that racial understandings were intimately bound with aesthetic judgments. The emphasis on classical Greek ideas and norms of beauty shaped early-modern racial theories of the 1700s and 1800s through the development of race as a concept in the natural sciences (ibid). West argues that modern science played a crucial role in “highlighting the physical appearances of people in relation to what it is to be human,
beautiful, cultured, and intelligent" (ibid: 108). The goal of natural history to “observe, compare, measure, and order animals and human bodies... based on visible, especially physical, characteristics... permit[ted] one to discern identity and difference, equality and inequality, beauty and ugliness among animals and human bodies” (ibid: 98). These purportedly objective processes of “observation” and “measurement” were in fact performative enactments of the scientific and moral norms that shaped, and continue to shape, the very boundaries of racial meaning through racial discourse.

The moral standards of self-improvement and conduct were thus merged with the aesthetic and cultural standards of beauty manifest in biological form. This merger also drew on the fusion of climatic and racial “science” of the time. In the eighteenth century natural science combined with classical ideals of beauty that drew on “classical aesthetic values of beauty, proportion, and human form and the classical cultural standards of moderation, self-control, and harmony” (West 2000 [1982]: 97). These ideals established aesthetic rules of beauty, for example, the perfect “size of eyes and eyebrows, of collarbones, hands, feet, and especially noses” (ibid: 97). The fields of phrenology, the reading of skulls, and physiognomy, the reading of faces, emerged to link bodily norms of beauty to climatic and racial “truths” about intelligence and morals of the time. These included the idea put forth by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a founder of modern anthropology, that “the more moderate the climate, the more beautiful the face” (ibid: 101). Thus, fields such as physiognomy “openly articulated what many of the early naturalists and anthropologists tacitly assumed: the classical ideals of beauty, proportion, and moderation regulated the classifying and ranking of groups of human bodies” (ibid: 102). Whites, embodied in the Greeks, were positioned as the representatives of the most beautiful and most civilized people, and all physical and racial variations were degenerate from that ideal state (ibid: 103-104). These racialized norms of beauty are also distinctly gendered, with men and women embodying different ideal characteristics, performing gendered racial subjectivities through compulsory repetition of these sedimented norms in an ongoing process.

Though these judgments have been covered over or eschewed explicitly in much current racial discourse, the current understandings of racial beauty, morals, and intelligence still draw on these foundational aesthetics (ibid). West holds that the problem of black inferiority in the popular and academic imagination has not been resolved: “The idea of black equality in beauty, culture, and intellectual capacity remains problematic and controversial.... [And] the everyday life of black people is shaped... by cultural
attitudes and sensibilities, including alienating ideals of beauty” (ibid: 90, 109). Like Mehta, he argues that the epistemological and ontological assumptions that shape modern science prevent certain aesthetics and ways of being in the world from being recognized. The exclusionary logic of the structure of modern discourse

is manifest in the way in which the controlling metaphors, notions, and categories of modern discourse produce and prohibit, develop and delimit, specific conceptions of truth and knowledge, beauty and character, so that certain ideas are rendered incomprehensible and unintelligible... [and] one such idea that cannot be brought within the epistemological field of the initial modern discourse is that of black equality in beauty, culture, and intellectual capacity. (Ibid: 91)

These “controlling metaphors, notions, and categories” of discourse that shape truth, knowledge, and beauty are performatively enacted in everyday speech and acts about race and racial truths. West’s critique is part of a larger reflection on the racialism and racism that were central to scientific theory and practices prior to World War II (Baker, 1998; Livingstone, 1992; Stepan, 1982) in which the aesthetic and moral judgments of racism were buried within and covered over by scientific studies of race that most often drew on essential and ontological portrayals of race.

These understandings of beauty and morals shaped bourgeois character, attitude, and action through self-control, self-discipline, self-determination, and, generally, self-improvement (Stoler, 1995: 8). These very “discourses of self-mastery were productive of racial distinctions, of clarified notions of ‘whiteness’ and what it meant to be truly European” (ibid). Accomplishing a state of happiness, purity, wisdom or perfection (Foucault, 2003 [1982]) was possible through these racialized processes of self-mastery. National and racial subjects were formed through the performative understandings and technologies of the self in reference to beauty, order, etiquette, and belonging. As argued below these same understandings of beauty, order, etiquette, and belonging in relation to nature also shaped the self-improvement and subjectivity of Americans in the twentieth century.

The values expressed in everyday norms of behavior can be analyzed through the rubric of “etiquette” (Hartigan, 2005). Etiquette “is not a singular concept but a nexus of concerns that range from hygiene to decorum, each of which is a critical dimension of class [and racial] formation” (ibid: 20). Etiquette articulates the process of the disciplining of bodies through the formation of morals around habits molded through norms of disgust, pollution and dirt, and it “brings into view the visceral, bodily dimension” of identity formations (ibid). It "naturalizes social classifications, schemes, and hierarchies, making their
importance tangible through the series of restrictions on what can be said or done and linking transgressions of these prohibitions to the viability of the social order” (ibid: 18). Because it shapes the labels for moral norms and inscribes them on the material world, etiquette performatively enacts “morally charged categorical identities” (ibid: 90). Further, because etiquette is formed through acceptance and revulsion, purity and filth, it is “as much concerned with self-constitution as with depictions of otherness” (ibid: 90).

Forms of etiquette maintain and reproduce the attachments and trappings of race that are non-visible (ibid; Stoler, 2000 [1997]), and they point to the overlapping norms through which the identities of race, class, and gender are simultaneously and performatively constructed (Hartigan, 2005: 19).

Norms of gender etiquette also delineate moral norms of race through the simultaneous construction of the self and the other, and the difference and distance between. The moral discourse of racism overlaps with the moral discourses of gender and class, as well as environmentalism, and the moral norms and practices of race are shaped through the pursuit of self-improvement as gendered and environmental and national citizens. All of these are visible in the moral norms and practices of racism, outlined here, and environmentalism, explored below.

The late twentieth century brought a consolidation of white privilege visible in the attempts to rescind the policies implemented to address racial inequality, such as affirmative action, in the 1980s. Many authors see this political retrenchment as a response to the crisis of white hegemony prompted by the civil rights movement in the U.S., the obligation to reverse explicitly white supremacist and eugenicist racial policies after World War II in the global north, and the widespread movement for independence of former colonies in the global south (Baldwin, 2009; Bannerji, 2000; Thobani, 2007). In response to the crisis, new political and cultural policies were formed, such as that of multiculturalism in Canada, which Sunera Thobani says proved “critical to the rescuing of Euro/white cultural supremacy: white subjects were constituted as tolerant and respectful of difference and diversity, while non-white people were instead constructed as perpetually and irremediably monocultural, in need of being taught the virtues of tolerance and cosmopolitanism under white supervision” (Thobani, 2007: 148). In the same political and discursive move, the state constituted within itself separate communities, “discrete racial, ethnic, and cultural groups existing within its territorial borders, yet outside the symbolic bounds of the nation” (ibid: 149).
A similar reconstruction of difference occurred in the United States, with new policies and moral norms shaped around the special, “racialized” (non-white) Americans. This shift is visible in the “hyphenated identities” (not all of which actually included a hyphen) that became the norm in the 1980s. For African Americans, this shift became widely popularized after Reverend Jesse Jackson at a speech to black leaders in Chicago in December 1988 publicly called for the adoption of the moniker “African American” instead of “black” as a part of a move towards self-identification with reference to most American blacks’ cultural roots in Africa that at the same time parallels other Americans self-identification as Jewish Americans or German Americans, for example24 (Baugh, 1999; Bremner, 1989). As the politics of naming often brings with it the scrutiny of the difference named, many cultural and political commentators, black and white, in the United States dismissed the label as only a surface change that does not reach the substance of inequality in the country (cf. Drummond, 1988; Raspberry, 1989) or as interruptions in the effort for all Americans to be simply “American” (cf. Martin, 1989; Morris, 1989). Yet, the term African American was quickly adopted by mainstream media and remains widely used today. The racialized structure of power in which the name change occurred was pointed out by an African American professor of History at Florida A&M University who said, “White people, they just call themselves plain-old white and they’ve got all the power. We’ve got every name in the world and we’re still broke” (Drummond, 1988).

In the United States, even as whiteness was renegotiated as the norm of the nation through the new articulations of “difference” located in non-white bodies of hyphenated Americans during the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s and multicultural era of the 1980s and 1990s, the heart and soul of the nation was still located with new fervor in the nation’s natural patrimony, its pristine wilderness. For example, the “Great Society” that President Lyndon Johnson described in 1964 combined a vision of a world free of poverty and racial injustice with a vision of a world in which people renewed their connection with nature (Rome, 2003). More recently, environmentalist Philip Shabecoff described his own efforts in the mid-twentieth century to live a “more American” lifestyle in a cabin in the woods of the Berkshires, far from the sprawling suburbs (Shabecoff, 2003: 142). As I explain in the following sections, the location of the origin of

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24 It is important to note that Jackson was not the first person to use the term African American, only the first to call for its widespread use in public. Discussions among African Americans about how to self-identify brought first “Afro-American” and later “African American” into popular use in some of the African American community prior to Jackson’s announcement (Baugh, 1999, see chapter 8 “Changing Terms of Self-Reference among American Slave Descendants”).
the nation in the wilderness and the American frontier was hardly a new idea, but the renewal of the
discourse needs to be seen in the context of the reconfiguration of racial and class relations in the second half
of the twentieth century.

While the popular imagination renewed its national vigor through visions of its frontier history and
majesty of its wilderness, the political right in the U.S. rearticulated whiteness through everyday virtues of
national subjects. Winant shows that, in its more populist manifestation, The New Right’s racism “associates
whiteness with a range of capitalist virtues: productivity, thrift, obedience to law, self-denial, and sexual
repression” (Winant, 1997: 78). These were framed as American values, and many continue to shape the
social-political values on much of the right today. At the turn of the twentieth century the values of
productivity and thrift were seen to be inspired by nature and were key components of the project of self-
improvement that made visitors to Chautauqua good national and racial citizens and solidified middle-class
cultural authority in a time of social upheaval (Rieser, 2003), as I discuss in the following section.25 Winant
argues that these very values allow a “cross-class racial alliance... which endows new right positions with
such strategic advantage today” (ibid: 78).

The shift in the moral norms and practices that constituted the moral discourse of race and shaped
both liberal whites’ attitudes and projects of self-improvement were ostensibly fully committed to racial
equality but in fact were constituted by a complex mix of fear, anxiety, guilt, and self-protection. With the
change in the conceptualizations of race and racism after the civil rights movement, understandings of
etiquette and belonging also changed. The liberal project of racial equality under the law was widely
accepted, particularly within the liberal-progressive political arena, even as white privilege was
reconsolidated. Despite the official acceptance of the doctrine of racial equality in the mainstream and
especially on the left, Michael Omi and Howard Winant see a broad process of the reconstitution of racism in
the U.S. (Omi and Winant, 1997 [1984]: 64). They see racism as “endemic to much of the left itself” because
the left “is encumbered with dogmatic understandings of what race and racism are, and it lacks the necessary
vision to mount effective anti-racist campaigns” (ibid: 65). Further, they point out that after the civil rights
movement many liberal whites “lapsed into uneasy silence about racial oppression and sought to devote their

25 Here my reference to the efforts to be good “racial citizens” refers to the efforts at maintaining the purity and quality of
the white race, an active and everyday pursuit in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hartigan, 2006; Kosek,
2006; Stoler, 1995).
political energies to other causes, often unable to confront the racist dynamics that were present in the organizations with which they worked” (ibid). One of the “other causes” to which many progressive whites devoted themselves was environmentalism, which I explore in the following sections.

Winant gives an incisive account of how the state of white racial formation after the civil rights movement is far from a commitment to racial equality. Rather,

since the enactment of civil-rights reforms, contemporary racial discourse has been unable to function only as a logic of racial superiority and justified exclusion [as it did prior]. The racial conflicts of the post-civil-rights period have fissured white supremacy and fractured the old racial “common sense” of the U.S., although they have hardly destroyed it. An unprecedented period of racial anxiety and opportunity has resulted, in which competing racial projects struggle to reinterpret the meaning of race and to redefine racial identity. A crucial theme in these struggles has turned out to be the identity of whites, and the meaning of whiteness. (Winant, 1997: 74)

Whites’, particularly liberal-progressive whites’, processes of racialization and self-improvement are increasingly articulated performatively through whiteness itself, through anxiety, guilt, and attempts to reject white privilege. Americans continue to “understand their anxieties in racial terms: wealth and poverty, crime and punishment, gender and sexuality, nationality and citizenship, culture and power, are all articulated in the U.S. primarily through race” (ibid: 86-87). In the dominant form of liberal thought identified by Winant the emphasis on racial equality focuses on universalism and universal opportunities that those who have been disproportionately disadvantaged by racist structures of the past can use to a greater extent, but that are open to everyone (ibid: 82). This designation discursively places racism in the past and relies on the assumption that capital, if not people themselves, is color-blind (ibid). Thus, liberal whites can commit to racial equality and at the same time uphold racism and white privilege through ignoring the continued structural racism of society and maintaining the status quo (ibid: 84). In this way, whites (and, Winant points out, people of color) can endorse a position of racial equality as an ideal social order, while supporting a de facto order of racial hierarchy expressed through a color-blind meritocracy, which holds to the standards of beauty and morals central to racial thinking of the past (West, 2000 [1982]).

The belief in an American meritocracy assumes that American capitalism tends towards equality rather than inequality. Omi and Winant point out that from a neoclassical theory of capital, it is assumed that racism is “an anomaly” that a market unhindered by state restrictions would eliminate (Omi and Winant, 1994: 25). Race is positioned as an obstacle to the “equilibrating tendencies of the market” (ibid). Used to advocate for a decreased amount of state intervention in the market, this view of race as an obstacle idealizes
what open participation in the market by minorities could do to facilitate a more equal state if racial politics did not stand in the way by drawing the state increasingly into affairs of racial equality in the market (ibid: 26). Often, critiques of racial inequality such as this treat race and racism as consequences of class relationships, but I agree with Omi and Winant that racial dynamics need to be understood as contributing to class relationships, not mere consequences of them (ibid: 34).

Race, racism, and racialization must be seen as a separate “field of social conflict, political organization, and cultural/ideological meaning” that overlaps with the terrain of class struggle (Omi and Winant, 1994: 48). This view necessitates analysis of economic discourse as a racial and political social intervention, as Roopali Mukherjee (2006) does. She describes the way Johnson’s “Great Society” was reinterpreted as a “failure” during the neoliberal era of Ronald Reagan’s presidency at the same time that entrepreneurial citizens were celebrated as an American archetype (ibid: 14). “Within this larger discursive context,” she says, “[W]elfare and social justice emerged as unproductive racial entitlements that created no wealth at the expense of the ‘productive’ public sector in which all national wealth was actually produced” (ibid). Calls to free the market from the grip of the state had specific effects on the popular understandings of racism and of the rights of individuals to make demands on the state based on racial claims.

On the opposite end of the scale of analysis from the state, Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn argues that the growth in the presence of “race experts” and the increased attention to personal, psychological adjustment and “individual attitudes” in the 1950s through the 1980s (when it became mainstream) actually undercut the potential of the radical democracy and egalitarianism of the civil rights movement (Lasch-Quinn, 2001). She places the emergence of race experts in the context of the “Me Decade” and self-obsession of the 1980s, which fostered a “cult of personal growth” that addressed many facets of life, including, importantly, race, racism, and diversity (ibid). At that time, new professions and new professional roles emerged, including work in “diversity training” and “interracial etiquette,” that would help individuals identify hidden racist habits and thoughts and internalized racism (ibid: xiii). This goal of self-improvement would supposedly have the expected result of not only reducing racism but would also “lead to peak experiences, heightened group awareness through total emotional disclosure, and ‘transcendence’ of the mundane, numbing world” (ibid). Here is visible an escape from the banal urban modern way of life through encountering others so
profundely so as to improve one's own personal attitudes, including racial attitudes. Self-improvement was portrayed as an escape from modernity and a positive racial training.

Lasch-Quinn contrasts the potential of the civil rights movement for radical egalitarianism in social relations with the reaction to it: “The civil rights movement reminded Americans of their commitment to true egalitarianism... The civil rights movement did bring a revolution to American life, but the forces of reaction – though often striking a liberal or radical pose – gave a new lease on life to race-conscious behavior not entirely unlike the double racial standard that ruled under white supremacy” (Lasch-Quinn, 2001: xiv). The rearticulation of personal racial attitudes paired with the obligation toward self-examination heightened racial anxiety in a counterproductive emphasis on hypersensitivity: “In the hands of diversity trainers, [hypersensitivity] makes us sensitive to all the wrong things at all the wrong times... Sensitivity [as an etiquette] itself is an inadequate and cynical substitution for civility and democracy” (ibid: xviii). The obligation toward self-examination also transformed the field on which racism is often discussed in society. Specific rituals and roles are prescribed for discussion of race: “The triumph of the race experts in many ways embodies the 'harangue-flagellation ritual' write large.... This ritual cast blacks in the role of repressed, angry victims and whites in the role of oppressors who need to expiate their guilt” (ibid: xv). Because the roles are personal, individual, and fixed, the solution to social as well as individual ills supposedly lies in “self-obsessed wallowing” and “emotional outpouring” that Lasch-Quinn says has no end (ibid: xvi).

This liberal or radical strategy to deal with racial conflict embedded deep in American history eviscerated the view of power and inequality that Lasch-Quinn describes as true egalitarianism. Power is left only visible or legible in the black / white binary that is necessarily and ritually read through the angry victims / guilty oppressors binary. This simplification of racial inequality in history and in contemporary times (for Lasch-Quinn, the 1980s) prevented a more nuanced view of how racial inequality works in and through daily life, and of how the discourses class, gender, and environmentalism are involved in performative processes of racialization. The race experts contributed to the isolation of race and racism from other social phenomena, the very avenues through which racism often takes place.

Contemporary understandings of racism as an American relic and a practice only of societal fringe white supremacists hide the continued racialized inequalities and formative moral norms and ethical practices that continue to form racial discourse. The view that the civil rights movement achieved racial
equality allows whites (and non-whites) today to see contemporary social relations as separate from a racist past, and that assumption makes whites less likely to participate in real political action to remedy racial inequalities (de Oliver, 2001). Likewise, it has become an important ethical practice of the moral discourse of racism in mainstream American society to disavow affiliation with white supremacy (Wiegman, 1999). This disavowal acts to distinguish "regular" white people from white supremacist racists, and it reinforces whites' understanding that people who do not believe in white superiority and do not engage in individual racist acts do not participate in or perpetuate the social ill of racism. But, as I argue above in reference to liberalism, racism is embedded structurally and epistemologically in modern liberal society. The performative ethical practice of distancing oneself from "real racists" does serve to mark white supremacists as pariahs in liberal tolerant society, but it also acts ideologically to hide the unacknowledged and pervasive forms of racism that articulate in many facets of everyday life. In chapters 2 through 5 I demonstrate the persistence of racial understandings and judgments by liberal white Boulder residents despite their progressive politics and support for racial and cultural diversity.

Another strand of liberal thought that Winant identifies in the post-civil rights movement era is endorsed by "the new abolitionists" (Winant, 1997: 84). Winant explains, "The core message of the new abolitionist project is the imperative of the repudiation of white identity and white privilege" that is manifest in "thousands of minute acts" of resistance to the reproduction of white supremacy (ibid: 85). For example, "[w]hen you hear a racist joke, confront its teller" (ibid). White residents of Boulder exemplify a complex combination of these new abolitionists, who are committed to interrupting racist jokes, and the dominant liberal-progressive stance that is committed to universalism and equality under the law. Boulder residents I interviewed believe in the universal good and potential in liberal democracy (i.e. the rationality of liberalism) and attempt to "do their part" in bringing society more in line with that equality through Winant's "minute" acts, including the recognition and condemnation of their own white privilege. But Winant challenges the new abolitionists by asking, "[I]s whiteness so flimsy that it can be repudiated by a mere act of political will, or even by widespread and repeated acts aimed at rejecting white privilege? I think not.... Like any other complex of beliefs and practices, 'whiteness' is embedded in a highly articulated social structure and system of significations" (ibid: 86). As this chapter and the ones that follow demonstrate, the process of white racialization is attached to significations of nature, culture, civilization, beauty, order, etiquette, and
belonging, and racial identity and racism are perpetuated through these associated realms of meaning, and, indeed, attempts at repudiation often become tangled up in the very discourses they disavow.

Thus, “race” is neither simply physical (a type of descriptor on par with hair color) nor merely constructed (a simple set of social relations shaped by appearance), but rather a complex moral discourse that ascribes physical characteristics with hierarchies of character, moral propensity, and proper aesthetics. Historical notions of race “were based not only on a non-visible set of criteria, but on the assessment of a changing set of features that made up a racial essence.... [including] cultural competencies, moral civilities and affective sensibilities that were poorly secured by chromatic indices, and not by color-based taxonomies or visual markers” (Stoler, 2000 [1997]: 372). The relationship between the seen and unseen components of racial thinking are “conditions for its proliferation and possibility” (Stoler, 2000 [1997]: 372). The patterns of racial thinking are explored next in the moral discourse of environmentalism.

**The moral discourse of environmentalism at the turn of the twentieth century in Boulder**

The aesthetics of nature distinguish those on high moral and racial ground from those who are not through performative enactments of racial etiquette and racial truths. The boundaries of racial belonging and exclusion are maintained through the establishment and performance of moral norms and ethical practices. Critical whiteness studies scholars have demonstrated how white people who do not conform to certain moral norms that define the purity of the white race are pushed out to the margins of whiteness, or exiled from the white racial category entirely (Hartigan, 1999, 2005; Wray, 2006). This process of exclusion of the white “other” centers on racial discourses of class, blood, and heredity filtered through the concept of morality that is very often shaped by gender norms as well. Stoler reminds us that race has always consisted not only of physical and visual components but also of moral and unseen characterizations, hierarchies, and divisions (Stoler, 2000 [1997]: 371). The moral components of the process of racialization expressed in the Colorado Chautauqua literature at the turn of the twentieth century articulate with the aesthetics of nature performatively in the appreciation for sublime landscapes, in the praise of industrious and orderly land management, in the desire to test one’s strength and character by climbing great peaks, in the ability to learn the lessons of nature under the majesty of the peaks, and in the propensity to be divinely inspired by the indescribable natural scenes and create unparalleled works of music, art, philosophy, and literature. These
aesthetic expressions take for granted a moral, gendered, and racial coding of nature as pure, and as a source of cultural and civilizational renewal (Braun, 2003; Cronon, 1996; Kosek, 2006). The apparent equality of opportunity of exploration of nature and associated self-improvement that marks the early Chautauqua literature ideologically obscures the racial anxieties as well as the racism and racial segregation of the time.

By analyzing the overlap between the performative practices and norms of the discourse of racism and the discourse of environmentalism, I demonstrate that they are mutually constitutive. They are both constituted through the practices and norms of beauty, order, health, purity, etiquette, and belonging. In this section I explore in-depth the discourse of environmentalism as expressed at the turn of the twentieth century in the literature of the Chautauqua established in Boulder in 1898. Chautauquas were designed for summer activities of lifelong learning on the topics of science, religion, and health, and to foster this learning they were set in beautiful natural areas, such as lakes, forested areas, and mountains, which were seen to inspire learning.

Much of the language used in the early Chautauqua literature matches Robert Gottlieb’s description of preservationist approaches to nature of the era. The approaches include nationalism, in which nature is viewed “as a national treasure”; spiritualism, which values “wilderness as a regeneration in an urban and industrial age”; commercialism, which prioritizes “wilderness available for tourism and recreation”; ecological, in which nature is seen “as biological richness and diversity” and, elite aestheticism, in which nature is seen “as beauty and experience, especially for those presumed to be most capable of appreciating it” (Gottlieb, 1993: 26-27). The moral norms and values expressed and ethical practices outlined in the literature published from 1898 to 1902 by the Colorado Chautauqua Association in Boulder focus around these approaches, and, along with the themes of health and self-improvement, complement each other and often overlap to form the moral discourse of environmentalism at the turn of the twentieth century.

26 Gottlieb is making the point that these values are central to the preservationist paradigm, as opposed to the conservationist paradigm, because while the former values scenic beauty and the associated values listed here, the latter encompassed issues of equity and urban quality of life, as evidenced in its involvement in the issue of the appropriation of Los Angeles’s extended water supply from the Owens Valley (Gottlieb, 1993: 28-29). I use “conservation” in the more common current reference, to the history of the environmental movement, which matches Gottlieb’s characterization of “preservationists” of the time.

27 In this section, I primarily draw on monthly journals published between 1898 and 1902 by the Chautauqua Association in Colorado that advertise and inform about the events and opportunities at the summer Chautauqua assemblies in Boulder. I also draw on histories of Boulder, narrative accounts of Boulder’s Chautauqua, and promotional material for the city published in the early twentieth century.
Nationalism and commercialism

Chautauqua literature consistently lauds the value of nature for its beauty and uniqueness and cites the mountain landscape as a source of inspiration, strength, and character. This praise performatively reinforces American nationalism and shapes American subjectivity through environmental discourses and through commercial practices. The documents depict the area around Boulder as the “Switzerland of America,” a point of national pride, and depict the West more generally as a product of the American wilderness frontier, from which the nation’s pride and strength were forged (Cronon, 1996). The famous “Switzerland Trail” rail line in the mountains west of Boulder was named for exactly this natural legacy. Gottlieb goes as far as to say that places like Yosemite – and Boulder – were valued for their scenic beauty in part because the character of a place where nature is “frozen in time” provides a point of cultural competition with Europe (Gottlieb, 1993: 27). Areas of timeless nature were marked as one of America’s proud national features.

In an analysis of a similar wilderness aesthetic in Canada, Andrew Baldwin explicitly links the crisis of white hegemony to Lawren Stewart Harris’s turn-of-the-century art, in which white identity and national identity were anchored in the pristine Canadian wilderness as a response to the need to preserve “pure” white spaces and the essence of the nation (Baldwin, 2009). Harris painted both wilderness scenes and quintessentially urban scenes of immigrant neighborhoods, which Baldwin juxtaposes to show that the increasing racial diversity brought by immigration in the early 1900s was discursively and performatively tied to the promotion of wilderness as a source of national pride and purity.

The commercial aspect of nature was especially important to the Chautauqua portrayals of nature because of the position of Chautauqua resorts as seasonal tourist attractions at the turn of the twentieth century. Like the national park system, Boulder’s Chautauqua was enabled, supported, and even funded in part by railroad companies (Gottlieb, 1993; Ricketts, 1926). The first journal published to advertise the first Chautauqua assembly in Boulder in 1898 extolled the railroad’s utility in reaching the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains:

Railroads – there are 4,700 miles in the state – will carry one to within a short ride, by horse or wagon, of yet unbroken wilderness. By pack train a few days’ journey will lead to the wilds, where each spot visited is an undiscovered place... without a care one can drop back to a life of pristine simplicity, free from all trammel of convention. (The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association, 1898, April, henceforth “TTCCA”)
The railroads, a quintessentially industrial development, would transport travelers “back to a life of pristine simplicity.” The passengers simply pay the fare, board the train, and ride to the “yet unbroken wilderness” at the heart of the American frontier, thus accessing the pure source of national pride and strength. These expectations that the wilderness is “out there” and is also accessible performatively reinforce the wilderness as a source of American character and strength.

The Chautauqua was also a main feature of the local tourist industry early in the twentieth century. The Rexall Drug Store of the Temple Drug Company, located at the corner where all of Boulder’s streetcars stopped and mere blocks from the city train depot, distributed tourist pamphlets for several years during the decade 1910 to 1920 titled “Boulder and Her Environs: What to See and How to See It” with instructions about which streetcar or train to board to reach Chautauqua and the Switzerland Trail, with schedules, or which tour company to hire for coach trips – and later auto tours – in the mountains (The Rexall Store, 1916). Though commercialism is not often an explicit approach to nature within the preservationist paradigm, it is often an essential part of tourism and recreation and the larger goal of “getting away” from the hassles and crowds of everyday life in the city. William Cronon summarizes this commercialism through the understanding of the wilderness landscape as a landscape of consumption at the turn of the century:

Wilderness suddenly emerged as the landscape of choice for elite tourists, who brought with them strikingly urban ideas of the countryside through which they traveled. For them, wild land was not a site for productive labor and not a permanent home; rather, it was a place of recreation. One went to the wilderness not as a producer but as a consumer, hiring guides and other backcountry residents who could serve as romantic surrogates for the rough riders and hunters of the frontier if one was willing to overlook their new status as employees and servants of the rich. (Cronon, 1996: 78)

Wilderness was valued in part because it could be accessed for recreation and tourism, especially in the Boulder area at the turn of the twentieth century. Boulder itself felt like a frontier to many who visited because of the way the landscape vaults cliffs thousands of feet up from the plains. Boulder was described as “set like a gem of rare value at the foot of the Rockies... [where to] the west several cañons open the way to an endless panorama of rugged majestic mountain scenery [...] and to] the east lies a valley unsurpassed for loveliness” (TTCCA, 1989, April). Visitors to Boulder felt as though they stood “at the door of scenic beauty excelled nowhere in the world” (TTCCA, 1900, September) and at the gate of a wild mountainous country, which anchored the national character, that began at the foot of the Flatirons, at the exact location of Boulder’s Chautauqua.
Spiritualism

The spiritualism of environmental preservation is a major focus of early Chautauqua literature. Aptly named, the spiritualism in which one views “wilderness as a regeneration in an urban and industrial age” (Gottlieb, 1993: 27) is often expressed in deeply religious and spiritually reverent language. Cronon identifies the “sublime” as a concept central to the experience of wilderness beginning in the eighteenth century, when certain landscapes were marked as more likely to offer an encounter with God: “God was on the mountaintop, in the chasm, in the waterfall, in the thundercloud, in the rainbow, in the sunset” (Cronon, 1996: 73). Though Cronon points out that the experience of the sublime changed dramatically from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, from fear to joy, these exact landscapes are those compellingly described by Chautauqua visitors. From the “majestic mountain scenery” and views from the top of Mount Evans or Long’s Peak to the “ephemeral mountain storm that springs suddenly from out the blue sky” and the tumbling water of Boulder falls “blown out in a sheet of mist” on which sunbeams paint “the variegated hues of the rainbow,” Boulder’s sublime landscape offers the “grandest scenery on the continent.” Boulder’s landscape exemplified the divine beauty and order of nature that gave the nation its vigor and strength.

The early Chautauquans saw the landscape as a divine object and its study as a divine activity. The motto of the Chautauqua, displayed on the walls of the buildings, was, “We study the word and the works of God” (The Colorado Chautauqua Association, 1901, April, henceforth “TCCA”). One intrepid adventurer headed up into the foothills and, ending up on one side of a valley across from the continental divide “could not resist the temptation to descend the mountain side, cross that wild gorge and climb at least part of the way up one of those rugged peaks... carved by God’s own hand” (TTCCA, 1990, September). The wildness and divinity of the landscape together called him up to the mountaintops.

The divine perfection of nature is also described as highly valued in the texts. Experience and exploration of this divine perfection of nature was a performative exploration of Chautauqua’s visitors’ spirituality and subjectivity. One woman wrote of an inspiring trip up Boulder Canyon to see the “Perfect Tree,” a tall, symmetrical, cone-shaped spruce estimated to be hundreds of years old. She described both the distance from the “worldly” experience and the proximity of the divine: “We had all been where ‘Forgotten is

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28 In the fall of 1900, after two turbulent years in management and financing of the Boulder Chautauqua from a home base in Texas, it was incorporated in Colorado. At that time the association changed its name from the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association to the Colorado Chautauqua Association (Ricketts, 1926).
Getting away from the worldly, mundane life of the city to the perfection and beauty of the wilderness was an important way to access one’s spiritual core, which was rooted in nature and available for renewal through contact with nature’s divine beauty and majesty.

Cronon argues that this distance from the “worldly” fostered both a religious experience and a form of nationalism through the experience of primitivism paired with the concept of the American frontier. Primitivism is “the belief that the best antidote to the ills of an overly refined and civilized modern world was a return to simpler, more primitive living” (Cronon, 1996: 76). One 1900 writer’s reverence for the untouched Boulder falls reinforces this overlap:

Something that makes the heart warm with gratitude to the mysterious Manitou of the place is that it is left in primeval grandeur. The woodman’s ax has not insulted, or murdered, these huge rounded trunks of forest trees, the largest and straightest in the state; the prospector has not defiled the sanctity of the grove by unsightly holes after the treasures hidden beneath; the impious hand of man is not discernible. (TTCCA, 1900, July)

Wilderness is valued as a space absent of human influence (Cronon, 1996) and a space from the past, before the “impious hand of man” ruined the “primeval grandeur” of the natural beauty. It is anchored in the spiritual also by a Native American essence, in the “mysterious Manitou” – a spirit to be revered. The preservation of this landscape “makes the heart warm with gratitude” and is valued for its sanctity and mystery. This account ignores the fact that several “unsightly holes” were bored into the landscape all around Chautauqua for mining gold, among other materials, and focuses rather on the purity and divinity of the frontier landscape, a landscape of sufficiently high quality to anchor one’s faith in the nation in.

According to many, the values imbued on one’s spirit and soul by the experience in the natural landscape far outweigh the value of money or power. Describing the “shady scene of surpassing beauty” at Boulder falls, one man proclaims, “A crust eaten in such a spot is sweeter far than the richest viands in the palaces of kings” (TTCCA, 1900, September). From this special, spiritual set of values flowed both the sanctity of wilderness and the strength of the nation (Cronon, 1996). The approach to nature of spiritualism combined religious sentiments and industrial anxieties, and it performatively reinforced the values of nature expressed through nationalism (Baldwin, 2009; Braun, 2002).

The beauty of nature in the Boulder area was said to inspire artists and be indescribably grand, by virtue of its primordial essence and unsullied state. The majesty of the mountains inspired song when
musicians stood on mountaintops and “caught inspiration as [they] heard the music of the winds with symphony divine in harmony with nature” (TTCCA, 1898, April). Art and song, as transcendental expressions, struck a harmonious chord with nature and elevated culture. Some scenes were so intensely beautiful they could inspire countless works of art:

Julian Ralph, who came to Colorado some ten years ago, said in Harper’s Magazine when he returned to New York that it might take one, two or three generations, but, as surely as the sun rose, the sparkling ozone, the magnificent distances of plains and mountain, the great beauty of Nature’s prodigal charms, the nervous energy and quick appreciation gained from this ‘Genesis of life,’ would there come a race of poets and writers, sculptors and painters, whose pens and brushes, chisels and pencils, would create a new literature and art, not only for America, but the world; they would out-Shakespeare Shakespeare; out-Raphael Raphael. I wonder if Mr. Ralph went, as I did, to Boulder falls? (TTCCA, 1900, July)

Art inspired by a great, sparkling scene such as Boulder falls would be so exquisite it would create an entirely new level of artistic expression in culture. Another visitor observed the same staggering intensity of nature’s beauty in the area around the Boulder Chautauqua, but opined that no artist could do it justice: “No artist can place on canvas the inspiration of those towering mountain peaks, which look down upon the Chautauqua. No language can describe the sparkling beauty of a gushing mountain stream” (TCCA, 1901, March). Another agreed, “The beauty of many scenes of the Rocky mountains, no language can describe. What writer ever felt that he had expressed all the sentiment aroused by a visit to Boulder falls?” (TCCA, 1901, July). Here the godly sublime of the natural scene exceeds even the greatest works of human art. These landscapes inspire because of their purity, the “unsullied,” “unbroken,” and “undiscovered” character of their natural beauty in contrast to the dirty, fractured, and banal urban landscape, filled with poverty, immigrants, and the anxieties of a life of labor (Baldwin, 2009; Braun, 2003; Kosek, 2004, 2006).

Like Gottlieb (1993), Kosek (2004, 2006) and Braun (2003) have pointed out that this spiritualism is intricately linked with an opposing conception of industrialization and modernization as lived in the urban setting of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The theme of retreat from the labors, social confines, and industrial limits of urban life to the mountains repeatedly appears in Boulder’s early Chautauqua literature. It is taken for granted that “[e]verybody feels the need of an occasional rest from the everyday duties of life” (TTCCA, 1898, April), and Chautauqua is a place “for overworked men and women to recuperate from the monotony of labor” that one endures in the cities (TCCA, 1901, March). This performative desire to escape to nature reinforced gendered and racial subjectivities of Americans of the era.
As a “vacation retreat” Colorado is the best: “With its varied extent of mountain and valley scenery, its continued sunshine and weather which can be trusted for outdoor life, it is the ideal resort for the overworked business man or brain-fagged scholar” (TTCCA, 1898, April). The Chautauqua in Colorado even supplies an escape from the confined work of science in the east: “The scientist, tired of the day of small things and the old over-worked fields of research, here beholds a practically virgin field for original research” (TCCA, 1901, April).

At the Chautauqua in Boulder, nature, rather than industry, provides what one needs for relief from the heat of summer. It is the source of purity and comfort. Under the heading “Free Life in Colorado” the joys and merits of a more natural life are extolled: “What a source of congratulation it is to be in the shadow of snow-capped mountains, instead of having surroundings of heated brick walls, to be cooled by breezes in place of palmleaf fans, and to have one’s thirst slaked with cold, sparkling spring snow water rather than manufactured drinks chilled by manufactured ice!” (TCCA, 1901, March). It is also suggested that time spent at Chautauqua is not only more relaxed because of the escape from the industrial and work pressures of urban life, but it is an escape from the social pressures as well. In a description of events for women and families at the first Chautauqua assembly, it is suggested that the more rustic accommodations are a “delightful change from the cramped life of the average hotel, where childish gaity is suppressed,” and that mothers should “[l]et the babies romp and roll around. They like it and will gain weight and brightness, while their parents are relieved from all care” (TTCCA, 1898, June). A certain kind of gender, racial, and class politics is embedded in the anxiety surrounding the urban industrial experience, as the references to manufacturing, industry, family and gender etiquette, and social pressure allude to (Baldwin, 2009; Braun, 2003; Kosek, 2004, 2006).

Ecology

The Boulder Chautauqua approach to nature is also ecological, in which nature is seen “as biological richness and diversity” (Gottlieb, 1993: 27). The Boulder Chautauqua literature focuses on the scientific study of nature, which is also seen as the work of God. Because God’s work and the processes of geology and climate are seen as more visible in the Boulder area, with its immense Flatirons and foothills rising from the
plains, as well as the variability in climate by altitude, Boulder is seen as a perfect place to study the natural sciences:

Scarcely any site could have been selected that would afford such opportunities for the study of the works of God and man as the neighborhood of Boulder. It is rare to find such a combination of hill and valley, mountain and plain, forest and arid prairies, placid lakes and tumultuous cataracts plunging down the narrowest gorges and canons [sic: canyons]. What teacher could wish a greater variety of geographical forms than is spread out in the landscape from the hills in the region of Boulder? Where can the processes that have shaped the surface of the earth be so well studied as in this region, where everything is not thickly covered by vegetation or modified beyond recognition by the works of man? The sudden change from the mountains to the plains gives unexcelled opportunities to watch the methods of erosion, transportation and sedimentation. The abrupt uplift of the bed rocks of the plains along the base of the mountains... exposes within a short distance a great variety of geological formations, the work of ages; of river, lake and ocean action. (TCCA, 1901, April)

Boulder is a giant natural laboratory and classroom for the study of nature. The centerpiece of the summer Chautauquas were their lectures and classes on the topics of science, religion, art, and health. These topics were often linked in a discourse of environmentalism in which nature inspired one spiritually even as one applied oneself to study it scientifically and artistically and recreate in the splendor of the natural and spiritual landscape. For example, in the article titled “Amidst Sublimest Scenes,” the author describes the opportunities to attend lectures by Professor W. T. Lee from the University of Chicago on “geology, botany, zoology... [and] nature subjects, which are right at hand in Colorado” as well as “sight-seeing parties into the mountains” led by the professor. The lectures were to be given “in the open air, under the blue canopy of heaven, and always within sight of the sublimest works of nature” (TTCCA, 1900, February). The inspiration provided by nature for health and self-improvement as a racialized and class experience is discussed in the following section and at length below.

*Elite aestheticism*

Part of what facilitated the overlap between religious, national, commercial, and ecological perceptions of nature was the elite aestheticism that encompassed almost all of the approaches. Within this elite aestheticism nature is seen “as beauty and experience, especially for those presumed to be most capable of appreciating it” (Gottlieb, 1993: 26-27). The aesthetic assumptions embedded in descriptions of nature are based in part in religious, spiritual, and romantic traditions that emphasize the divinity of sublime nature (Cronon, 1996), but geographic theorists of landscape have also pointed out that particular aesthetics of
landscape beauty and order are embedded in often-overlooked social, political, and economic relations (Braun, 2002; Daniels, 1988, 1989; Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988; Mitchell, 1996; Smith, 1984). Landscape and wilderness aesthetics are also thoroughly gendered, with norms of beauty, purity, order, and health expressed performatively through gendered metaphors (both masculine and feminine) and gender norms.

At the Boulder Chautauqua and surrounding area, the blue sky, green land, sparkling lakes, flashing streams, and “endless panorama of rugged majestic mountain scenery” (TTCCA, 1898) were taken as a paradigmatic landscape of natural beauty. This aesthetic assumes, for example, that sensory experiences of nature make people happy. The “[s]unshine and shadow, the songs of birds, the Te Deum of waterfall and rapid, the good earth-smell and the incense of captured rainbow-prisms, the myriad blossoms that dot the green; these things make you joyful” (TTCA, 1900, July). This happiness could be imbibed from the laudable everyday experience of nature and were implicitly contrasted with the unnatural urban environment, with its undesirable urban aesthetics. The practice of enjoyment of the natural landscape reinforced racial norms and anxieties embedded in the conceptualization of the urban setting as unhealthy and unable to sustain people’s spirituality. Enjoyment of nature confirmed the goodness and purity of the aesthetics that undergird assumptions about nature and about race and gender.

The purity of nature was visible not only in its beauty but also in its aesthetic order, which in Boulder was enhanced by human efforts: “On either side of the mountain stream arise the beautiful mesas, and here it is that the cunning hand of man has perfected the landscape by terraced lawns and arranged in rustic form the streams brought down from the mountains above” (TTCCA, 1898, April). This description of man’s industrious inspiration always already embedded in the modified natural landscape reflects a specific conception of order and aesthetics.

In the same manner, because of the specific aesthetics built into natural settings, they are seen to facilitate rest, education, spirituality, and industriousness. Farms, irrigation, and even mining are described as the bounty nature yields to thrifty, productive, industrious people, who tend crops, bees, and orchards and work hard in the mountains (TTCCA, 1898, April). These are real Americans, and the landscapes they supplement with management provided aesthetic therapy and rest. Rest is more beneficial and knowledge easier absorbed in the properly ordered and pure landscape. Compared to the cold, calculated order of the city, the aesthetics of nature foster a deeper, more meaningful engagement with land, knowledge, and God.
Here gendered norms are performed through man's desire for agricultural order and industriousness and talent in domesticating the feminine wild nature. Nature is also seen as a fundamental source of not only art but also culture and civilization. Like a female muse, nature serves to inspire talented men to create unparalleled art and music. “Culture-seeking people” from all over the country were expected to come to Chautauqua to take in the scenery and knowledge in a magical cultural and artistic combination that itself advances civilization.

Health

Chautauqua is the place for mentally or physically overworked urban residents to escape the unhealthy city to the health of the mountains. A Sanitarium was established in Boulder in 1896 by the Seventh Day Adventists (Frink, 1965), but the entire city is at times described as a sanitarium (Perrigo, 1946). The climate and environment themselves were seen as providing healing properties. The air and altitude healed ailments caused by residence in the urban spaces of labor and disease at lower altitudes. In an article titled “Colorado: About Its Climate” is a long quote from a doctor about the salubrious effects of the mountain climate for those who are exhausted by urban living:

“There are many,” says Dr. Burney Yeo, “who with vigorous frames and much actual or latent power of muscular activity, become mentally exhausted by the strain of mental labor, anxious cares or absorbing occupations. Mental irritability usually accompanies this exhaustion, great depression of spirits, with unrest of mind and body. These are the typical cases for the mountains. The stimulus and object which they afford to muscular exertion; the bracing atmosphere, rousing the physical energies and reawakening the sense of powers unimpaired and unexhausted; the soothing effect of the quiet and stillness of high mountain regions, and the absence of the human crowd, all these influences bring rest and renovation to the overworn mind.” (TTCCA, 1989, April, emphasis original)

This view emphasizes the weakening potential of the urban environment on individuals, where one under-uses one's muscles and over-uses one's mind or is overwhelmed by the “anxious cares or absorbing occupations” of the city. Although women too are included in the call to the outdoors in Chautauqua literature, this urban anxiety implicitly draws on the norm of manual labor as both a masculine practice and a necessary practice in performing masculinity. According to the texts, many people succumb to mental irritability, exhaustion, depression, and unrest in urban landscapes, and the cure for all of these symptoms of urban ailments is the mountain landscape, which fosters physical activity and provides escape from the “human crowd,” which is portrayed as both unnatural and dubiously racialized, as the reference to a crowd
points to too many people and echoes racial fears of pollution and contagion embodied by immigrants and poor urban populations (see Kosek, 2006). In the mountains, the air is “purified by contact with pine and spruce trees” (TTCCA, 1898, April) and the air itself can give you strength through its “tonic qualities” (TTCCA, 1900, March), even after living in lower altitude, urban environments:

Don't fail to keep in mind the beneficial effects of the climate of Colorado upon persons living for years in a lower altitude. It adds years to one’s life to bask in the ozone of this marvelous state. The location of the Chautauqua is just right – 5,600 feet altitude – and the breezes that are wafted to the grounds through the pine-covered sides of the mountains are laden with health and strength. The scenery from the Chautauqua is the grandest in America. (TTCCA, 1900, February)

Boulder and the Chautauqua are billed as places that will literally lengthen your life if you visit. "Health and strength" emanate from the environment itself, and the scenery both inspires and heals. The air can cure asthma and pulmonary diseases (TCCA, 1902, March). One article encourages potential visitors to imagine a grand scenery flowing with healthful air that enables both a more active body and mind:

Picture in your mind a locality where the foothills tower heavenward 3,000 feet, with emerald facades studded with weird and beetling rocks of deep red sandstone; imagine an atmosphere fragrant with the invigorating odor of health giving balsam distilled by nature's processes from the pine, the spruce and the juniper, and so light that the lungs seem suddenly increased to double power, and the mind, stimulated to greatest concepts, is constantly active. (TCCA, 1901, March)

The mind is capable of its greatest thoughts when supplied with the healthful air and inspiring scenery of the mountains.

In this view, national and individual health drew from the purity of nature and were maintained in the purity of the white race. Embedded in the purity of nature is the contrast to spaces where the environment is not pure, but dirty and disease-laden. These environments include not only American urban spaces located at lower elevations, but also, by extension and implication, the tropics. Reference to colonialism and implicit contrast to tropical environments demonstrate that the ideas of health, nation, and purity are not isolated from colonial, racial, and environmental determinist discourses of the time. Colonialism is presented as a progressive influence in descriptions of boys’ choirs that performed at the Chautauqua, including the South African Boy Choir and the Kaffir Boy Choir. The performance of the latter, one writer observes, “bespeaks the prospects of the dark continent with unmistakable voice. It shows the colonizing genius of the Anglo-Saxon race to the full. The taste, beauty and tone are simply indescribable”

29 The “urban crowd” could also carry racial reference to the “impure” white city and rural residents (now summarized in the terms “white trash” or “hillbilly”) who did not succeed in upholding the purity and quality of the white race (see Hartigan, 2005, chapter 2 and Kosek, 2006, pages 150 to 157).
Likewise, references to the “tonic qualities” of the Colorado mountain air draw on racialized understandings of environments like those of Africa and other colonial tropics that corrupt rather than improve one’s health, strength, culture, and civilization (Livingstone, 1992). In sharp contrast to visiting Africa, where the colonizing agents of Anglo descent must wear pith helmets to prevent the powerful sun from corrupting their mental capacities, visiting Colorado lends itself only to health and self-improvement through contact with the pure, dry, healthful air. In Colorado, the environment and climate foster civilization.

**Ethical practices and outdoor activities**

The environment and climate of Colorado also facilitated the key ethical environmental practices of the time. Simply breathing the air and “ozone” was portrayed as an important practice for health and character in the mountains, so one’s mere presence in the Boulder area implied participation in formative environmental practices. Similarly, all visitors were expected to engage in a deep practice of rest from labor and mental exertion at lower altitudes, to stave off the “nervous irritability” that was a constant danger of urban life. These practices were discursively tied to the environment, a source of health and strength:

> Attractions to an outdoor life are present on every hand, and the visitor is irresistibly drawn out into the pure, fresh air and dancing sunlight. The wide horizon, with its beauty of soft, level plain or grandeur of mountain peaks, is a constant joy. Colorado climate invites to outdoor life. There is no season of the year... in which one can not be out of doors with comparative comfort. This, added to facts that the air is bracing and the sunshine inspiring, leads to a great deal of walking and driving and riding and bicycling and outdoor sports. The result of this on health [...] is most visible in children; though their parents come to Boulder as invalids they are] full-chested, strong-limbed and bronzed. (TTCCA, 1898, April)

These irresistible environmental practices are rewarded by good health. Visitors to Chautauqua regularly engaged in “tally-ho” outings up trails in the Flatirons, up the canyons, or on the Switzerland Trail, to see the scenery and enjoy the mountain air. These trips often included picnics and “steak-frys” in which food was prepared over a fire, sometimes in an established fire ring or metal grill, for the enjoyment of the nature-goers. Male visitors were encouraged to bring their guns and rods for the excellent hunting and fishing opportunities in the wilderness landscape, pointing to the gendered norms that guided the enjoyment of nature. Many who stayed at Chautauqua in the early years camped in platform tents during the summer assembly. This rustic living was a practice that provided a feeling of proximity to nature that lent moral value
to all other environmental, educational, and health activities engaged in. It was a performative enactment of the norms and subjectivities shaped through environmental discourses.

Campfires and campfire stories were an important practice in which to tell stories of the West and legends of the Indians. These stories were often performative of white subjectivity through distinction from an “other.” One legend told the story of a high cliff in Boulder canyon overhanging Boulder Creek called “Lover’s Leap.” The legend is told as truth:

Far up Boulder canon [sic: canyon], where the water tumbles in the creek with a roar, is a steep cliff overhanging the road. Years ago, when the hills were full of a wild, exuberant animal life, a tribe of Indians put their lodges near, that they might revel in the glorious hunting grounds. A time came, however, to the descendants of the tribe, when there was no game. The children cried with hunger and pitifully died, one by one; the old women crooned in patience and suffering, while the young men howled in their agony. One sad morning a young buck went out alone to search for food. Many days passed and he did not return. The Indian maid he had wooed for his wife grew frenzied and filled the village with her lamentations. She implored the medicine man to reveal to her the face of the young brave. The wrinkled old man, muttering his weird incantations, went into a trance and then spoke to her these words: “The Great Spirit has taken him to the Happy Hunting Grounds.” The girl screamed and tore at her long, black hair; she rushed from her people to the edge of a precipice, and plunged into the torrent below. This rock is called “Lover’s Leap.” (TCCA, 1902, May)

Stories and legends like this one were repeated at campfires and other informal gathering times. They played an important role in performing the West, the frontier, and racialized “truths” about what the West, specifically Boulder, was like before the European descendants explored, mined, and settled there. In this legend, as in most stories of the Boulder area, Indians are not portrayed as savage but rather as noble. They are experiencing an unfortunate and naturally caused decline, which stemmed from their direct dependence on the bounty of nature to provide “wild, exuberant animal life” for hunting. As they slowly declined (“one by one”), the young men howled and the old women “crooned in patience and suffering,” drawing the listener’s attention to the humanity of the Indians, but only in limited, stereotyped forms with men who are out of control and inarticulate, patient old Indian women who suffered, rather than led a search or solved problems, and a “wrinkled old” medicine man who “went into a trance” and “muttered weird incantations” including a euphemistic and quintessentially stereotyped statement that the “young buck” who looked for food was taken by the “Great Spirit” to the “Happy Hunting Grounds.” The starvation and decline of the tribe is merely a backdrop for this individual tragedy. Love drives the story to a tragic end with the “Indian maid” screaming and tearing “her long, black hair,” “rushing from her people,” and throwing herself into the raging river, back into the torrents of nature. The gender stereotypes embodied in the characters in this fable are
performatively reenacted in the telling of the story, a speech act that reinforces the idea that women ought to be nearly inconsolable when they lose a male mate and that men bear the responsibility to secure provisions and the livelihood of the household or family.

Telling stories and fables of frontier and Indian history was a formative and performative ethical practice of nature, race, and nation at the Chautauqua. The legend serves many purposes besides telling the story behind a place name. It reinforces the stereotypes of Native Americans typified in the story. Its telling also elides a colonial history of violence and dispossession of Native Americans that was far from finished at the time of the storytelling, with the extremely violent events of the Indian Wars only thirty-five years earlier. Troops for the Indian Wars were recruited from Boulder, and the famous captain David H. Nichols who was a founder of the University of Colorado and lived on a farm near Boulder was one of the leaders in the infamous Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 (Frink, 1965, Limerick, 1987).30

Western historian Patricia Limerick explains that it seems contradictory that the same man who promoted education also fought some of the bloodiest battles in the Indian Wars, but the two were seen at the time as part of the same process of civilizing the West:

But to Nichols himself, and to many of his Anglo-American contemporaries, the founding of universities and the killing of Indians represented service to the same cause. The project was to “bring civilization” to Colorado, and to most nineteenth century Anglo-Americans, that meant displacing the natives, establishing and allocating property claims, installing territorial, county, and town government, and setting up schools, colleges, and churches. (Limerick, 1987: 5-6)

The perspective that Limerick describes was one of national and racial progress through civilizing actions (war against Native Americans) and institutions (schools, colleges, churches). Chautauqua itself was one of these institutions, and it told its own particular versions of Indian history and legends, one that fit with the romantic view of Native Americans living in harmony with nature but then suffering a brutal but ultimately natural decline. Like animal populations, the Indians faced famine, and their numbers dwindled.

Like storytelling, mountain climbing was also a popular and formative ethical practice for men and women, with Chautauqua guests summiting fourteen thousand foot peaks with the help of guides and a boost from a stage car or railroad trip. The practice of mountain climbing also played an important role because it

30 Nichols went on to be a member of the state legislature and lieutenant governor in the 1890s (Frink, 1965). For a detailed historical exploration of Nichols’ role in the massacre and in the Indian Wars, see Limerick, 1987, written during a university-wide discussion of whether to change or keep the name Nichols Hall for one of the buildings on the University of Colorado Campus.
was not engaged in as often as other "tally-ho" trips, so it was seen as a more inspiring and sublime activity. Reports of long hikes or mountain climbing trips were most often relayed by men in the literature, but women were sometimes referenced as also able to accomplish such feats. One mountain climber encouraged potential others to join in the activity to appreciate "the silent message which these mountains bring" (TTCCA, 1900, March). As an ethical practice, mountain climbing not only promoted health, but also educated the climber about the spiritual and scientific wonders of the world:

> It may require an entire day to ascend a single peak, and once on the top scores of neighboring peaks extend an invitation to the adventurous soul to scale their heights. The visitor should come to Colorado prepared for mountain climbing, as it is one of the most interesting and health-inspiring diversions of the world. Nothing but the actual experience can give one a correct idea of the vastness of the mountains, and, through them, an appreciation of the magnitude of the world, and the exhaustless energy that sustains it. (TCCA, 1901, July)

Mountain climbing is worth the time, the effort, and the challenge to access the special knowledge available at the mountaintop of the "magnitude of the world" and its "exhaustless energy."

> These practices were part of getting away from urban life and lifting the soul above the annoyances of everyday life through the practices of simpler, environmental life in the mountains and plains of Boulder. Because the mountains were experienced as a more natural and raw form of reality, visitors to this great natural landscape were able to engage in environmental practices that touched their core as people, particularly men, and connected them to nature and to larger forces. They tested their strength, courage, and character in the mountains. Thus, the practices of breathing, resting, getting away, getting out into nature, hiking, picnicking, storytelling, and mountain climbing were the morally and ethically correct practices to conduct for gendered self-improvement and for a positive and productive interaction with the very special environment of Boulder's mountains, canyons, streams, and plains, which lie at the heart of the nation.

**Self-improvement**

Racial improvement and personal improvement were linked to national progress, and all were grounded in the concepts of the purity and specific aesthetics of nature in one manner or another. These forms of improvement were shaped around a generalized masculine subject who explored the wilderness, pursued scholarship, and became inspired in the natural surrounding. Sometimes women were specifically addressed or discussed, in which case feminine norms of improvement specific to the family and home were
most often the topics treated. Summers spent in the grand setting of the Boulder Chautauqua inspired individuals, particularly men but also women, to be the best persons they could be, to improve to their natural potential of intellect, order, productivity, and hygiene. This self-improvement was not separate from but fit within the approaches to nature outlined above. Practices of self-improvement were performative of the norms of environmentalism, environmental subjectivity, race, and racial subjectivity of the time. For example, one of the first journals published in 1898 inviting people to come to the Chautauqua in Boulder gave seven reasons to attend the assembly, ranging from rest and leisure to study and self-improvement:

For needed rest.
For mental refreshment.
To see and hear great men.
To get an impulse towards study.
To make valuable acquaintances.
To improve your character.
To spend your time of rest as you please. (TTCCA, 1898, April)

The reason of improvement of one’s character is explained thus, “It [attending Chautauqua] will help you to make yourself better. The society is elevating and inspiring. There is no aristocratic artificiality, nor is there any pretentious [sic] humbug, but solid, earnest and manly men and womanly women frequent such places” (ibid). Despite the absence of some social mores, which can be read as pretension, gender norms still strongly applied, with expectations for men to be manly and women womanly. The people who came to the assembly were “moved by a common impulse for the greatest good of all” (TCCA, 1901, March). All of these reasons act together for self-improvement, within the larger projects of societal progress and good. A rested person is one who seeks out great men, who can be the most productive; a person with improved character develops a habit “towards study.” Those in attendance at Boulder’s Chautauqua in its early days practiced self-conduct as decent and honest national, gendered, and racial citizens, inspired by the backdrop of the Flatirons and periodic excursions into the canyons, peaks, and prairies of the Boulder area.

Contextualized historically in the social tensions in the United States at the end of the Civil War, the changes brought by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and labor violence prompted visions of class warfare in the popular imagination. In his cultural and political critique of the Chautauqua movement, Andrew Rieser traces the roots of modern liberalism in the responses to this social upheaval (Rieser, 2003). He identifies “middle-class anxiety about the preservation of social order” as central to the movement of modern liberalism into a hegemonic political and cultural institution. Chautauquas attended by any non-
whites maintained the dominant socio-spatial culture of segregation in the Chautauqua grounds, preserving social norms attached to “pretension” but in reference to race, not other social mores. The question “How could something that trumpeted democracy be so undemocratic in practice?” drove Rieser’s research (ibid: 6). Rieser grounds these practices in the middle-class efforts to assert cultural authority through their individual practices of cultural improvement (ibid: 4). Nation-wide, the Chautauqua movement was dominated by people’s desire improve themselves and their society (ibid; Galey, 1981). Rieser says, “Closer inspection reveals self-culture to be a hotly contested practice with political implications, a seemingly stable concept given new meanings as it buffeted the winds of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and state formation” (ibid: 4). The improvement of the self was a thoroughly political, cultural, and economic activity, and at the Boulder Chautauqua it was often translated through the medium of nature.

A number of positive ethics (Colebrook, 1998; Mahmood, 2005) appear in the list of summer lectures multiple years in the Chautauqua journal. Both “theoretical” and “practical” ethics are addressed by professor William Caldwell from Northwestern University, who uses Mackenzie’s Manual of Ethics to “outline... the science of conduct... and the application of ethical laws and principles to the making of character, the art of education, and the development of efficient citizenship” (TCCA, 1901, July). In the following year’s announcement, this course expanded to also address that both ethics and sociology rest upon the latest applications of science (biology, psychology, e.g.), of the theory of civilization, and of educational philosophy, to the problem of individual and social development. Thus, a course upon ethics or sociology may be one of the best means of finding out the defects in one’s general education and in one’s general outlook on life; and one of the best ways of discovering remedies for these defects. (TCCA, 1902, May)

Ethics were a guide to self-scrutiny and positive self-development in reference to one’s education. In these texts is visible the desire for progress and civilization and the fact that people could participate in these civilizing projects through education, ethics, and self-improvement. Indeed, these passages and others suggest an imperative to participate in improvement of self and community, as inspired by nature and God.

Nature is a particularly important player in this quest for self-improvement because of its properties of fostering culture. This property is ironic, as nature is often set as the opposite of culture, but in the texts, nature’s grandeur, majesty, and beauty do not only set a backdrop to educational quests, nature itself provides a font of culture. In an article titled “Nature Study in Colorado” it is argued that it is imperative to follow the German schools’ example where “nature study has long been one of the most important branches
of elementary training” (TCCA, 1901, April). This practice was not only to learn science for vocation – and thus for society – “but also as a most important means of culture which can be gained from no other branch of study” (ibid).

Nature was viewed as a civilizing force because it fosters culture, which was often seen as an important part of the process of development of a civilization from uncivilized roots to a culturally rich society (Williams, 1976). The latter is a thoroughly racialized and gendered conception of both culture and civilization, both of which were ideas developed hand-in-hand with “race” and were fundamentally shaped by masculinist ideals of civilization in the European expansionist and colonial periods (Anderson, 2001; Goldberg, 1993; Kosek, 2006; Wade, 2002, see also Hall, 1996, 1997). Those societies that had obtained “culture,” which were “civilized,” were constructed as European, in opposition to a (sometimes complex) gradation of uncivilized societies that lacked “culture” as the European thinkers conceptualized it. As explained above in the section on liberalism, Mehta, among others, demonstrates the totalizing structure of this Eurocentric worldview and the ontological violence it wrought in much of the British empire. As seen in early twentieth century geographers’ maps of race and civilization, the gradations and hierarchies of culture, civilization, and race were geographically identical and conceptually bound to each other, even as each was influenced heavily (if not seen as determined) by climate and environment (Livingstone, 1992: 221-231; see also Lowenthal, 1994).

The qualities of strength and character that were defined around a generalized masculine subject were also seen as embedded in the natural landscape, and those qualities were available for people to access through observation, interaction, and contemplation of the natural scene. The “calm dignity” of the “lofty peaks” around Boulder was “a source of perpetual inspiration. The storms which hide them for a time leave them pure and beautiful with their clothing of white – types of strength and character which lift the soul above the annoyance of the ‘trivial round’ of every-day life” (TTCCA, 1900, March, emphasis added). The mountain landscape had infinite ability to inspire, to offer strength and character to the careful male (and only occasional female) observer. Even though anyone could gaze upon the mountains and witness this transcendental and inspiring reality, the Chautauqua texts also posit that it takes a certain kind of person to access true inspiration and to appreciate the majesty of the natural landscape: “To him who has the strength to endure and the soul to appreciate, a mountain journey such as I have suggested is the event of a lifetime”
(ibid, emphasis added). Nature thus reflected one’s own character, even as its trials tested and strengthened a strong body and reverent soul, most often assumed to be male, though females were seen to benefit from nature for self-improvement in different ways (a point addressed at length in the following section).

In the texts, self-improvement can be achieved through both the acquisition of strength from nature and through the domination of nature. One writer singles out the Flatirons behind Chautauqua as a location where “Nature, in her most rugged aspect, invites the Chautauqua visitor to a test of his strength” (TTCCA, 1900, May). The gender division is clear; nature is a feminine presence that man enters to test his strength. The landscape is foreboding and “so mighty” that many are hesitant to attempt the climb. But, assures the writer, “there are brave young women who have conquered the barrier and stood triumphant at the summit” (ibid), though he warns that this feat “is not for the weak, the unambitious, the indifferent. It is reserved only for the clear head and steady hand, but once accomplished and the dangerous path once surmounted, the difficulty disappears and the mountain climber seeks new obstacles” (ibid). This account tells in allegorical form of the mountain climber in the making who is also the subject of modern progress and civilization. In the story, one thinks one cannot even attempt a difficult feat, but in fact, even women (albeit “brave” and “young”) have risen to the task and “stood triumphant at the summit.” While the gendered abilities and challenges shift through the narrative, with nature at time being “mighty” and women also conquering nature and standing triumphant, the generalized masculine nature of domination and success remain. The key to the allegory is that one must have a “clear head and steady hand” to accomplish the goal, and, once accomplished, “the mountain climber seeks new obstacles.” A clear head and steady hand, tested and forged in the crucible of nature, proves enough for each natural or modern obstacle. Each difficult ascent and “dangerous path” is left behind with each accomplishment, allowing progress forward to new challenges and new, even better, accomplishments, always moving forward, always forgetting the danger, hesitance, or hardship.

In the same way, a professor from Texas who set out from Chautauqua mid-morning, climbed the continental divide, hiked back through Boulder canyon at night, and arrived back at Chautauqua at dawn the next day describes his journey not only as “the greatest experience of the kind I ever had” but also in terms of the imperative to persist in the pursuit of a feminized wild and beautiful nature that he could not resist (TTCCA, 1900, September). Through dogged perseverance he and his male adventure companion scaled a steep peak. He walked and crawled, and he found that “as we passed each defiant point we would discover a
means of reaching the next” even though the climb was “the steadiest and most perilous” of the day (ibid). Even hiking through the night, and with hearts “singing and thumping away like caged lions mad with desire to get back to their native atmosphere” because of the thin air at the high altitude, he and his fellow hiker covered forty miles in twenty hours (assisted only one way by a train). The presence not only of an irresistible figure of nature, who draws these men deeper within her fold, but also of wild caged lions trapped in a foreign land, gives a distinct gendered and racial tone to the story. The tone and savanna metaphor frame the wild, untamable character of nature and describe the way it beckons men into it, with their wild hearts beating in their chests like a scene from a tale from an African wilderness. Strong men leave from civilization (or an urban setting), are seduced by a feminine figure of nature,31 face the chaos of her uncharted landscape, and return home late and on foot, improved and inspired. Here nature is chaotic, unpredictable, uncharted, irresistible, and, ultimately, what makes one into a man, and that masculinity is carried back to urban settlement to strengthen civilization and contribute to progress. The dynamics of racial and environmental discourses are woven through gender discourses as well. The adventuring professor’s subjectivity as a nature adventurer is enacted performatively through gendered, racial, and colonial expressions of domination and strength.

The Chautauqua programs emphasized physical education or training in “physical culture” as part of the yearly assembly. This education, like the study of other sciences and literature, was inspired by the mountain landscape and healthful air. There were courses designed especially for women’s physical needs, from daughters to grandmothers, that paired “hygienic lessons, lectures, and... gentle and rhythmic exercises" to improve their physical and mental health:

A delightful course in health culture for ladies has been planned by Miss Burkella Pierce, who has spent years studying the physical needs of women.... Miss Pierce inspires her pupils with enthusiasm for the "body beautiful." She pleads not only for the cure of deformities and diseases of the body, but for the awakening of the mind and soul to the divinity and glory of the human being. Ladies go to Miss Pierce's classes sick, melancholy, and discouraged; they leave with a delightful feeling of refreshment and happiness. Ladies of all ages testify with joy that this culture has cured them of indigestion, backache, nervousness, constipation, insomnia, lung and pelvic troubles; that it has taught them to stand and walk with grace and comfort; and that it has enabled them to do their daily

31 Other articles specifically refer to nature as feminine (“she” or “her”). Though this one does not, it certainly presents a feminized account of nature's "trackless" virgin forests and chaotic landscapes such as the "inextricable confusion of mighty trees, huge boulders [sic: boulders], crystal springs, gurgling rivulets, roaring falls and limpid lakes, interspersed... [with] the most luxuriant growth of wild flowers I have ever seen" as well as a descent through a forest the professor experienced as an ultimately chaotic and beautiful scene, "that wonderful labyrinth which only an artist could describe" (TTCCA, 1900: September).
duties with greater ease and pleasure. The course consists of a series of hygienic lessons, lectures and a system of gentle and rhythmic exercises. The ladies of Chautauqua can not fail to greet with enthusiasm this department of physical culture. (TCCA, 1901, July)

The ideal, happy women described in this passage “stand and walk with grace and comfort” and “do their daily duties with greater ease and pleasure.” These are modes of conduct available to women who take this course in “health culture,” learn the lessons of proper womanhood, and improve their physical and mental health. The women were taught to perform their racial and gendered roles as healthy ladies better able to manage the duties of womanhood through practices of health and self-improvement.

*Gendered improvement*

Often, women were the objects of projects of self-improvement because of their central role in social reproduction, particularly in the space of the home. Training women to improve health, hygiene, and educational habits had an effect beyond the individual. These efforts were aimed at society and community. A course on domestic science at the Chautauqua, for example, covered a range of topics within the home, including organization and decoration of the home, as well as theories of diet, nutrition, and hygiene. The course description assures the reader that “[t]he work will be of educational value in broadening the conception of the home, and in making more vital the connection between its necessary operations and the health and welfare of both individual and community” (TCCA, 1902, May). Improved management of the home by the woman of the house, when seen from this perspective, had expansive effects on individual as well as community health and welfare, both working towards national, racial, and civilizational progress.

These individual and community improvements, however, would be impossible without proper conduct in the management of the home. The outline for the course in domestic science taught by professor Theodosia Ammons, “head of the Domestic Science department of the State Agricultural college of Colorado,” referred explicitly to normative activities of household management (TCCA, 1902, May). Though they are located in the home in urban settings, these activities are exemplary ethical practices of environmentalism because they draw from and reinforce concepts of health, nutrition, economy, order, thrift, and community welfare that are linked to self-improvement and proper conduct in relation to and inspired by nature at the Chautauqua. The concept of proper conduct that women can adopt to improve themselves, their families, and their communities is visible in the course description. First, the course will cover “the intelligent planning of
meals in relation to the human body” then food and diet, covering “relative nutritive and economic values;... selection and care [of food];... and wise combining and balancing [of foods]” (ibid, emphasis added). The third section of the course covers the “proper preparation of meals” and focuses on the “arrangement and care of the kitchen; selection, use, and care of utensils;... use and care of [the] stove;... right application of heat...; best methods of combining ingredients; [and] wise use of utensils” (ibid, emphasis added). This appealing emphasis on proper, intelligent, and wise use and the best methods for the selection, care, and preparation of food and of the kitchen itself outlines how women ought to conduct themselves to best manage the health and economic activities in and around the kitchen.

Similarly, the first season in 1898 promised women in attendance a great education from Dr. W. H. Riley, the director of the Boulder Sanitarium. The journal promised, “[H]e will enlighten Chautauquans on sanitation, good cooking, care of the sick along hygienic lines, furnishing hints that will be invaluable to every housewife” (TTCCA, 1898, June). This teaser of anticipated hints for housewives, like the normative appeal of instruction on the proper conduct in the kitchen, points to the idea that there is a best way to run a household and be a housewife, and that it is accessible through such lectures and study. In this way, the health and strength that are deeply connected to the mountain air and landscape can be domesticated and brought into the home anywhere in the country, provided the housewife attends the lecture, is inspired by the natural beauty, and sets her mind to develop positive habits of housekeeping and thrift. She keeps an eye on the household economy, balancing the “needs of the body” with the “limitations of the purse” even as she prepares healthful meals in accordance with modern household science (TTCCA, 1900, June).

Thus, the care for the self and the family was improved through education in domestic science. The modern woman could gain inspiration from the natural scenery while improving her own ability to care for her family and promote her society through nutrition, health, and wellbeing. She only had to adhere to the norms of health, order, hygiene, and morals to contribute to the good of society. Self-improvement was a strongly gendered performance of norms that reinforced gendered and racial subjectivities.

The moral discourse of environmentalism: Twentieth century shifts

The middle of the twentieth century brought changes in the mainstream environmental movement. While the core values of nationalism, commercialism, spiritualism, ecology, elite aestheticism, and health
remained central to the movement, some of these values faded to the background or became unspoken while others moved to the forefront. All core values underwent at least minor shifts in articulation, but the discourse continued to be articulated performatively through nature as a source of purity for individuals and for the nation, and be attached to specific moral aesthetics of beauty, order, and health.

Nationalism

Nationalism, more than the other approaches, decreased its frequency as an explicit approach, but was often implicit in discussion of nature. Retreat to natural parks and wilderness was only rarely explicitly linked to the strength of the nation, national renewal, national purity, and national character. But, engaging in a wilderness retreat, “Daniel Booneing” (Kosek, 2006: 161-162), and purchase of a primary or second home located in a remote area still resounded at times with a sentiment of participating in what is most American.

Philip Shabecoff, in his “definitive” history of American environmentalism (2003: from the book jacket), describes his own homestead retreat in the Berkshires, in a rough woods, with a kitchen garden, purchased in 1968. It was a space away from the “city crowds, noise... traffic... concrete, steel... glass... [and] damp, gritty air” (Shabecoff, 2003: 142). He says, “When we are up there, living seems more direct and vital. We feel somehow more attached to history – more American. We have re-created the middle landscape idealized by Jefferson and his generation – our own patch of pastoral terrain in the midst of a wilderness” (ibid: 142). This passage is in the chapter titled “Saving Land,” which goes on to warn of the “enormous and intensifying pressure” on “the American land” (ibid: 143). The land where solitude and quiet are cherished (ibid) will be turned into “suburbia” if it is not saved (ibid) through the establishment of national parks, other federal lands, and local and regional land planning efforts. As Shabecoff points out, Bernard Shanks said that such protected lands were “the spiritual heart of America” (Shanks, 1982: 3, cited in ibid: 147), and so a threat to remote or wilderness lands is also a threat to the American spirit. In the modern environmental movement, protection of land and the environment is a nationalist endeavor.

Environmentalism also took a place next to other important social values in the growing discourse of the need to strengthen America through the public funding of modern social projects. Protection of nature was a means of salvation of the American quality of life from the worsening dirt and disorder of the nation’s cities. In the 1960s, pollution, parks, water supply, open space, and “the ugliness of the sullied landscape”
were increasingly mentioned in the national political conversation alongside the pressing social issues of declining educational quality, increasing health issues, crowded roads, decaying railroads, growing slums, expanding urban blight, increased criminality and delinquency, and inadequate jail facilities (Jessup et al., 1960, cited in Rome, 2003: 530). President Lyndon Johnson championed this project of improving society. In a speech he gave early in his presidency in 1964 he outlined the new America as the “Great Society,” which “required the abolition of poverty and racial injustice” and would be “a place where man can renew contact with nature” and focus on “the quality of their goals” rather than the “quality of their goods” (Rome, 2003: 533). The failing condition of social services and material infrastructure, including the environment, were causing “the very quality of American life” to suffer (ibid). This crisis needed to be reconciled; “Americans needed to improve the quality of the environment, to stop the spread of pollution and ‘the growing sleaziness, dirtiness, and chaos of the nation’s great exploding metropolitan areas’” (ibid: 313). Thus, the popular political discourse continued to portray contact with nature as a balm to materialism. Further, paired with the goals of ending poverty and racial injustice and expanding government funded education and health programs, environmental protection was marked as a socially progressive goal, bundled with other socially progressive goals by Democrats in the 1960s. Boulder residents also used the discourse of “quality” (as explored in chapters 2 and 4) to push for social values of equality and for environmental protection around the city.

**Spiritualism**

In many ways, the intangible nationalist sentiments attached to nature as a source of civilization were replaced by an increased emphasis on individual spirituality and renewal. The divine character of nature lost emphasis in explicit discourse, but the romantic concepts of nature as a source of personal calm, retreat, and renewal grew in importance. Wallace Stegner’s 1960 “Wilderness Letter” solidified the importance of the wilderness not only as a place to use for recreation but also as an *idea* (Stegner, 2007 [1960]). He drew on spiritual and national reasons for the preservation of the wilderness and of what the wilderness idea does for people in the U.S. He argued:

> We need wilderness preserved – as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds – because *it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed*. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is *good for our spiritual health* even if we never once in ten years set foot on it. It is
good for us when we are young, because of the *incomparable sanity it can bring* briefly, as vacation and rest, *into our insane lives*. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea. (Ibid: 43, emphasis added)

Like the Chautauquans, Stegner sees the wilderness as the crucible in which the American character was forged. For that reason and for its calming, sane influence on individuals, Stegner argued that the idea of wilderness cannot be lost along with the material landscapes that embody the idea.

Kosek shows further that this rooting of the soul of the nation in the experience of nature is connected to the “belief in racial salvation through a return to nature” (Kosek, 2006: 158). The spiritual attachment to a national patrimony seen as fast disappearing robs individuals of a mental and moral space to get away from the “insane” urban lives, which, particularly in the 1960s, were filled with social strife, intensifying poverty, and racial tensions in many American cities. This expression of a spiritual attachment to nature was the performative enactment of environmental subjectivity as rooted in wilderness and autonomous from urban spaces and urban life.

Nature became further individualized, with less emphasis placed on group outings facilitated by mass transit such as railcar or stage and more on family, small group, and individual outings. Before, individual experience of nature was viewed as a source of self-improvement for the ultimate improvement of society and progress of civilization. Mid-century spiritualism emphasized personal experience of nature for personal rest, but the connection to broader community and social good were largely severed, except as a touchstone for the development of proper morals and mental health among children, described below.

The primitivist emphasis in the spiritualist approach to nature paired with the fears of rapid change of urban and rural landscapes combined to produce a new approach to the environment founded on anti-development and anti-“sprawl” sentiments. Outward growth of cities was a major impetus for the growing popularity of environmentalism (Rome, 2001). As I explore in chapter 4, fear of future population growth and environmental destruction drove Boulder residents and city leaders to enact growth restrictions through urban planning and zoning policies and through “urban shaping” using the establishment of open space areas in and around the city. It was imperative to protect “pristine” landscapes around the city, particularly the “mountain backdrop” to preserve Boulder’s scenic beauty and its heritage as a location to visit to experience the beauty of the natural landscape. As with the Chautauquans, this beauty was seen to come from within the
landscape itself, and cultural ideas that shaped judgments of beauty or destruction were seen as both universal and inherent to the natural scene.

These anti-sprawl sentiments echoed environmental values at a national scale. In 1966 journalist Ben Bagdikian wrote an article titled “The Rape of the Land” in the Saturday Evening Post, which was widely read at the time (Bagdikian, 2007 [1966]). The article’s somber tone lamented the loss of green, open spaces between rapidly and haphazardly growing urban areas. He cited the nervous exhaustion faced by urban commuters and the bleak suburban landscape in his argument for towns in America that can stay beautiful through the preservation of existing natural features (ibid). He warned:

The crisis is worsening. Each year three million more Americans move into existing cities... Fields, woods and hills near urban places are disappearing at the rate of a million acres a year, so that more people find themselves returning home from nervous (rather than physical) work by way of jammed cars, buses and trains to graceless neighborhoods and homes from which they see mostly he walls of surrounding buildings. In desperate need of relief, solitude and beauty, they find themselves among awkward, ugly manmade structures that take a growing toll in bleakness of spirit and mental disease. (Ibid: 132)

He argues for the enrichment of the “human spirit” rather than the “bank account” when planning new development (ibid: 133). He emphasizes the worth of aesthetics, of beautiful places, like small ponds among poplar trees where swallows fly at night (ibid). Thus, he combines the many approaches to nature in the modern environmental movement, including spiritual renewal from nature, diminished health in nature's absence, and the ecological loss of fields, woods, and hills near cities.

Adam Rome argues that it was exactly this widespread process of environmental change brought by urban expansion that occurred after World War II that prompted more people to join the environmental movement (Rome, 2001). It is certainly in line with the shift in popular sentiment in Boulder in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the construction of new homes, neighborhoods, and industries at the time.

Commercialism

With the increased emphasis on the individual experience of nature came a shift in the commercialism of nature. With the expansion of suburban development, the land itself was increasingly commodified, shifting its tenure and zoning from agricultural to residential on a vast scale each year. In areas like Boulder, encouraged by federal programs, areas of open space were designated as protected areas of nature, salvaged from the greedy rush of commercial venture and endless construction. Rome (2001) points
out the increased consumption through television and magazines of stories of the West, the frontier, and wildlife, as well as landscape photos such as those by Ansel Adams (Stoll, 2007). By mid-century, the national parks were also increasingly commodified, with a fortress of well established tourist goods and services available nearby.

Ecology

The importance of ecological sciences increased to a central, major theme in the modern environmental movement. The emphasis on environmental sciences marked a shift from the earlier view that the pursuit of all science can benefit from exposure to grand natural settings. Mid-century, the ecocentric discourse came into widespread use and circulation after the publication of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1966 [1949]), and his earlier works published in periodicals. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) in contrast, focused on the science of death and survival in the era of poisons. Soon after, the field of environmental science was founded as its own proper area, and it continued to expand with new theories developed, methods used, and environmental problems addressed. The idea that nature must be protected was central to this new science and to the ethics of environmentalism in the 1960s, and it remains a central tenet of environmentalism.

The anti-development approach drew heavily on an ecological view of the environment. The value of the beauty of natural environments, as supposedly inherently found in “pristine” or “natural” landscapes, was described in terms of ecological metrics and values. In chapters 2 and 4 I explore the process of evaluating the natural landscapes around Boulder using environmental science and the assignation of priorities to those values and to specific natural areas around Boulder. Often these ecological values existed in the shadow of the overriding sentiment of anti-development. In effect, ecological assessments of Boulder's conservation landscape were used to justify the purchase of properties facing immanent sale for development. Opposition to development and protection of land were the goals, and environmental science provided the tools to measure and name the inherent or intrinsic value of that land as it stood, undeveloped.
Elite aestheticism

The moral superiority in revering nature remained, but the dominant idea shifted from the idea that only those with the sufficient soul and strength of character could appreciate and gain from nature – that is, the elite – to the idea that those who valued the environment were a sub-culture and a social movement. Earth Day 1970 was a major event for the “new” environmental movement that called for the salvaging of what was left of an unpolluted environment and an end to the overuse of and pollution by toxic chemicals (Shabecoff, 2003).32 Gottlieb (1993) points out that the more radical positions expressed on Earth Day that also referred to racial equality and elimination of poverty dissipated in the coming years. Shabecoff even speculates that “young, middle-class Americans in and emerging from the universities once again grew increasingly self-absorbed and sought individual rewards rather than social reform... Many of the angry demonstrators of the late 1960s and early 1970s became the investment bankers and corporate lawyers of the 1980s” (2003: 111). Many of the values based in the elite culture of those Chautauquans who could afford to take a summer off from work and travel to the mountains to learn and renew themselves remained central to the valuation of nature, particularly as the “new” (or “second wave” or “second generation”) movement shed its affiliated social causes like racial and class equality and local struggles for health such as those now seen as early environmental justice actions (Cole and Foster, 2001; Gottlieb, 1993).

Prior to the first Earth Day celebration, in the 1950s construction boom, when new subdivisions built each year could cover the area of Rhode Island (Rome, 2001: 120), there was a cultural critique of the ugliness of tract-house developments rooted in part in elite aesthetics. Some elites disparaged the “mass culture” of the time based in mass production, and the identical ranch homes and sprawling neighborhoods represented this offence to elite aesthetics (ibid: 125). A more populist critique of the lack of open space and the importance of the natural aesthetic existed alongside the elite version, and can be summed up in simple statement, “People wanted and needed the chance to enjoy the beauty of nature” (ibid: 125). Drawing on spiritual value of natural landscapes to offer relief to the weary urban or suburban resident, the open space

32 Shabecoff says that the “old” conservation organizations, including the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation were not involved in this watershed event: “Still preoccupied by traditional land and wildlife preservation issues, most... of the old guard had remained blind and deaf to the growing national anger over pollution and other environmental threats to human health” (Shabecoff, 2003: 109). He says this gap quickly closed, as the two camps realized their mutual interests in a clean healthy environment. Neuhaus (1971) contradicts the assertion that organizations like the Sierra Club were not involved in the 1970 Earth Day celebration. He cites their involvement in his own account of participating in the event in New York City (Ibid).
advocates of the 1950s argued that open space “provided much-needed contrast – ‘visual relief,’ as one advocate put it, from the monotony of sprawl” (ibid).

The aesthetics adhered to in the valuation of the land in and around Boulder centered on certain ideas of wild and rural landscapes that were seen to embody Boulder’s past. That past was idealized and seen as a time when nature was “untouched” despite extensive mining and other industry in the foothills and plains around the city. As I explore through analysis of city policy data in chapters 2 and 4, the “mountain backdrop” was the most prized aesthetic object to preserve, as it represented a pure, natural landscape in its prior state, before development rushed into the Boulder valley. But, rural agricultural landscapes were also highly valued as reminders and repositories of Boulder’s rural heritage and the small town, rural character residents sought to hold onto in the 1960s and 1970s. These farms, fields, and grazing lands were relieved of their productive obligation, and left to stand in for a working landscape though they no longer were.33 The former working agricultural landscapes were cleaned up, their extraneous and decidedly unnatural outbuildings removed, and trails were constructed through the now orderly idyllic rural properties.

Though not necessarily mainstream, Edward Abbey’s writings added a distinct perspective to the movement, positing which kinds of people ought to enjoy nature and how, offering his own take on the acceptable aesthetics of nature. In *Desert Solitaire* he rails against what he calls “Industrial Tourism” that he saw ruining the national parks through facilitating the visits of too many people who do not leave their cars even when they visit parks (Abbey, 2007 [1968]). Aside from these despicable people, he enumerates many others who are not fit for adventure, but attempt it nonetheless. He says that people have managed to get many places on their own feet and on pack animals, from mountaintops to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. In his argument he offers a description of most unsuitable people accomplishing these feats, not only “rank amateur” mountain climbers who summit Everest, but also “thousands and thousands of tourists of the most banal and unadventurous type… [T]hese hordes of nonmotorized tourists, hungry for a taste of the difficult, the original, the real, do not consist solely of people young and athletic but also of old folks, fat folks, pale-faced office clerks who don’t know a rucksack from a haversack, and even children” (ibid: 52). But all of these

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33 This is especially true in the city’s early era of land purchase. In later years, the city employed more conservation easements and land purchases with leaseback arrangements that preserved farmers’ right to plant crops and graze livestock on open space land.
people want to get out of their cars and walk somewhere, so they are least superior to those who do not (ibid).

Abbey’s analysis of who should visit national parks and how they should move through them highlights the expectation that real adventurers are young and fit; they are the ones who will get the most out of a trip to the wilderness, who will be able to “enjoy a taste of the primitive and remote” (ibid: 50). Other old, fat, unknowledgeable, and inexperienced people can visit parks and even walk through them because “they are determined to get out of their motorcars for at least a few weeks each year” (ibid: 52), but it is implied that they will not have the adventure or pleasure of the real experience of primitive or remote wilderness because they are not in good enough physical condition and do not have the technical knowledge. Abbey’s opinion of who belongs in nature extended to the issue of who belongs in the nation, and he supported increasing immigration restriction to the U.S. He said, “[I]t might be wise for us, as American citizens, to consider calling a halt to the mass influx of even more millions of hungry, ignorant, un-skilled, and culturally-morally-genetically impoverished people” (Abbey, 1988: 126, cited in Kosek, 2006: 161). His prescriptions of who belongs where and how to enjoy nature cross moral conversations about race, belonging, nature, and nation.

*Health and self-improvement*

The idea that one’s own health improves through contact with nature continued through the twentieth century, but it shifted to a less literal interpretation. Outdoor activities were still a source of health because they improved bodily strength, but the same physical health could be achieved indoors at a gym, so the more important component of health became mental health. The idea that one can “get away” to nature and “recharge” out on a hike or sitting by a stream became an increasingly important theme for being happy in life. The intangibles of nature remained central to its experience. Primitivism, in this sense, remained important to the experience of nature because just *being* in the presence of a nature that existed in a prior, pure state contrasted with the growing, sprawling modern world, fed people the energy to return to the life of labor.

In the 1950s children’s access to open space for recreation was framed in terms of physical and mental health in the growing shadow of the specter of development. Children needed varied spaces to play,
including playgrounds and natural areas, for their physical health, and those spaces were largely absent in many 1950s neighborhood developments (Rome, 2001). In addition, “The 1950s were marked by a major campaign against juvenile delinquency, and advocates of recreational open space often claimed that access to nature would help to ensure the healthy social development of children” (ibid: 126). Access to nature in the form of open space would secure children’s physical and mental health, making communities healthier and safer.

**Conclusion**

Despite its break with other social causes and the narrowing of the movement, the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s continued to conceive of itself as a counter-culture movement, roughly equivalent to other new social movements with roots in the 1960s and 1970s like the movement for racial equality. Thus, members of the movement at that time and today see their own personal stake in the environmental movement as active support of affiliated progressive social causes. The characterization of environmentalism as a counter-cultural movement is expressed in interviews I conducted with Boulder residents who articulate their identities as environmentalist in opposition to a conservative other who denies global climate change. This self-described oppositional identity allows Boulder residents who participate in environmental activism or even environmental lifestyles (e.g. hiking and recycling) to view and performatively construct themselves as part of a counter-cultural movement. In this way, Boulder residents see their environmentalism as contributing to the protection of the “fragile ball” of the planet at the local scale, and as part of a global imperative (Escobar, 1996: 50). But, it also allows them to ignore the power-laden nature of that imperative, especially when applied in the name of green government, rational environmental management, or sustainable development (ibid).

This association also brings with it an assumption that other movements, like the movement for racial equality, are populated by like-minded progressiveness. Paired with their personal liberal-progressive beliefs about racial equality, the interviewees’ environmental activism and lifestyles allow them to see themselves as part of a broader progressive movement of social improvement that focuses on environmentalism, racial equality, anti-poverty, improved education, and improved health care, the central tenets of Johnson’s Greater Society. They sincerely believe they are effective anti-racist environmentalists.
So, it seems that they ought to easily align with the environmental justice movement, which focuses on social and racial justice and on environmental issues. But, as discussed above, the environmental justice movement has been hesitant to affiliate with mainstream environmental organizations, even those formed since the 1960s, which do not have their historical roots in the strictly protectionist agendas of the late 1800 and early 1900s, because of the exclusionary nature of environmentalism in the modern era.

This moral positioning of white environmentalists in Boulder in alliance with anti-racism, multiculturalism, and to some extent anti-poverty elides the wide social and political gap between the values central to social and racial justice movements, including environmental justice, and the mainstream environmental movement. Yet, this identity formation as socially and environmentally progressive and as a minority within the entire country's political landscape, and even at times within the Democratic left, lends an aura of moral superiority to the expression of environmental values. Even as the mainstream environmental movement (distinguished from more radical groups and from environmental justice) has had its agenda adopted into the American political and consumerist mainstream (with not only the landmark environmental decisions of the 1970s like the Wilderness Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and NEPA but also with the climate change debate's play in major media), many of its members continue to conceive of themselves as environmental dissidents. Because of the way the civil rights movement, for example, is remembered as a major historical moment in the making of modern, equal America in which brave African Americans risked their lives to change the state of the nation, new social movements ride the wake of that portrayal and that particular version of history remembered. In hindsight, and as viewed through the lens of white liberal-progressivism, in the civil rights movement African Americans focused on the core American values of freedom, democracy, and equality and reminded the country of these values, so that all Americans could live in line with them together. Central in the new social movements like environmentalism remains the importance of standing up for your beliefs that contradict the mainstream but hold to important American values. To be most American, like Shabecoff living in his rural cabin in Massachusetts, is sometimes to act against the grain to protect what is most sacred in the country. From many environmentalists' views, the wilderness frontier, a simpler lifestyle, and the purity of nature are still the source of the sublime and sacred, the heart and soul of the American nation. To protect America's nature is to be most American.
Boulder residents today can thus view their own self-improvement on the topics of environmentalism and racism through their participation in a generalized progressive politics. This comprises of ethical practices of environmentalism, including individual reflection in and renewal through nature in the form of hiking, trail running, and even nature photography. The everyday lived experience of the environmental ethic in Boulder, expressed performatively in reverence for the scenic beauty of the natural landscape, becomes a political act of resistance against the mainstream. Even living in Boulder is portrayed as counter-cultural, because Boulder is a “bubble” or a “people’s republic” where one chooses to live to escape the political and social conservatism rampant in American society, where one can live with like-minded people who share the same values of environmental and social progressivism. Boulder residents are living the best environmental ethics, values, and practices that they can in the progressive city and majestic scenery. They chose the quality of life in Boulder, and that decision counts for a significant amount in the everyday practice of self-improvement through the proximate and near-constant contact with “pristine” nature. As one interviewee pointed out, many residents have to sacrifice some things to live in Boulder, like working out of town for more money but with an unacceptably long commute, or having to buy a smaller house than one could afford in a neighboring city. This concept of sacrifice adds to the sentiment of moral superiority, because some residents had to give something up or pay more for the quality of life in the city, even while they protect what is most American.

Thus, white Boulder residents also see themselves as continually improving, always attempting to be better environmental and anti-racist Americans, to achieve a state of perfection and happiness expressed in both moral discourses of environmentalism and racism. They draw on dominant norms of racial and environmental etiquette expressed in ideals of beauty, order, and equality to promote an inclusive narrative of national (and local) belonging, even while they repeat environmental tropes of beauty and purity that rely on racialized values, and even while extending sentiments of ownership over environmental assets and environmental values and position people of color as includable, but essentially other (as I explore in chapter 5).
Chapter 2: Green belt, white city: Race and the natural landscape in Boulder

Introduction

Boulder is often lauded, and often praises itself, for its proximity to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, its outdoorsy, active lifestyle, and its high quality of life. A New York Times article boldly proclaimed that “if you’re a bike-riding, cliff-rappelling, latte-loving, eco-certified boho tycoon, there is heaven on Earth – and it’s called Boulder” (Williams, 2008). Originally a gateway to smaller mining towns, Boulder is located at the point where the long, flat prairies and plains stretching west from the Mississippi River are suddenly vaulted into the sky, just twenty miles from the continental divide. Walking west from neighborhoods on the western edge of the City of Boulder brings a challenging change in elevation, from the once treeless prairie to a hilly and cliff-accented forest full of ponderosa pines, Douglas firs, mule deer, bears, mountain lions, peregrine falcons, and hundreds of miles of trails. Very few houses are perched on the foothills because construction was prevented by the city's century-long history of environmental conservation. In addition to wildlife on the trails, one finds Boulder residents hiking, trail running, loaded with climbing gear, or astride a mountain bike. One thing the hikers, bikers, climbers, skiers, picnickers, and swimmers have in common is that, if prompted, most will praise the beauty of the landscape, the enjoyment of fresh air, and the great opportunities for exercise and enjoyment provided by Boulder’s conservation landscape. The symbol commonly used to represent Boulder is the profile of the Flatirons, the huge orange-brown rocks that tower above the city (see Figure 1).

Not only do the Flatirons dominate the view from the city, they also represent the city's orientation to the swath of green in which they are nestled (see Figure 2). Planners and residents of the City of Boulder appear to have an affinity for all things characterized as green, “eco,” hippie, environmentally progressive, organic, outdoorsy, athletic, or healthy. This characterization is expressed explicitly in local newspaper, magazine, and radio advertisements. It is visible in the number of outdoor gear stores and environmentally themed boutique storefronts in Boulder's downtown. It is expressed less explicitly in residents' everyday conversations, including those overheard in locally owned, Italian themed, bicycle decorated coffee shops in which avid rock climbers one-up each other with name-dropping matches (Field notes, 2008).
Figure 1. Historic postcard of the Flatirons, looking over the City of Boulder downtown.

Those who live in or visit Boulder cannot help but notice not only the high quality of life but also the high cost of living, which results in an above average concentration of residents with high incomes or healthy trust funds. The estimated median family income in the City of Boulder in 2009, for example, was over 90,000 dollars, nearly fifty percent more than the national average (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009). Paired with the startling number of wealthy residents is the much-remarked-on majority of white residents and a relatively small number racial or ethnic minorities (around twelve percent, ibid). It is not uncommon to hear residents and visitors comment on how “white” Boulder is or on how few black people one sees on the street. In addition, some African American residents express feelings of isolation and special attention in public places in Boulder (Rodriguez, 2006). These perceptions of Boulder’s natural beauty, high quality of life, and wealthy, white population are linked together in subtle and complex ways in both residents’ geographic imaginary and the city’s history.
Figure 2. Map of City of Boulder open space, easements, and protected areas. Map courtesy of William Goldrick.
In this chapter, I look at how Boulder has come to be seen as so green and so white and at the way that vision performatively reinforces social norms in the city in an ongoing process that continually interpellates the city as “green” and “white” in residents’ everyday lives. I draw on field research, including surveys, interviews, participant observation, personal experience living in Boulder, conversations with Boulder residents about my research, current city open space documents, and historical data from Boulder’s conservation history, including government and policy documents from the key open space planning era of the 1960s and 1970s. I use an analysis of landscape to sketch a view of the way Boulder’s natural landscape has been portrayed as an agent of history in Boulder to explain its social characteristics of affluence and whiteness. The focus on Boulder’s natural landscape and environmental values brings into view how significant portions of the social history of the city that played a part in environmental planning have been erased. This erasure occurs in part through the performative reiteration of Boulder’s conservation landscape as fully “natural” in historical and current city open space records and publications and in residents’ everyday speech and actions.

The idea of landscape creates a conceptual space in which to trace the articulations of the social and material worlds, so it has the potential to bring together representational, metaphorical, social, material, and embodied realms. Significant contributions to the landscape literature emphasize the importance of landscapes not only as texts, codes, and signs (Cosgrove, 1998; Daniels, 1989; Duncan, 1990) but also as material realities that affect and are affected by social relations (Cosgrove, 2003; Mitchell, 2002, 2003; Olwig, 2002). Employing a performative analysis of discursive practice, I look at how race and class are mapped onto, obscured by, or read off of conservation landscapes. Using Boulder’s peculiar assemblage of social relations, I argue that landscape is a particularly productive object of analysis for advancing a rich theorization of the relationship between environment, race, and class because, at its most robust, it

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The arguments made in this chapter are based on contemporary information produced by the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department (including: City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks websites and brochures, Open Space Program inventory reports, management policies, focus group reports, and visitation study reports), city government documents from the city's open space planning era (1963-1976), as well as historical documents from the Boulder Chautauqua (1898-1902), and historical documents on the topics of race, demographics, and promotional materials of the City of Boulder. See Appendix A for archival documents accessed. The documents were evaluated for major themes and silences on the topic of people’s environmental values and interactions with and perceptions of nature.
encompasses both material and semiotic realities and takes into account the social relations of class, race, gender, and environmentalism.

Recent works in landscape studies look beyond the apparently natural or built environment to the social history and historical power relations of a place (ibid). In 1967, the City of Boulder was the first city in the country to pass a tax via referendum to provide funds to acquire and maintain open space, starting with the acquisition of 1,000 acres in the foothills on the western edge of the city. In subsequent decades, the city has spent more than 200 million dollars to acquire more than 45,000 acres (City of Boulder, 2008, “Some Facts”). The histories of such conservation policies are often obscured by a commonsense acceptance of the importance of the majesty of the Flatirons and the taken-for-granted protection of pristine, natural landscapes.

A study of landscape is necessarily about social relations (Mitchell, 2003). What made this conservation tax and zoning possible? What social relations create and maintain the space of environmental governance summed up in the slogan “Twenty-five square miles surrounded by reality” (Williams, 2008)? What racial, class, and power dynamics are at work in this landscape? In policy and everyday conversation the natural landscape is framed as a straightforward material reality separate from people but needing our protection from development and destruction. Landscape theorists point out that this framing is itself a social representation of the landscape, which constructs an exclusion of the human experiences, physical transformations, policies, and representations of the natural landscape that also constitute it. In addition, as I demonstrate in this chapter, the framing of the landscape as a wholly material entity is an ongoing performative enactment of the city’s identity as green and as white; it is a compulsory set of speech acts that delimit the realm of possibility for what kind of city Boulder is and what type of person belongs there.

Placing Boulder’s natural landscape at the center of my analysis allows me to tease out the constituent elements of the particular discursive formations of race, class, and nature in Boulder. The social practices through which natural landscapes are produced, reworked, and contested in Boulder are often folded back into the natural aspects of landscape through normalizing claims of the wisdom of conservation activities. This view seems to suggest that social actions are determined by the physical landscape itself. Such passive agency given to the hills, cliffs, animals, and plants greenwashes the social character and performative function of the landscape. The greenwashing creates a social space for classist and racist
assumptions to be articulated but remain unnoticed or unquestioned. Yet, they can be glimpsed occasionally in policy justifications and in everyday conversation.

Green belt: The making of open space for aesthetics and recreation

In Boulder, the natural landscape has served as an ideological force. It is performatively employed in conservation narratives to hide the landscape’s social histories of racial and class privilege. The naturalization of the landscape has separated issues of race and class from Boulder’s outdoor oriented quality of life, despite their central role in its history. Landscape theorists analyze the way representations of natural landscapes hide the social histories that shaped the landscapes (Cosgrove, 1998; Daniels, 1989; Duncan, 1990; Smith, 1984). Labor relations and conservation policies are forgotten in admiration of nature (Cronon, 1996; Mitchell, 1996; Spirn, 1996). Commonsense binaries such as nature versus culture performatively obscure race and class aspects of the conservation politics. Material natural landscapes are called on to legitimate and explain social phenomena, including Boulder’s above-average income and high cost of living. Boulder’s greenbelt – the natural landscape that surrounds the city – is seen to both justify the cost of living and allow the quality of life.

The much admired majesty and uniqueness of Boulder’s natural landscape have obscured its labor-intensive formation and maintenance. In an ideological landscape, social relations are removed from their histories and portrayed as “natural” (Smith, 1984: 16). Nature, not social history, becomes responsible for inequality (ibid). Likewise, social inequalities in Boulder, including its wealthy white characterization, are often shifted into a discourse about who enjoys, appreciates, or can afford to live near nature rather than questions of who is excluded and why. Exclusion is naturalized performatively through the defense of the city’s greenbelt, deflecting critiques of city planning. Emphasis on the greenbelt also distracts from planning decisions made within the city concerning retail and residential development, including the ongoing struggle to provide affordable housing.

Landscape

The concept of landscape has been attributed many different meanings, which, today, has proven to be one of its strengths. From its early conception as either the German idea of landtschaft, referring to a piece
of land and its governing body, or the British idea of landscape, referring to all of the land visible from one viewpoint, the concept has become a tool for synthesis of land, representations of land, and social norms governing them (Olwig, 1996). In the 1900s, American geographers alternately touted and distanced themselves from the concept of landscape. In the 1980s Marxist and humanist geographers led a reconsideration of landscapes as ideological tools in the maintenance of social inequality. Since then, studies of landscape have drawn on Marxist interpretations, as well as on feminist and post-structural theories to examine the role of landscape in reproducing, naturalizing, and contesting power relations and social inequalities (Oakes and Price, 2008). This dissertation offers a further theorization of the performative nature of landscape, as it is used to delineate social norms of race, class, gender, and environmentalism, each of which overlaps with the other in ongoing performances and processes of subject formation. Each era of landscape studies has provided a new perspective, strengthening the analytic capabilities of the concept. The current theories of landscape have attempted to bridge the divide between material and discursive analyses (Olwig, 2002).

In Boulder, the adjacent rocky foothills have been identified as a natural landscape view in need of protection, as a real-life subject of an iconic landscape painting. My analysis of historical and contemporary open space material and city planning policy documents finds that two environmental values dominate and significantly shape the policy decisions made concerning open space and the greenbelt: aesthetics and recreation. These values are occasionally explicitly articulated in open space policy documents, and they are almost omnipresent implicitly. For example, while the City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space (CMACOS), formed in 1968 to advise the City Manager on open space decisions including open space policy changes and land acquisition priorities, rarely explicitly expresses its "aesthetic values," it refers to the importance of protecting the "mountain backdrop" both consistently and passionately in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Likewise, the committee only sometimes declares that a primary objective of the acquisition and protection of open space by the city is to provide city residents with spaces for recreation. But committee members do often discuss and determine the nature of recreation appropriate on open space land (i.e. low-impact or passive) and how to manage an infrastructure to support that recreation. One of the few times these values are articulated explicitly is in a 1973 document from city Parks and Recreation managers to the CMACOS recommending future policy:
Greenbelt lands are to be utilized for the aesthetic and recreational benefit of the citizens of Boulder.... Administration and management therefore is... to be geared toward providing a pleasing and useful area to view and visit. One of the overriding considerations of administration of Greenbelts is that a natural rather than developed appearance be maintained. (Ehrler and Donahue, n.d.[1973], emphasis added)

The values of aesthetics and recreation expressed in the formative open space planning era of the 1960s and 1970s have long historical roots in Boulder. Material from the Boulder Chautauqua's founding and early years as well as tourism and promotional material of the same era focus on the scenic views of the “mountain backdrop” and opportunities for outdoor recreation in the foothills around Boulder. The values must be examined in their historical context and in the context of the historical construction of Boulder's conservation landscape.

In Boulder, the landscape scene, as it is perceived, imagined, and represented, is treated as a simple, natural object of beauty, and its protection for the sake of aesthetics is rendered unproblematic. From the earliest documents in Boulder's conservation planning era of the 1960 and 1970s, Boulder's “mountain backdrop” is admired unconditionally, and calls for its protection echo throughout the period. The central focus of the protection of the mountain backdrop is the preservation of the view of the mountains from the valley. Any potential development activities (construction of roads, homes, or other buildings) on the foothills, mesas, and mountains west of the city that are in sight from the valley are censured. Policy documents and meeting minutes of the City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space are littered with calls for urgent action to protect the visible mountain landscape from development. In 1970 the CMACOS considered purchasing lands already subdivided into acre lots for homes in the Dakota Ridge and Mount Sanitas area west of downtown. The committee reports that the lots "are on the eastern slope and if developed upon would be clearly visible from the City of Boulder" (CMACOS, 1970, 5/6). Examples from homes or planned subdivisions of land on Flagstaff Mountain and Dakota Ridge illustrate the emphasis on the preservation of natural, scenic views from the valley. In consideration of whether to purchase a six acre property on Flagstaff Mountain, near a well established overlook, the CMACOS reports that due to its damaged state the land is not worth purchasing: "It was felt by the Committee that the cutting of the road... which separates the six acres from the overlook tract has sufficiently scarred the mountainside that enough benefits would not accrue to the community by owning the six acres" (CMACOS, 1971, 12/1). Likewise, on Dakota Ridge, where a few homes had already been constructed by long-time Boulder residents, the
committee discussed purchasing a scenic easement to prohibit owners from “any form of excavation, construction of buildings or overgrazing” of their properties to preserve the view (CMACOS, 1970, 4/16). This action by the committee was in part motivated by a citizens’ group who lobbied to protect the views on Dakota Ridge. In a letter to the CMACOS, The Dakota Ridge Committee (1970) argues that development on Dakota Ridge must be prohibited, not only because of the dangers of flash flood runoff conditions, endangering the houses east of the ridge, but also because “the east face of the Dakota Ridge is an irreplaceable part of the mountain backdrop view.” Moreover, The Dakota Ridge Committee was reacting to an event they observed from their valley homes: “As recent as February 2, 1970, a bulldozer has cut what appears to be a roadway on the east slope of the Dakota Ridge which increases the hazards and mars the view” (ibid). The City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space also placed great emphasis on hiding from view any development of the mountain backdrop land the city itself acquired. In assessing its current holdings in 1968, the CMACOS describes an area near Dakota Ridge: “This area is highly visible from many points of town and great care should be taken to conceal from view any roads, parking lots, and structures” (CMACOS and McKelvey, 1968: 1). Even in the case of its own land management, the city is most concerned with the aesthetic value of the mountain backdrop. Visible development is to be avoided or prohibited as much as possible within the limited city Greenbelt Fund, established through the 1967 tax.

Landscape theorists Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove argue that the meaning of a physical landscape like Boulder's mountain backdrop is not fully legible separate from its representations (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988). These representations of landscape, like the postcard depicted in Figure 1 (above), are not “images standing outside it, but... constituent images of its meaning” (ibid: 1). Such representations often draw on romantic views of nature as well as certain visual aesthetics and social values embedded in the protection of nature and wilderness. But Boulder's Flatirons and mountain backdrop are viewed daily without such representations in mind. The natural landscape around Boulder (what I am calling Boulder's conservation landscape) is taken at face value and thus performatively reinforced both as natural and as separate from any representations of it. It is stripped of its constituent romantic representations and social histories, including efforts at preserving its aesthetic value. The landscape has a “substantive nature” in the everyday lives of Boulder residents who look at, hike in, and celebrate it (Olwig, 1996). It also has a materiality that matters in its scientific management and restoration that cannot be reduced to the
representations of it (ibid). Thus, the material landscape and its representations must be analyzed together, in tandem, with the recognition that neither the materiality nor representations of the landscape determine one another. The pair is performatively enacted in an ongoing process that produces a naturalized effect.

According to Marxist interpretations of landscape, social relations constructed around and through landscapes are obscured by their ideological nature (Smith, 1984). Ideological landscapes are represented in ways that reinforce dominant social relations and norms (ibid). Some carefully composed artistic representations of natural and human landscapes work to naturalize dominant views of the social order and do ideological work (Daniels, 1988). Daniels explores the political iconography of the “selection, siting, and arrangement of trees in written, pictorial, and parkland scenes” of woodlands in Georgian England (ibid: 43). Like Boulder’s carefully preserved mountain backdrop, such representations appear to be dictated by nature rather than carefully composed, and, once naturalized, they become reified and reproduced (ibid). In fact, the policies and objectives outlined for the acquisition and management of Boulder’s open space put as top priority efforts to preserve the land in a “natural state” (City of Boulder, n.d. [1970]), preserve the “natural beauty” of the open space (City of Boulder, 1974, “Boulder’s Open Space Plan”), “maintain the essential quality of Boulder’s natural environment” (Committee of 100, n.d. [1968]), and preserve mountain land “in its highest natural state” because of “high visibility” (Ehrler and Donahue, n.d. [1973]). Here the naturalized effect of the landscape as “natural” is performatively reinforced through its assumed state as always already natural until people develop it or ruin it, and ruin the view of the natural mountain scenery.

Natural landscapes are not just preserved; they are created (Moore et al., 2003). The orderly view of the world represented in landscape paintings and poems naturalizes hierarchical social relations and distracts people from the way the world actually functions (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988). Such is the case with Boulder’s natural landscape, which is made orderly through conservation policies and city planning as well as development of open space properties for aesthetic and recreational purposes. The landscape is then portrayed in city open space policy and educational literature as a culturally and economically valued object because of its natural beauty.

The material aspects of discursive formations are particularly important in an analysis of the natural landscape. Power relations are stamped onto material landscapes through their physical management. This management then becomes common sense, hiding its own social histories (Duncan and Duncan, 1988).
Material landscapes are products of social relations, but they mask their own production, leaving a landscape “to speak unambiguously for itself” (Mitchell, 1996: 30; see also Mitchell, 2002, 2003). Boulder’s conservation landscape is seen to speak for itself, and the aesthetic and recreational values that shaped the landscape are obscured by its naturalization. Mitchell offers an example in which the workers who planted and maintained an orchard landscape in California are forgotten (Mitchell, 1996). In their place is a stunning natural scene, an orchard full of nature’s bounty. This is an example of how easily narratives of nature can erase not only the labor and values embedded in a landscape, but also the assumptions of race and class that often comprise it. With an explicit focus on the natural and social histories of a place, a landscape analysis recovers the material and ideological work done in the name of the natural landscape.

The city’s aesthetic values for open space select certain types of natural aesthetics over others. A truly un-managed wilderness landscape is, in fact, not favorable to open space management goals. Historical open space policy documents show that, to meet the aesthetic standards required, open space lands must be managed but at the same time appear largely unaffected by humans. This management is particularly evident in the discussion of agricultural lands included in the Open Space Program through acquisition (city purchase using money from the Greenbelt Fund) or conservation easement. Here, despite the blanket statement about keeping lands in a natural state, the emphasis is on preserving a certain agricultural aesthetic achieved only through land management. For example, in discussing the possible acquisition of the Van Vleet property along South Boulder Creek, the City Manager told the CMACOS that “Mr. Van Vleet pointed out that the land would return to brush and weeds without care such as it is being given now” (CMACOS, 1971, 8/4). This scenario was clearly unacceptable to the committee, which concluded, “Thus, the water rights may have to be taken along with the land to permit continued irrigation and farming” (ibid). Similarly parks and recreation managers suggest, “Areas acquired which have been traditionally irrigated before acquisition, should continue to be irrigated in order to preserve existing vegetation types” (Ehrler and Donahue, 1973). These efforts at irrigation and construction of extensive irrigation ditches were also extolled as adding great value to the aesthetic landscape in the early Chautauqua literature. One article titled “Boulder’s Location and Climate” easily pairs the natural landscape features of mesas and streams with lawns and irrigation ditches: “[Boulder’s] unique location and surroundings alone immediately charm the eye, and nature’s beauty has been supplemented by the hands of her enterprising citizens…. On either side of the mountain stream arise
the beautiful mesas, and here it is that the cunning hand of man has perfected the landscape by terraced lawns and arranged in rustic form the streams brought down from the mountains above” (The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association, 1898, April). This aesthetic appreciation for a mix of “wild” and managed landscapes thus has a long history in Boulder.

Farther north from Van Vleet’s property on South Boulder Creek the CMACOS accepted a gift of sixty acres from Flatirons gravel and mining company, but noted that it would be necessary that “[t]he land will be shaped and planted with grass and trees” (CMACOS, 1971, 10/13). Stream banks throughout the city were a focus of both open space and parks policies, and, echoing efforts by the Boulder Improvement Committee fifty years prior, planting trees and shrubs was an important component of maintaining streams in a pleasant “natural” state (ibid; Olmsted, 1910; Perrigo, 1946).

The maintenance of the open space aesthetic also required removing evidence of development such as homes and other buildings. The unquestioned state of naturalness attributed to Boulder’s greenbelt hides the very labor that goes into the creation of the apparently natural landscape (Mitchell, 1996). Old homes and buildings have been destroyed to re-construct the idyllic natural landscape, through which miles of trails have been built and maintained. As recently as 2008 the City of Boulder purchased a turkey farm and demolished the farm’s outbuildings (City of Boulder, 2008, “Open Space Board”). The turkey farm buildings apparently did not meet the aesthetic standards of other structures that remain on open space land. Old buildings in this case are contrasted with “historic” buildings, which are preserved, restored, and interpreted for visitors. Historic buildings usually date to the frontier or early city era (mid-1800s to early 1900s). The history of “old” buildings is destroyed in favor of a natural landscape, while the history of “historic” buildings is preserved and made to meld with the natural scenery, asking visitors to recall the early days when people farmed the land. The “Historic Dunn House” (City of Boulder, 2011, “South Trailhead, Mesa Trail”) and a historic barn on the South Boulder Creek trail, pictured here, are both suitably attractive and historic to remain on open space land (see Figures 3 and 4).
Figure 3. The historic Dunn homestead south of the city, with an interpretive sign in front and Flatirons behind. Photograph by the author.

Figure 4. Historic barn. Photograph by the author.
Sometimes preserving open space in a natural state could be costly, as indicated in attempts in the 1960s to establish priorities for land acquisitions which asked of each possible purchase, “Will any expense be incurred to remove existing structures; e.g. a farmhouse?” (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Greenbelt”). The same standard of potential removal of buildings on farms in the plains applies to mountain homes on open space land. On Flagstaff Mountain the CMACOS decided to purchase a property on which two “inexpensive homes” were located “with the expectation that those two homes would someday be removed by the City” (CMACOS, 1971, 12/15).

Physical evidence of prior use of the land was not the only social history that the city chose to remove from the landscape. On July 3, 1969 a full page article ran in the Boulder Daily Camera titled “A July Fourth Outing: See the City Greenbelt Lands” (Nye, 1969). The page was filled with a large map of Boulder and its surrounding open space, with photographs and descriptions of open space properties and arrows pointing out where to find them on the map. The properties included: Boulder Memorial Hospital Property, Byron Wells Property, Joseph Erni Property, Overlook and Morrissett Properties, T.H. Dunn Property, and Taley Gallucci Property. Most current Boulder residents would need the labeled map to locate these open space properties because, even though they are still frequently visited as city open space land, they no longer have the same names. Only one year after the city began acquiring properties with its sales tax Greenbelt Fund, the City Manager’s Advisory Committee on Open Space “approved a motion to give all Greenbelt lands geographic or historic names, rather than the names of previous owners” (CMACOS, 1969, 12/4). The committee looked to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for suggestions and recommendations for renaming the land. Now the parcels themselves do not have names; named features include only trailheads, trails, and natural areas. The list above would now be described as: the Sanitas Trailhead, Shanahan Ridge area, Wonderland Lake area, Viewpoint Trail, Mesa Trail South, and Davidson Mesa. Changing from a socially oriented naming system that indicated previous private ownership and type of use to one that refers back to the landscape and its natural features helped the city’s open space make a break from its social history and forge ahead into the future as an aesthetic landscape in its natural state that visitors can enjoy. Despite the naturalization of the open space properties through the name change, the change was decidedly a social one that reinforced the social norms demanding that the open space be, above all, natural.
In addition to aesthetics, Boulder's conservation landscape is valued for its accessibility and pleasurable setting for recreation. The recreation value frequently outweighs the overall ban on “development” in open space areas. There is often a contradiction between the objectives and allowable uses of open space lands as set out in the City Council Resolution that established the Greenbelt Program and the city’s practices regarding open space. The resolution reads, “Generally, lands or interests in lands acquired with open space funds shall not be developed for intensive recreational uses nor shall lands be improved by planting, structures, or the like from the funds earmarked for the open space program unless such improvements are necessary in order to prevent and protect said open space lands from erosion, destruction or impairment” (City of Boulder City Council, 1968). Irrigation and plantings described above certainly contradict this statement, as do the 2,500 dollars requested in 1973 for removal of nearly 30 miles of fence and the 3,500 hours of greenbelt maintenance labor by crews in 1971 and 1972 (Ehrler and Donahue, 1973).

Ehrler, the Director of Parks and Recreation, and Donahue, the Superintendent of Parks, also suggest:

There may be sections of Greenbelt where a somewhat higher degree of development is compatible with Greenbelt philosophy. It seems appropriate that structures such as livery stables, interpretive buildings, picnic or trailhead shelters, picnic tables, boat docks, bicycle and bridle paths, maintenance buildings or dams for artificial ponds could be established by careful placement in the Greenbelt system. (Ibid)

In other areas with the “minimum necessary” level of development, “parking lots, trash containers, restrooms, fire roads, trails, fire pits, and trail head improvements such as signs and interpretive devices” would be built (ibid). Thus, despite the use of ecocentric language emphasizing prevention of destruction of land and “preservation” of a “natural state” on open space, the values to which policymakers adhere are more anthropocentric. Preservation of land is in fact more important as preservation of landscape views and aesthetics and preservation of open space lands for recreation.

Early residents and visitors to Boulder had no hesitation in praising the area for its recreational opportunities, as well. These were attributed to Boulder’s climate and natural landscape. The climate facilitated outdoor activity, promoting health, as described in chapter 1. In fact, the recreational opportunities near Boulder were the primary focus of most of the tourism and promotional material for the city at the turn of the twentieth century. Women attending the first Chautauqua in 1898 were invited on “mountain trips and other delightful outings which you can have at pleasure” (The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association, 1898, April). A classic pamphlet for visitors published in 1916 by the Temple Drug
Company’s Rexall Store in downtown Boulder was titled “Boulder and Her Environs: What to See and How to See It” (The Rexall Store, 1916), and it listed numerous expeditions accessible from downtown (in front of the The Rexall Store), including: the University of Colorado, Chautauqua Park (aka City Park), Boulder Golf Links (west of Chautauqua), the Sanitarium, Pulpit Rock and Red Rocks in Sunshine Canyon, Eldorado Springs, Boulder Canyon and Nederland, The Switzerland Trail (via “narrow gauge trains” at Union Station), Arapahoe Glacier, and “the new Rocky Mountain National Park” (ibid). The pamphlet notes that Blue Bell Canyon and Gregory Canyon, both near Chautauqua park, are popular destinations “for picnics and beefsteak ‘frys,’” and in Gregory Canyon you can find “a delightful spring of cold, clear water and an oven recently constructed for the pleasure of picnickers on their ‘beefsteak frys’” (ibid: 4, 6). These activity lists are persistent throughout promotional material, including Chautauqua literature, through the 1920s, as are their specific focus on recreation and sightseeing in the natural landscape of Boulder. They all characterize Boulder as a place surrounded by nature that is easily accessible from the city. For example, a brochure printed by the Boulder Chamber of Commerce in 1923 describes Boulder as “Scenic Entrance to Colorado National Forest, the Glacier Region, [and] Rocky Mountain National Park” as well as “A Home and Health City, A Educational Center, A Recreational Playground, [and] Where the Rockies Meet Fertile Plains” (Boulder Chamber of Commerce, 1923). For over a century, Boulder has been branded as a green city, where people come to rest, rejuvenate, and recreate in the mountain air and natural surroundings. This characterization has established Boulder not only as a place where the natural landscape is scenic and beautiful, but also a place people visit to recreate in the natural landscape, from the walks, burro rides, train tours, and early auto tours and autoparks to the “golfing, skiing, boating, picnicking, fishing, hunting, scenic drives... Pow wow rodeo, [and] Arapaho Glacier hike” of the 1960s (Boulder Chamber of Commerce, n.d. [1965-1969]). The natural landscape is not protected for its mere presence, the purpose of its presence is to be enjoyed through viewing and recreation.

As described below, the establishment of the greenbelt is often portrayed as an act of wisdom and forethought, a sagely response to early manifestations of sprawl that would have destroyed the natural landscape and the city’s quality of life. The possibility of class elitism or privilege as an element of the protection of the natural landscape is not often considered. An analysis of policy decisions and discursive practices related to landscape reveals how landscapes can hide social histories. This approach focuses on the everyday and scientific discourses that normalize and reduce landscapes to a simple, separate swath of
nature: “By becoming part of the everyday, the taken-for-granted, the objective, and the natural, the landscape masks the artifice and ideological nature of its form and content. Its history as a social construction is unexamined” (Duncan, 1990: 6; see also Pratt, 1986). Race and class aspects of the social construction of the natural landscape are also unexamined. This common erasure is why attention to the performative discursive practices that link race and class to landscape is necessary.

*Racialized natural landscapes*

The discursive practices that naturalize Boulder’s conservation landscape are most visible in the definition of nature as separate from people. This assumption that nature is defined as the non-human world plays an important role in some conservation discourse as well as in popular understandings of nature and academic analyses of nature (Castree, 2005: 8). It played a key role in Boulder’s conservation history, as city residents protected first specific parcels of land as parks for recreation, later, the building-free view of the mountain backdrop, and, most recently, the conservation of rare and endemic species and of mountain and prairie ecosystems. The view of nature as a pristine wilderness developed around this conceptual separation of people from nature and supported the protection of wilderness areas in favor of recognition of nature in cities or in environments more intensively managed by people (Cronon, 1996). Such a definition of nature performatively reinforces the idea that it is removed from the social realms of race, class, politics, and economics. It excludes the social actions and beliefs that constitute natural landscapes from commonsense views of them. The everyday, lived concept of nature also conforms to specific aesthetic and recreational values that naturalize constructed trails, historical buildings, and agricultural landscapes on open space.

The assumed separation of nature from people neglects the ways in which the idea of nature is socially constructed (Castree, 2001: 5) and performatively reinforced. The understanding of nature as separate from people is itself a construction, and the problems with the construction are evidenced in the ambivalent positioning of Native Americans within the nature-culture binary. Native Americans are sometimes positioned as living more naturally or closer to nature (Baker, 1998; Braun, 2003; Moore et al., 2003). This view is reflected in an interpretive sign in a City of Boulder park that states, “Boulder’s original inhabitants were quiet, cautious, and respectful as they watched wildlife” (see Figure 5). The text is accompanied by a depiction of a Native American male, with three feathers upright in his headband, no shirt
on, and a large knife strapped to his colorful belt, crouched behind a rock intently watching deer graze in a prairie. The sign is positioned on a paved trail at the point where the trail leaves an urban, grassy, grill and shelter equipped park at the edge of town and leads to more rustic hiking trails. People who hike the trail today are encouraged to imitate those “original” inhabitants by talking softly, walking slowly, and keeping their pets on a leash. In this representation, Native Americans are located both in the past and in greater proximity to nature. The sign suggests that we listen to the ancient wisdom of the people from the past to behave the way nature intends. This reliance on a primordial connection to nature lends authority to the rules governing environmental behavior.

Figure 5. Interpretive sign at Eben G. Fine Park. Photograph by the author.

Eben G. Fine Park is an interesting location in Boulder. Located on the western edge of downtown, in the 1920s through the 1940s it was the site of Boulder’s auto camp, a campsite developed for car camping. In 1921 there was a local Automobile Association, which raised 4,000 dollars to locate the camp at the site, and in 1923, 6,662 visitors from forty-two states as well as from Canada and the Philippines visited the auto camp (Perrigo, 1946). Currently, Eben Fine Park is known as a community park where many different residents of Boulder, including many immigrants, college students, and white Boulder residents, come to picnic, swim, or launch their inner-tubes to float Boulder Creek. Eben G. Fine, the man the park is named after, was a member of the park board, a city board first appointed by the city council in 1907 (ibid). The establishment of the park board was part of the broader efforts of the Boulder Improvement Society, a private organization for which Eben Fine served as an officer, originally founded in 1890 and that regained popularity in 1903 with the purpose “to make Boulder more beautiful, more healthful, and in every way more desirable as an educational centre, a tourist point, a sanitarium and a city of homes” (ibid: 216, citing the Boulder Daily Camera, March, 1890).
Examples like this one highlight the implicit, and at times explicit, assumptions in narratives of conservation that pre-contact America was a pristine wilderness in which ecological systems and human systems existed in a balanced symbiosis (Denevan, 1992). These assumptions demonstrate the ways that the idea of nature has been constructed to erase Native Americans’ histories and obscure their complex and varied relationships to nature, in favor of simplistic stories of harmonious living (ibid; Deloria, 1998; Solnit, 1994; Spence, 1999). The theme of a more natural lifestyle or time represented by Native Americans plays an important but problematic role in conservation thought (ibid; Cronon, 1996; Krech, 1999; Slater, 1996).

In addition to erasing Native American history, such romantic depictions reinforce the idea that a pristine state of nature existed in the past. This pristine nature is reified and projected as a goal to which we should return (Cronon, 1996). Thus, the City of Boulder has purchased vast tracts of land using tax, bond, and federal revenue in order to restore the land to its natural or pre-European condition, to its “past-perfect” – the supposedly pristine state in which Europeans first encountered it (Mercer, 2002) – the idea of which is performatively reinforced by continual reference to it as a factual representation of the area’s natural history.

The view of Native Americans as being more natural or living in harmony with the earth naturalizes them, conflates them with nature, and thus performatively reinforces their difference from the majority of people in the U.S. today, who are perceived as alienated from nature (Deloria, 1998). This positioning of Native Americans as closer to nature and of nature as pristine prior to contact legitimizes a racialized understanding of nature and of conservation landscapes (Kosek, 2004, 2006). The division between nature and society is reinforced and normalized by a rich, white conservation movement even while it supports racial stereotypes (Di Chiro, 1996: 300; Taylor, 1997). The example of the attempt to divide people from nature and the problematic place of Native Americans within that division also demonstrates the naturalization of beliefs about nature, how problematic those beliefs can be, how unstable such representations of nature are, and how interrelated issues of race, class, and environmentalism are. It comprises one strand in the discursive formations performatively linking Boulder’s conservation landscape to attitudes and understandings of race in the city.
Naturalized landscapes of race and class

The story of environmental conservation in the United States is not complete without attention to social relations of capital and to racial prejudice. Racial prejudice can be tied but not reduced to relations of capital. Neil Smith and Denis Cosgrove suggest that the creation of the idea of wilderness is intricately linked to the alienation of people from nature by industry and the property relationship (Cosgrove, 1998; Smith, 1984). In addition, as expounded in chapter 1, Jake Kosek demonstrates that the desire to get out of cities into the natural landscape was also undeniably bound up in racialized thinking at the turn of the twentieth century (Kosek, 2004, 2006).

The City of Boulder is characterized as a place where wealthy people live. Between 2000 and 2010, the median price of a single family home increased 170,000 dollars, nearly a fifty percent increase 36 (The Housing Collaborative, 2005: 8, City of Boulder, 2010, “Middle-Income”). One resident remarked, “When I tell people I’m a student and my husband is a teacher and we own our home, they look at me like I have something to hide, like I’m breaking some kind of rule” (Field notes, 2008). Such comments highlight the performative exclusion of poor or even middle-income people, from the city through the assumption that poor people simply cannot afford to live in the City of Boulder. Similarly, one interviewee, comparing Boulder to the cultural diversity in Boston said, “It’s too expensive. It keeps a lot of those different kinds of people out, because... the cost is so high” (Interview, 2010, Lou37). Given Boulder’s above-average income levels and high cost of living, this assumption is accurate in part. However, it is often invoked in a manner that positions poor Boulder residents as outsiders or misfits (Peake and Ray, 2001). There is a thin line between the small percentage of low-income or working-class residents of Boulder compared to nearby communities and the idea that poor people don’t belong in Boulder.

These discourses of rightful ownership and belonging are complex, often subtle, and linked to environmental discourses. One wealthy white Boulder resident pointed out that poor residents “don’t have big lawns or pools in their condo complexes” (Field notes, 2008), so he would expect to see poorer people in public parks. Others were dubious about the popularity of parks with poor residents. One person who works

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36 From $375,000 in 2000 to $542,500 in 2010

37 In this chapter, quotes from interviewees also quoted in later chapters are referred to parenthetically by their pseudonyms.
in Boulder focused on utility, saying that if “you can’t fish on it, can’t hunt on it, then, from a certain perspective, what’s the point? If you’re struggling economically do you have time to go on long walks?” (Interview, 2008). Others hypothesized that poor residents might not have access to transportation to parks. Embedded in these comments are assumptions about people’s relationship to and use of the natural landscape based on class.

However, the tendency to say that Boulder is elite and environmentally conscious because of class alone ignores the explicitly racial and racist acts of the past. Early black Boulder residents are reported as having had great difficulty finding employment outside of manual and domestic labor and service work, causing many of Boulder’s early black residents to move away (Delgado and Stefancic, 1999). This employment pattern persisted into the 1940s, when black Boulder residents were almost exclusively employed as cooks, custodians, porters, and other service positions, including community members who held bachelor’s and master’s degrees (Brunton, 1948: 85-86). In addition, Boulder, as well as nearby Denver, had active chapters of the Ku Klux Klan from 1921 to 1925 (Goldberg, 1981). These Klan groups were part of a revived Klan movement after World War I, and they adhered strongly to white supremacy, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and anti-black sentiment, as well as to prohibition and Protestantism (ibid). They succeeded in electing or appointing Klan members to city and state government and judicial positions (ibid). The Boulder Klan burned crosses in Italian and Latino residents’ yards in the neighboring, integrated community of Lafayette (Delgado and Stefancic, 1999). Racist sentiment did not comprise the entirety of the Klan platform, but racist notions were linked to other issues such as crime, alcoholism, and religion. Such a political presence at the local and state scale, even for such a short period, could not remain completely separate from the city’s politics. Though not overwhelming or widespread, racism against black Boulder residents continued through the 1940s, when black residents reported being at times asked to sit in the balcony of movie theaters or asked by owners not to dine in their restaurants because they would lose business from white clientele (Brunton, 1948: 76). At that time, some black Boulder residents did not feel that white residents treated them as equal citizens (ibid: 92).

Intentionally and proudly characterized as an environmentally conscious city through everyday speech acts that reiterate that norm, Boulder’s natural landscape is conscripted into a naturalization of the city’s outdoor-oriented lifestyle. Such a characterization is deeply tangled in discourses of class and race.
References in Boulder’s contemporary conservation literature to the wisdom of Boulder’s early residents and leaders might be less ebullient if they took into account the city’s history of race relations.

**White city: Conservation narratives and hidden histories**

*Social values obscured by the natural landscape*

The establishment of the Open Space Program and of the environmental policies in the 1960s and 1970s was part of and often explicitly positioned within other broader social goals in Boulder. These included the development of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and a focus on “quality” of population and environment over “quantity” of development and growth in the city. The role of many of these social values has been minimized in retrospect because the social history of the landscape has been erased, simplified, or stripped down to its aesthetic and recreational values through the performative reiteration that Boulder is and always has been a green city.

An analysis of City of Boulder’s conservation discourse shows that Boulder’s land acquisition is comfortably couched in rhetoric of environmental preservation and the dangers of population growth, suggesting a kind of environmental purity that does not accurately represent the policy process, at least early on. Contemporary open space documents proudly refer back to the purchase of Chautauqua Park in 1898, receipt from the federal government of 1,600 acres on Flagstaff Mountain in 1907, and the purchase of 1,200 acres (including Green Mountain and Bear Peak) in 1916 as the roots of open space preservation in Boulder:

> As you drive into the Boulder Valley, with its multi-hued grasses swaying in the breeze, vast red rock reaching toward the sky, and whitecapped mountains forming a backdrop, – you are struck by what a truly beautiful place you have found. But it very easily could have been otherwise. (City of Boulder, 1995)

References to what Boulder might have been like “otherwise,” if the city had not implemented the Open Space Program are often overstated. For example, an article in the *Boulder Daily Camera* ran an explanation by city planners of “What might have been” (Urie, 2010, November 28): “Four lanes of congested traffic choke the Pearl Street Mall. Houses sprawl to the top of the Flatirons. Radio towers and billboards overlook Boulder from the hills to the west” (ibid).  

(Braun, 2003; Martin, 2004).
Figure 6. Illustration of what Boulder might look like without city planning and open space (Urie, 2010, November 28).

Although he admits that the pictures might “exaggerate the city’s case” that Boulder’s investment in planning and open space has paid off, the city’s director of community planning and sustainability said, “There is a core agreement on a lot of things in this community.... The decisions we’ve made about open space and the backdrop have significant social benefits” (ibid). These benefits include the “pristine mountain backdrop” free of “sprawling subdivisions” and giant billboards (ibid). The article mentions challenges that accompany the limits to urban growth, including an increased cost of housing, making Boulder a “less-affordable place to live” (ibid). The passing mention of Boulder’s high cost of living is couched in praise for the city’s foresight; a Boulder realtor remarks that her clients are shocked at the small size and older condition of housing that comes with a high price tag, but she is a proponent of Boulder’s open space policies because, she says, “I think several generations down the road we’ll be delighted with it” (ibid). The emphasis on the unspoiled mountain backdrop view and the preservation of “more than 45,000 acres of open space,” along with the exaggerated depictions of Boulder’s ersatz future consistently point to the natural landscape itself rather than the policy decisions. The policy decisions always seem to be driven by the landscape rather than vice versa. Instead of policies being portrayed as actually productive of the conservation landscape as an aesthetic and recreational resource, the policy decisions are performatively framed as “foresight” to build a protective wall around a preserved landscape, guarding it from the brutal forces of development. The narrative of what
Boulder would have been like “otherwise” is a performative enactment of the unwavering norm of Boulder as a green city driven by its natural landscape rather than by social values.

In the pivotal planning document, the Long Range Management Policies for open space, the original acquisition of land for Boulder’s Mountain Parks is seamlessly followed by the establishment of a “Blue Line” limiting city water provisions to a specific elevation in 1959 (City of Boulder, 1995). Only rarely mentioned in contemporary conservation literature are the limits placed on the extension of city services including water and sewer lines to many areas on the plains to the south and east of Boulder that were a central part of the city’s “urban shaping” goals (City of Boulder, 1974, “Boulder’s Open Space Plan”; CMACOS, n.d.). The urban shaping project was combined with acquisition of open space land and conservation easements to prevent urban growth, but this decision was not based entirely on values of environmental protection, as is often portrayed today. In conversations about Boulder’s growth and limiting city growth in the plains, what city administration and managers discussed most was the fear that the city would not be able to provide services to all of its residents if development continued at the rapid pace of the late 1950s and early 1960s (Boulder City Council and Boulder City Administration, 1971). They also wanted to preserve the agricultural and natural scenery aesthetics of the city, but the capacity and age of city infrastructure such as water and sewer lines and cost to maintain, much less extend them, was the subject of much passionate discussion in the period of open space establishment (ibid). That is, environmental values and goals of environmental protection existed side-by-side with other social values and concerns, including how to manage the infrastructure for a growing urban area.

In the Long Range Management Policies, the establishment of the Blue Line is sandwiched in a timeline between the city’s population doubling between 1950 and 1960 and again between 1960 and 1970, from 20,000 in 1950 to 37,500 in 1960 and 66,000 in 1970 (City of Boulder, 1995; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2011). Post-1960 history in the environmental narrative includes city residents’ vote to increase city sales tax to purchase open space and the defeat of proposed extension of city services to a development south of Boulder (City of Boulder, 1995). Here the denial of the permit is framed as proactive against development for the sake of the preservation of open space, and concerns about capacity and cost of the city infrastructure are forgotten. From 1967 to 1976 the city passed ordinances protecting open space and preventing urban sprawl. Reasons offered for this policy shift include a concern for protection of the
“natural environment and land resources that characterize Boulder” (City of Boulder, 2008, “Some Facts”), also leaving out the social and managerial concerns about infrastructure expansion.

The discussion of infrastructure maintenance was not limited to the water and sewer lines. In fact, in the same 1967 vote, which was the first in the country in which citizens passed a sales tax increase for the express purpose of acquiring open space, was a vote for the Major Thoroughfare Program, a tax for transportation infrastructure improvement. Specifically, the ballot proposal was to “[i]ncrease the City of Boulder’s sales tax from 1¢ to 2¢ for the purpose of realizing major roadway improvements and acquiring large open spaces in and around the City” (Citizens for Greenbelts and McKelvey, 1967). Sixty percent of the sales tax increase was allocated to the Major Thoroughfare Program and forty percent to open space acquisition. The transportation tax was in response to "congestion, delay, and unnecessary traffic tie-ups now created by inadequate facilities" and designated for “the planning, design, and construction of the City's collector, arterial, and freeway systems” with emphasis on artery construction and acquisition of rights-of-way (ibid). The two programs are tied together as responses to the recent rapid development of the city and the rising land prices, as illustrated in a 1967 pamphlet supporting the tax increase:

The critical factor in both these programs is time and money. Boulder has the opportunity to act now on both of these programs at a reasonable cost. It is certain that future action, if it can be taken at all, will cost considerably more. The press of development is already disposing of natural areas which, once built on, can never be recovered. Also, the cost of greenbelt land is increasing drastically each year. Timing is equally important for the Major Thoroughfare Plan. Boulder citizens are presently experiencing serious traffic problems due to the community's rapid growth. Delay will only mean more expensive right-of-way costs and construction expenses in the future. (Citizens for Greenbelts, 1967)

The changes in Boulder brought by increased rates of urban development are not only seen to affect the environment but also have many social effects, including the very banal issue of traffic congestion and delay. The city leaders of Boulder who established the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Program saw these issues as inter-related and took action on them at the same time.

Other social goals articulated during the open space planning era of the 1960s and 1970s include affordable housing, social equity, and social diversity. These goals were articulated in draft documents of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and other community planning documents, but these social values were not funded or prioritized as highly or consistently as the open space and growth management planning were. As early as 1963, land values were rising as a result of rapid development (Special Committee on Park Sites
and Open Spaces, 1963), and in 1968, the city manager reports, “For some time now the City has expressed an interest in developing... a program [for low and moderate-income housing]; however, the efforts to date have been somewhat scattered and have not approached the general problem in a comprehensive way” (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Housing”). The city manager’s report enumerates the specific number of deteriorating (1,049) and dilapidated (125) housing units in the city in 1966 (ibid). By 1971, the city was proud to announce in its annual report that the city began building 183 units of affordable housing with federal money, which the city later received ownership of (City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Golden Opportunity”). Yet, at the same time, a city resident told the City Council and Administration, “Already without a policy of social or economic balance you’ve determined an economic level in this community that fairly well excludes low income people. You’ve done that. And you’ve done it by not doing anything else,” and this comment was followed by an expressed need to commit funds to affordable housing programs (Boulder City Council and Boulder City Administration, 1971). Between 1970 and 1999 the city established 1,755 affordable housing units in the city, and another 1,000 have been added since 2000 (City of Boulder, 2011, “Division of Housing”).

In 2000, the city Division of Housing set a goal for ten percent of the city’s housing to be affordable, but a key vote for raising taxes to pay for additional affordable housing failed by a narrow margin in 2000 (City of Boulder Division of Housing, 2010, “History”). In 2011, funding for affordable housing is still an issue. With much of its funding based in fees on new development,38 the affordable housing program sought new sources for funding (Urie, 2011, August 28). One option proposed by the city’s Affordable Housing Task Force was a sales tax increase, but the City Council members were hesitant to attempt to raise taxes because they were unsure of public support (Byars, 2011; Urie, 2011, August 31). As City Councilwoman Suzy Ageton put it, though Boulder residents value affordable housing, the city has “struggled to be willing to fund that value.... Until we solve that issue, I don’t know that putting something like [a tax measure] on the ballot is a good idea” (Urie, 2011, August 31). Despite these ongoing efforts by the city to create affordable housing for low and

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38 Developers must either designate between forty and sixty percent of the units in the planned development as affordable housing or make a cash payment in lieu of building affordable units (Urie, 2011, August 31, September 3).
middle-income residents, the task force agrees that maintaining the goal of ten percent of housing as affordable is important but not sufficiently funded. Boulder is still seen by many as a city with a very high cost of living and fewer single-family homes for middle-income residents than there is demand (City of Boulder, 2010, “Middle-Income”). Consequently, affordable housing continues to be an unresolved issue in Boulder today. In contrast, residents of the City of Boulder have always voted to pass measures to support continued open space funding through initiatives such as bonds and even sales tax increases since 1967, including a .25 percent sales tax increase in 1995 to improve several community parks (Urie, 2011, August 5).

Examples of social values in Boulder’s history show the rather muddled but well-intentioned rhetoric of social progressiveness as relatively strong and conforming to socially progressive federal legislation of the era. But the social values of equality and diversity were not well funded through the era that open space has been, and they have not been put into policy and action to the same extent that open space and aesthetic and recreational environmental values have. Boulder has quickly and easily reaffirmed its position as a “green city” but, despite significant efforts and social values of equality and racial diversity, it has not been able to grow out of its reputation as “so white.” The environmental values of aesthetics and recreation have proven to have more purchase in Boulder’s history, even when the answer to the self-reflective question “What kind of community do we want to live in?” was: A community where people live and work, where all people have access to quality housing, and where the environmental and social character is preserved, in short, a “quality community” (Boulder City Council and Boulder City Administration, 1971; City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Golden Opportunity”; Committee of 100, n.d. [1968]).

The documents from the 1960s and 1970s that describe the “kind of community we want to live in” emphasize the importance of “all people” having access to good housing (City of Boulder, n.d. [1970]). In Boulder’s 1970 annual report, mailed to residents, on the topic of homes, it proclaims,

The city's ambitious housing goal is a maximum variety in types and prices—for everyone. Take low-income housing. Although the housing crunch hits everyone, it hits hardest the elderly, the disabled, the unskilled, the young and the minorities. Boulder’s Housing Authority, an arm of city government, is in business to create and disperse safe and decent housing for Boulder’s low income residents, throughout the valley. (City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Golden Opportunity,” emphasis added)

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39 Low-income is defined as up to 80 percent of the area median income and middle-income is defined as 80 percent to 120 percent of the area median income. The area median income in 2010 was $80,000 for a family of three (City of Boulder, 2010, “Middle Income”).
This discussion is grounded in social values of equality and inclusion, even referring to “the [racial] minorities,” but these values are abstract and resonate more clearly with national discourses of the time than with the realities of city racial demographics. Only 93 African Americans lived in Boulder in 1948, out of approximately 20,000 people (Brunton, 1948: 18). Long-time white residents who grew up in Boulder in the 1950s and 1960s remember very few black residents, and one remembers only one black student in the schools growing up (Field notes, 2010). Because of the language they use, the reports’ treatment of the minority population within their discussion of affordable housing is apparently based more on the idea of racial equality than on actualizing racial equality or equal access in the city. For example, the 1968 report on affordable housing warns that, in order to avoid “the natural inclination for the establishment of ‘newly built ghettos’” which, if not avoided, would cause the “upsetting impact of ghetto-type living,” the city ought to fragment the poor population geographically by building housing containing no larger than fifty units in one place (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Housing”). While there is no explicit statement about race in connection to potential ghettos in Boulder, in the 1940s through 1960s, most of the city’s black population lived in a relatively segregated area downtown near Goss Street and Water Street (now Canyon Boulevard) (Brunton, 1948; Hays, n.d.). Though this was decidedly not a “slum” (Brunton, 1948), city managers’ fear of the possibility that building housing for low-income residents could result in a ghetto is best understood in the context of the social upheaval of the 1960s, race riots across the country between 1964 and 1968, and new civil rights legislation. The city managers were careful to use the most up-to-date research and language that seemed relevant to the changes in their small city, and the research at the time commented on race. Yet, the city leaders rarely mentioned race explicitly, but instead referred to it in the context of other vulnerable populations (e.g. “the elderly, the disabled, the unskilled” above). City leaders wanted to get the social equity right; they did not want to create disorderly spaces in the city. But, discussion of racism in the city is nearly nonexistent. The only trace is a statement about housing discrimination at the end of the housing report. The report says, “Discrimination in Boulder housing is verified by noting that eight formal complaints alleging discrimination in housing were filed with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission in 1967” (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Housing”). The document continues, “The Boulder Human Relations Commission now maintains a fair housing listing service, but usually homes listed are too expensive to be of substantial help to low and moderate-income groups. The Commission also investigates complaints of housing and other forms
of discrimination” (ibid). Discrimination was reported in the context of something that needs to be improved and avoided, and it is a statement about race without the word race. Discrimination in housing, according to the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (also known as the Fair Housing Act), was prohibited based on race, religion, and national origin, not income, age, or skill. Here the discussion of income is a proxy for an implicit discussion of race. Because of national scale events, city leaders were exploring issues of racial discrimination and fairness within their exploration of affordable housing, but, unlike their environmental values that resonated with the growing language of ecology and environmentalism, they lacked a productive language about race to move forward with their progressive social values.

In this environmental and social history Boulder’s excellent “quality of life” and its status as a “quality community” emerges from the natural landscape rather than the policy decisions. It was the preservation of open space that improved Boulder's quality of life (City of Boulder City Council, 1968). People's role in establishing policy in the environmental history narrative is referred to in relation to its foresight in protecting the natural landscape, so it is portrayed as anchored only in environmental values rather than both environmental and social values. Furthermore, the environmental values lauded assume an ecocentric language and stance, even as they praise the preservation of open space as a scenic and recreational resource.

The portrayal of this history in the current city conservation literature unites several disparate themes. The purchase of land for mountain parks, the preservation of scenery, the establishment of the Open Space Program, and institutions established to purchase open space are linked to dangerous rates of population growth, the geographic bounding of city services, opposition to development, and land use planning. A trajectory of progress is implied, as is a causal relationship, with the fears surrounding population growth prompting conservation actions. The conservation literature portrays all Boulder citizens as winners due to such a rich and forward-looking conservation program. Land purchased and protected is portrayed as always already natural and in need of protection from the destructive effects of people.

The city’s conservation literature constructs a space in which the urban-rural dichotomy and the culture-nature dichotomy line up exactly. As constructed in the texts, people live in the city and visit the country or wilderness for recreation and “getting away.” The natural landscape provides a place for us to take “a break from our work-a-day lives” (City of Boulder and Leave No Trace, n.d). The rural areas are wild places with their own natural balance unaffected by human influence. Cronon (1996) presents this urban
rural divide as a romantic view held by city residents who have the time and money to “escape” modern life by taking a respite in the countryside. He points out the affluence of the conservation community since its founding. In Boulder, this affluence is distorted into an effect of the natural landscape:

Nestled against the edge of one of America’s great wildlife and recreation areas, Boulder has grown from a small mining town to an academic and technological center of 75,000 persons. Boulder’s special setting and natural beauty, however, attracted people so strongly that growth threatened to destroy the community’s cherished qualities. Urban sprawl and the ongoing rush of housing construction began to spread to the hills overlooking the city and the valley floor surrounding the city. (City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Greenbelt,” emphasis added)

In this quote from a brochure titled “Boulder’s Greenbelt,” the landscape itself caused the growth through the magnetic quality of its “special setting and natural beauty.” The conservation planning that shaped the natural landscape is portrayed as determined by the landscape itself rather than part of a larger set of social goals or a result of affluence. The greenbelt tax of 1967 accrued nearly one million dollars in 1968 and 1969 alone (Tedesco, 1969), and in 1970, the city projected open space tax revenues between 1968 and 1979 to total 8.6 million dollars. In 2010, the total amount of open space tax money spent on purchase of land was nearly 208 million dollars (City of Boulder, 2010, “Open Space Acquisition”). This budget is made possible in part by Boulder’s affluence, particularly its consumer culture supported by many of its residents’ copious spending, as well as its attraction as a tourist destination. Or, as one interviewee succinctly put it, “You just feel like there is wealth here” (Interview, 2010, Ina, emphasis hers).

Explicit justification of conservation programs in Boulder centers on the restoration of the natural buffer that exists around and between cities. Swaths of open space and agricultural land separate Boulder from nearby Lafayette, Louisville, Superior, and Longmont. The word choice is important; use of the term natural buffer allows for ambiguity between whether it is ecological (not cultural) or normal, good, and right. Restoration of the buffer implies that it is both ecological and right and that there is a need to protect the land in a state prior to human influences. Moreover, this separation maintains the goal of keeping Boulder a quality city with its own character, not “an anonymous suburb of The Denver metropolitan area” or “another unidentifiable portion of the Denver sprawl” (City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Golden Opportunity”; City of Boulder City Council, 1968). One way this effort to maintain Boulder’s character expresses itself performatively today is through disparagement of Longmont, Boulder’s urban neighbor to the northeast of similar size but lower average income and decidedly middle-class character. It is not unusual to hear Boulder
residents refer to Longmont as “Longtucky,” concisely but subtly marking it as backwards or redneck compared to progressive and affluent Boulder. In turn, Longmont residents compare their city to Boulder in a favorable light, saying, for example, that “real people live here” (Field notes, 2011), that it is easier to raise funds for social services in Longmont than it is in Boulder (Interview, 2011, Bob and Eleanor), or simply dismissing Boulder as elitist (Field notes, 2008). “Elitist” was probably not the character that Boulder’s leaders were attempting to preserve in the 1960s and 1970s, but neglect of social values and systematic erasure of social histories in the midst of rising land and real estate costs have reinforced that reputation.

Following landscape theorists, Boulder’s natural landscape is not complete without this historical account of its protection and conservation. The landscape hides its own social history (Duncan, 1990). The performative naturalization of space reinforces the ideology that natural landscapes are healthy places and sources of calm and contemplation (Cronon, 1996; Olwig, 2002). These narratives of natural health, sanity, and purity obscure both the physical labor expended on the landscape and the ideological work that the landscape does to justify or neutralize class, race, and labor relations (Cosgrove, 1998; Mitchell, 1996; Olwig, 2002; Smith, 1984).

A clean, pure, beautiful city

The city’s conservation literature is largely silent on several points. Most glaringly, despite the city’s thorough studies in 2004 and 2010 of use of and attitudes about open space, no data about race, ethnicity, or economic income are included (City of Boulder, 2004; City of Boulder, 2010, “Resident Survey Report”). This silence points to a possibility that the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department is unaware of a need to address differential access to open space within the population along racial, ethnic, or income lines. However, the situation is more complicated. In interviews with city parks and government employees, they expressed a range of desires and concerns about access. Park managers and outreach coordinators articulated an urgent and genuine wish that open space lands were utilized by a higher proportion of Hispanic residents (Interviews, 2008). In contrast, park staff reported differential rates of rule enforcement, with Hispanics censured more often than, for example, white members of fraternities and sororities also breaking park rules (Interview, 2007, Boulder Reservoir Park Staff).
The institutional nature of exclusions and differential rule enforcement shows the complexity of the discursive formations of race and the natural landscape in Boulder. Accepting the version of landscape history as natural and pristine and unaware of its racialized past, planners and citizens who embrace a desire for racial diversity wish the natural landscape were used more frequently by racial and ethnic minorities, including Hispanics. Here, ideologies of a pristine, natural landscape come in contact with late twentieth century discourses of equality, respect for diversity, and desire for inclusion of racial minorities.

Consequently, the making of the environmental subject is complicated by its racialization. The ideology of inclusion, especially in reference to environmentalism, often occupies a standpoint of white privilege, which enforces racial inequality even while expressing a discourse of racial harmony. The concept of white privilege is useful because a focus on white privilege enables us to develop a more structural, less conscious, and more deeply historicized understanding of racism. It differs from a hostile, individual, discriminatory act, in that it refers to the privileges and benefits that accrue to white people by virtue of their whiteness. Because whiteness is rarely problematized by whites, white privilege is scarcely acknowledged.... White privilege is thus an attempt to name a social system that works to the benefit of whites. (Pulido, 2000: 13)

In Boulder, white privilege grants white people exemption from the stares, comments, excessive helpfulness, and isolation that many people of color in the city remark on (Rodriguez, 2006; Field notes, 2008-2011). It is performatively reinforced by convivial lamentations among white people about the lack of people of color in Boulder. These remarks simultaneously reinforce an idea of unified hegemonic whiteness in the city and erase the non-white residents and their claims on the city as home. Racial understandings also play a role in the ideological naturalization of the landscape where classist assumptions are accompanied by white privilege. Analysis of white privilege allows us to see the racialization of conservation spaces. This racialization is one of the social histories excluded from commonsense understandings of Boulder’s natural landscape. It is from a position of white privilege that white park managers, city planners, and residents inadvertently claim the wilderness and open space as their own. They invite and encourage people of color to join in and share the wonderful resources that nature unproblematically provides and the city generously protects. For example, as I mentioned in the introduction, one summer I encountered a wealthy white Boulder resident at Eben G. Fine Park who said, “It’s great how Latinos can come to this park, but you still feel comfortable walking through. It’s not territorial” (Field notes, 2008). Clearly accustomed to feeling
comfortable in Boulder’s parks, he seemed to expect that the presence of Latinos would make him uncomfortable and possibly exclude him from the park. In addition, the reference to territorial Latinos also echoes broader social discourses about Latino gangs and the fear that accompanies that racial trope. This racialization is one of the constitutive elements of the discursive formations of Boulder’s conservation landscape.

A regressive sales tax that funds parks is also an example of a structural inequality fostered by white privilege and class privilege. One park manager insisted that a lack of invitation to parks is an issue of social justice: “If you pay for something [via taxes] and nobody’s making it clear to you that it’s your to use, that’s a social equity issue!” (Interview, 2008, City employee). Latinos are paying for the parks, the argument goes, so they should take advantage of them. Others point out that the tax was hardly a choice that the Hispanic community, for example, made in the polls because their population numbers are low (Interview, 2008, Boulder County employee).

The role of the landscape in obscuring and maintaining white privilege is especially apparent in the description of what happens when “ethnographic resources” are discovered on city open space land. In these cases, “associated ethnic groups may be consulted and their concerns may be taken into account as appropriate” (City of Boulder, 1995: 6-1). Open Space Program researchers will develop “ethnographically appropriate approaches to preserving the cultural and natural resources of Open Space” (ibid). Ethnic groups are implicitly assumed to be non-white, as revealed in this statement: In the case of historic and prehistoric burial sites, “Open Space may consult with groups reasonably linked by ties of kinship or culture to ethnically identifiable human remains... on Open Space lands” (ibid: 6-2). That is, when it would be culturally insensitive not to include “ethnic groups,” Open Space Program managers will incorporate such groups in decisions, as appropriate.

Despite the assertion that Native Americans may have brought one species of groundnut to the area (and its designation as a rare, threatened species rather than an invasive) and the preservation of historic buildings on open space land, the conservation literature characterizes all human action as potentially destructive to the environment (City of Boulder, 2007). Nature, separate from the city, must be preserved in its prior, pure state. Cronon points out the danger of this view for the larger environmental movement: “[T]o believe that nature, to be true, must also be wild [... means] our very presence in nature represents its fall”
(Cronon, 1996: 80-81). The error of these simple dichotomies attempting to distinguish the human from the natural is visible even within the city conservation documents themselves, in which “ancient hunter-gatherers” and historic structures can be separated from current culture, but agricultural resources are also included in open space to be preserved (ibid; City of Boulder, 1995). Agriculture and grazing are seen as a cultural relic, leftover from the time when people lived off the land and as a landscape to be preserved rather than as a destruction of the natural landscape (Smith, 1984).

The city’s conservation literature portrays the natural environment as guarded by the city and open to all. For "special populations” needing accommodation, the city’s Long Range Management Policies document states that the city takes into account the needs of “disabled persons, children, young people, senior citizens, and bilingual visitors” (City of Boulder, 1995: 8-1). The assumptions behind the determination of who needs extra help interpreting open space are unclear, and the phrasing here is awkward (i.e. why would a bilingual visitor need extra accommodation?). In a subtle racialization of space, Boulder’s conservation landscape is portrayed as open to everyone but managed by people not belonging to any “special” population.40

In a video produced by the City of Boulder titled “Open Space Mountain Parks, Our Vision and Our Future” the narrative of protecting the natural landscape is reinforced and the actions of early citizens praised:

The foresight of the early citizens in purchasing the Chautauqua area, the Batchelder Ranch, in 1898 and in encouraging the Chautauqua Association to come to Boulder and have a permanent presence in Boulder then led to those citizens reaching out and talking to Frederick Law Olmsted. He came to Boulder in 1910 and took a look at the surroundings and said, “This is a great thing! You need to preserve the mountains and the trees. You need to preserve these forestlands and the prairies below and along the Boulder Creek.” So we were lucky, early on, that the citizens of this community planned, and we've continued that planning for the last 100 years. (Boulder Municipal Channel 8, 2003)

The video states that the early citizens, Chautauqua Association, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr had great foresight and planning for future generations. But the story is more complex than this version of history suggests. Olmsted’s visit is portrayed in a different light by historians concerned with race and class.

Although Olmsted is famed for wanting to establish national parks in the U.S. that would be open to more than

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40 Although the categorization of Latinos as a racial other is contested, I use it because when I asked Latino and Hispanic Boulder residents what their race is, the majority of them said “Hispano” “Latino” or “Mexicano” (Hickcox, 2008; see also Anzaldúa, 1987).
“a very few, very rich people,” he despised Native Americans, and his landscape planning was not always so democratic (Olmsted, 1990 [1865]: 504, quoted in Olwig, 2002: 199).

In his visit to Boulder, Olmsted recommended not only the preservation of the majestic Flatirons along Boulder’s western edge, but also the creation of small expensive residential lots and large parks to cater specifically to middle-class and elite populations (Delgado and Stefancic, 1999). Olmsted also warned against attracting industry, particularly the kind that would foster “noise, dirt, disorder, or annoyance” for anyone not involved in the industry itself (ibid; Olmsted, 1910: 7). Olmsted discouraged the city from developing infrastructure that would facilitate the establishment of industry, and the city began an effort to buy out existing industries (Delgado and Stefancic, 1999). Olmsted’s recommendations about protection of the mountain views as well as the character of the city are largely forgotten as part of the landscape’s social history. The conservation landscape was re-created and adored as a natural space relied on “to speak unambiguously for itself” (Mitchell, 1996: 30). The groundwork was laid for Boulder to become a clean, pure, beautiful city because of its natural landscape and parks, with the anti-industry, anti-working-class history erased.

Olmsted’s recommendations to keep working-class people out of the city fell on friendly ears. “The reason there were no factories or industry here, other than the Beech Aircraft that came in the 1950s, is that the city fathers in the last century didn’t want those industries because of the people they’d bring here” (Interview, 2008, Boulder County employee). In the 1950s, Boulder began recruiting “clean” industry, such as federal labs and technological research and development firms, to come the city, starting with the National Bureau of Standards (formerly the federal Environmental Standards Services Administration), recruitment of which began in 1950. Ball Aerospace followed, in 1957, and in 1965 IBM developed its research park northeast of the city with city-supported infrastructure (Adams, 2006). In the city’s narrative of its environmental history, this change in city industry and demographics is framed in relationship to the natural landscape: “New residents meant both new opportunities and new challenges. Although jobs were needed, townspeople wanted to preserve the beautiful natural setting and amenities developed over the years” (City of Boulder, 2006).

This exclusion of industry played a part in and was justified by the protection of the natural landscape around Boulder. The conservation landscape has since been justified as an employment advantage
in recruitment: “The [Open Space and Mountain Parks] land system and the quality of life it represents attract visitors and help businesses to recruit and retain quality employees” (City of Boulder, 2008, “Open Space Board”; also Field notes, 2008). The “quality employees” referred to here presumably work for clean industries the city attracted mid-century, high-tech firms, outdoor industry headquarters, and the university, rather than the low-wage service sector that keeps the city’s restaurants and hotels open for tourists and residents.

The environmental value of the preserved natural landscape is easily seen as translated into economic value. The apparently inevitable increase in land value with preservation of open space and establishment of growth boundaries is accepted or lamented but rarely challenged. The origins of such elite populations in the city are often traced not to the Klan presence or hostility to working-class populations, but to the land use and zoning policies implemented since the 1960s to preserve the natural landscape. This version of Boulder’s class history performatively reinforces the idea that the virtuous goals of natural landscape preservation inadvertently caused the city to be dominated by wealthy whites, rather than vice-versa.

Furthermore, Kenneth Olwig (2002) analyzes Olmsted’s role in designing parks, particularly national parks, to reinforce the idea of a unified country after the Civil War. Olmsted’s efforts included evicting existing park populations without qualms (ibid). Comparing similar nationalistic work done by the material and ideological molding of natural landscapes in attempts to unify Britain, Olwig points out the explicit goals that Olmsted had in creating a national unity and identity. The scenic landscape of national parks, “the ideal park landscape... was seen as the cradle of the nation” (ibid: 202). In this unification, “the framing of the American national park as nature was used to obliterate the memory of earlier cultures and their marks on the land” (ibid: 206). These normative values of race and class were constitutive of the conservation landscape but obscured by the portrayal of the land as natural and in need of protection. Boulder’s conflict-free conservation history narrative and its own manifest destiny-like determination to foster a conservation-loving population in Boulder and beyond shows that Olmsted’s idea of national unity took root there. The city’s elitist and racist pasts were replaced by the more palatable conservation history of the city’s natural landscape.
Conclusion

A performative study of landscape shows the linkages between nation, class, race, and environmentalism. Perceptions of Boulder as a rich, white city have been mutually constituted with its characterization as a green city. The city’s wealth and racial homogeneity are perceived as a natural consequence of its conservation policies and outdoorsy lifestyle, repeating tropes of poverty-stricken minorities, of poor people who have no time to think about conservation, and of racial minorities and poor people who do not value nature the way rich and middle-class white people do. These tropes have been allowed to explain the peculiar confluence of the white city and its greenbelt because other social histories of elitism and racism have been erased. Moreover, this conservation landscape is not only shaped in open space history and literature; it is performatively invoked in residents’ daily reference to the healthy lifestyle, the beauty of the landscape, the wisdom of planners, the love of hiking in Boulder’s mountains and prairies, and even the puzzled references to Boulder’s population that is “so white.” Discourses of race, class, and conservation in Boulder are intimately intertwined, both in history and today.

A study of the ideological and discursive dynamics of landscape brings to light the normative function of the celebration of Boulder’s esteemed quality of life and outdoor recreational resources. A close look at landscape uncovers the city’s implicit social and environmental values as well as moments of elitism and racism in the city’s social history. At such moments, city leaders chose a direction for Boulder that would be most beneficial in maintaining a healthy (buffered), quiet (lacking noisy riffraff), well-organized (not disorderly), and prosperous (not impoverished or working-class) city. These moments do not need to be the uncontested trajectory of Boulder’s governance to be carried along as subtext in the discursive formations of race, class, and nature.

Innconently unaware of the labor history of the city and swayed by the easy work of matching conservation landscapes to the cultural landscapes of the wealthy white elite, many Boulder residents unabashedly celebrate the city’s recreational and conservation resources. This chapter is not written to condemn progressively minded city planners, environmentally concerned citizens, or proactive government officials in Boulder now or in the past. Instead, this story shows the importance of the discursive formation of the conservation landscape in both the creation and elision of the city’s social history.
This is also a story of people falling in love with a landscape that they, in part, created, both materially and symbolically. That love likely grew out of related fears, denial, alienation, and possibly hate of racial others and working-class, as Kosek, Smith, and Delgado and Stefancic suggest (Delgado and Stefancic, 1999; Kosek, 2004; Smith, 1984). But, Boulder residents believed, as did Olmsted, and many still do believe, that contemplation or experience of the natural landscape fostered health and inner peace. So they cultivated a landscape that fulfilled their desire for a pristine nature, called that landscape into being, and, in the process, displaced portions of the landscape’s social history that fell outside of the conservation narrative.

With scientific and thoughtful management, Boulder’s natural landscape has lived up to many of its residents’ expectations. In a commonsense understanding of the landscape, the problems of class-based exclusion and overwhelming whiteness seem external to such a pure, simple, and sometimes spiritual relationship between the people and their natural landscape. Thus the relationship is fostered and performatively reinforced through everyday interactions, representations, and policy-making. And, the model is touted as an example to follow, with barely a second thought for the jettisoned social histories of the landscape not amenable to the discourse of conservation.
Chapter 3: Racial silences and the affirmation of the white racial subject

Introduction

Seemingly innocuous or socially progressive discourses, including those centered on "cultural difference," can reinforce the differences they attempt to bridge. As part of the rubric of cultural racism, discussions about cultural difference often rely on unspoken racial meanings that reinforce hegemonic power relations. I demonstrate how "cultural difference" discourse elides the inequalities embedded in racial discourses, positions immigrants as "outsiders," and reinforces white racial subjectivity as the norm in Boulder and in the United States. In short, while the explicit goal of the discourse of cultural difference is to overcome the ostensible "problem" of cultural difference, much of what it accomplishes is the naturalization of racial ontology, or the "fact" of racial difference. Following Nadine Ehlers (2006: 149), this naturalization is a response to the "crisis of maintaining a claim to supposed racial ontology" that is the precondition for the construction and maintenance of "race." A performative analysis of race exposes the crisis as a necessary condition of racist identity formation (ibid). I expand on Ehler’s argument by drawing it through in-depth ethnographic data and linking it to the discourse of cultural difference. Even when explicit discussion of "race" is forbidden or avoided, the discourse of cultural difference reaffirms racial ontology. This reaffirmation simultaneously constitutes white racial subjectivity and reassures white racial subjects. The ongoing maintenance of an ontological understanding of race also maintains and secures white racial subjectivity.

Empirical data are drawn from an “Understanding Other Cultures” workshop conducted in Boulder in April 2010, interviews conducted between April 2010 and March 2011 with volunteers who teach English to immigrants in Boulder, Colorado, participant observation as a volunteer with the organization Intercambio de Comunidades (henceforth, “Intercambio”), field notes, and contemporary newspaper articles. The workshop was organized by Intercambio. A consultant who specializes in intercultural communication and competence training, a white woman in her sixties, led the workshop. About thirty-five people, including about twenty volunteer English teachers, ten English students, and five organization staff or board members attended the workshop. All workshop attendees came voluntarily; this workshop was not required for anyone’s job nor to qualify to volunteer with the non-profit or take classes from the non-profit. Most volunteers at the workshop
were American-born and white. Most students there were from Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, and one was from China. The workshop was conducted in English with simultaneous translation to Spanish (via headphones). Neither the non-profit’s mission nor the workshop’s goals are at issue in this chapter. Instead, I examine the operation of racial discourse in workshop discussions about understanding “cultural difference” and interviewees’ reflections about their experiences of cultural exchange in the broader context of Boulder’s social and environmental histories. The cultural differences discourse allows people to learn about other cultures without attending to racist or colonial histories or contemporary racial or ethnic inequalities because the discussion is emptied of questions of power that are necessarily part of conversations about race.

Racial discourse and the performative racial crisis

Discourse is not only what people say but a whole system of ideologies that shape social practice. A discursive framework highlights the racial undercurrents of discussions about cultural difference, even when race is not explicitly discussed. A discursive analysis allows an ethnographic assessment of the forms that racial discourse takes in people’s everyday lives (Hartigan, 1999, 2005; Yeh and Lama, 2006). In this chapter I identify racial discourses that undergird discussions of cultural difference and reinforce the supposed ontology of racial identity, including white racial subjectivity.

Following geographers Linda Peake (1993), Brian Ray (Peake and Ray, 2001), Audrey Kobayashi (2003), and Mary Thomas (2005), and building on the foundational work of Michel Foucault (1990 [1978], 1994, 1997 [1977]), this chapter uses an analysis of race as discourse to demonstrate through ethnographic material that social discourses such as “cultural difference” overlap with racial discourses and draw on racial meanings, even when race is not explicitly addressed in a social context. “Discourse” is best understood as a system of ideologies and interpretations that shape people’s social practices and affect the way people understand the world (Hay, 2003). Discourse is the way language acts to put things into place and people into categories (Foucault, 1994). Rather than taking “race” as a concept with an established meaning, a discursive approach investigates the ways the concept of race has taken on different meanings over time and in different places (Foucault, 1990 [1978]). Instead of asking what race is, a discursive analysis of race investigates how the concept of race is used to enforce or resist unequal power relations (ibid). This
distinction between the investigation of “race” and the discursive study of how “race” is used is particularly important because of the histories of racism directly linked to academic study of race that have supported colonialism, injustice, and inequality (Baker, 1998; Livingstone, 1992). A discursive view of race not only examines the history of the idea of race, but also examines how the things people say and do in contemporary society, especially on a mundane, daily basis, continue to reinforce, recreate, shift and challenge the current meanings of “race” in different contexts. A study of racial discourse focuses analysis on understandings of race drawn on, perpetuated, and transformed in everyday social relationships. Racial discourses are explicit and implicit in people’s everyday lives. They draw on, reinforce, and resist hegemonic power relations because power permeates discourses and because discourse is one technique of power (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 11).

Social norms are neither simple nor contained in discrete sets of meanings. Racial discourse overlaps with discourses of class, gender, and sexuality, among others (Peake, 1993). Furthermore, racial discourse itself is full of contradictions and ambiguities. Thus, when analyzing racial discourse in everyday actions and speech, it is necessary to identify the normative racial meanings that people draw on and to determine the ways in which they are reinforcing those norms and/or resisting and transforming them. Such analysis facilitates an understanding of how racial discourse operates in people’s lives within social contexts. Examining how racial discourse operates reveals unexpected flows of power/knowledge in the formation of subjects (Foucault, 1990 [1978]).

Racial meanings are often embedded in non-racial language. Simply not talking about race does not lead to the eviction of racial meanings from everyday discursive practices. Examination of the contradictions and ambiguities within discourse is not done for the purpose of “disproving” a discourse. Because “ideologies operate by systematically promoting certain meanings in preference to others according to the discernable interests of a dominant social group” (Jackson, 1989: 50), it is important to examine the everyday language people use in perpetuating ideologies. Looking at a discourse’s contradictions and ambiguities shows in detail how certain hegemonic meanings are promoted over alternative meanings. Contradictions and ambiguities also point to the need to examine the common-sense truths people draw on in everyday discursive practice, including ontological notions of cultural and racial difference. For example, Mary Thomas (2008) studies how high school girls draw on the multicultural discourse of universal humanism and post-
racial attitudes promoted in schools, but she argues that this humanist discourse is contradicted by the girls’ reliance on the discourse of racial difference in interpreting their social world. Thomas shows how these seemingly contradictory discourses are fundamentally related: “Multiculturalism itself articulates through difference, as ‘different than Anglo’ and therefore as other to white and heteronormative” (Thomas, 2008: 2871). Multiculturalism appears to transcend difference, to promote a post-racial society, but it relies on the discourse of difference, particularly racial difference (Thomas, 2011). The examination of discursive contradictions and ambiguities can expose unspoken assumptions that undergird contemporary social discourses such as cultural difference.

The discursive analysis of racial meanings in this chapter demonstrates the broader argument set out in the Introduction that race is best understood as performative (Butler 1993a, 1999) and thus should be analyzed in everyday discursive practice. In the rubric of performativity, it would be a mistake to analyze individual acts as “performances” in the sense that people who execute the acts are choosing the discourses on which they draw. Rather, because many social norms, such as racial meanings, are common sense (Hall, 1986; Jackson, 1989), they are rarely examined in everyday speech. They are often taken as naturalized truths (ibid). In this way, hegemonic racial ideologies are reinforced performatively in everyday practice, as people are compelled to repeat embodied actions that draw on social norms and reiterate them as truth (Butler, 1993a). This compulsion to repeat normative discursive practices is the performative production of subjects by discourse (ibid). Specific to race, the compulsion reinforces the ontological status of “race” through repeating the naturalization of racial truths (Hall, 1997). Drawing on Butler, Ehlers explains the constitution of the racial subject:

Instead of being the expression of an innate nature, racial identity is *formed* through a dual operation. Firstly, the racial subject is called into being – as raced – through a discursive name or assignment, that is [for example], as black or white. This naming ritual works as a repeated disciplinary, normalising and naturalising call to identity. Secondly, but in a coterminous movement, the individual is compelled to *assume* this name in some form. This takes place when the subject responds to the name through which she is called into being and when she then negotiates with the normalised acts and behaviours that are seen to be associated with the name and that mark the subject’s “belonging” – to the category black or white. (Ehlers, 2006: 154)

This performative reenactment of racial identification through repetition of norms avoids the ever-threatening realization of a crisis in racial meanings, in which “race” is exposed as lacking ontological status (Ehlers, 2006; see also Mirón and Inda, 2000; Warren, 2003). With a performatively constituted subject, “the
enunciation of subjectivity always involves the necessity to recite, in some recognisable way, the markers and norms that call the subject into being, and this is done so as to ward off the threat or risk of not ‘being’ the identity one supposedly is” (ibid: 153). This evasion of the failure of identification is central to Ehler’s racial crisis and to the performative constitution of the racial subject. The realization of the crisis of racial identity is a “point of ambiguity” at which the “subject is seen to have failed to announce racial truth” and failed to reinforce the “naturalness” of racial difference, thus calling into question racial ontology (ibid: 152). Further, I argue in this chapter that the repeated avoidance of the realization of ontological crisis and simultaneous confirmation of the white subject’s supposed ontological status reinforces white subjectivity. White subjects are reassured of their racial identities within a discourse of cultural difference that denies the dynamics of power it helps to maintain.

**The authorized discourse of cultural difference**

*Authorized and unauthorized discourses*

The discourse of cultural difference, exemplified in the “Understanding Other Cultures” workshop assumes that culture is ontological, something that can be analyzed as factual. This view has important implications for how people perceive and deal with difference in their everyday lives. The discourse of cultural difference is an “authorized discourse.” A racial discourse, in contrast, is an “unauthorized discourse” due to social prohibitions and limitations on racial speech. The cultural difference discourse used in the workshop and echoed in interviews and news media aims to end prejudice without addressing structural or historical power dynamics in society. It focuses on interactions among individuals as the site and scale at which to intervene to reduce prejudice and exclusion, thus avoiding the treacherous realm of structural inequality or oppression. This avoidance keeps the discourse of cultural difference safely within the realm of an authorized discourse in society, one easily discussed in social circles, fundraising efforts, and even political debates. The cultural difference discourse draws support by focusing on positive individual actions and locating the societal need for such a discussion primarily in the problem of inter-cultural communication across difference. Like discourses of multiculturalism, the cultural difference discourse celebrates difference. Unlike racial controversy, no colonial, genocidal, slave, or Jim Crow histories are invoked. The individualized nature of the discourse elides the examination of global flows of capital or political-economic relations. Thus,
the discourse of cultural difference promises to solve the problem of social prejudice and exclusion and relieve the contemporary social anxiety around the experience of difference in a palatable, enjoyable way. As a discourse it is a technique of power (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 11). The primary action of the cultural difference discourse is to promote a form of knowledge about “cultural difference” that alleviates social anxiety around “difference” while not challenging structural hegemonic social relations that rely on racial and racist norms and meanings in everyday life (Goldberg, 1993).

The language and experience of cultural difference

The main goal of the “Understanding Other Cultures” workshop is to teach workshop participants to respect cultural differences through providing them with a framework to understand and value difference. The workshop is designed to give participants tools to use in their everyday lives when they encounter people who act differently from the ways they do. The workshop goals are explained in the opening of the workshop, prior to the introduction of the workshop leader:

Organization staff: ...the reason we are here tonight is because we are going to talk about cultural differences. So why do you think it is important to talk about cultural differences? Anyone?
Participant: Because there are. There are cultural differences.
Staff: There are. And, so what? Is that a problem?
Participant: Not necessarily.
Staff: Okay, so what I think, and this is my personal opinion, is that human beings... have the tendency to judge and to reject those that behave different than us. That’s our nature. When we analyze the behavior of individuals and groups that behave different than us, we start understanding the reasons why they behave that way and therefore we have more compassion, greater understanding, we are more accepting and inclusive, okay? So today we are going to be analyzing different behaviors... and hopefully when we leave the workshop today we are going to be less judgmental about certain things that maybe we may have judgments about.

This introduction to the workshop highlights several assumptions built into the model of cultural difference and cultural understanding that the workshop employs: first, differences exist; second, cultures are fundamentally different, and the differences we experience among people are a result of our respective cultures; third, it is in our nature to judge people who behave differently from the way we do; fourth, we can and should educate ourselves about difference to be more comfortable with it and less judgmental. These four assumptions are central to reinforcing a naturalized concept of culture and cultural difference as ontological, or a simple fact. They essentialize cultural difference and remove it from the social and historical
contexts in which it is produced (MacLaren, 1994). These assumptions are central to a discourse of cultural racism (Pred, 2000).

The final assumption points to the operational assumption of the workshop. Through learning about generalized differences among cultures and about cultural values as a motivation for people's actions, workshop participants will be able to suspend judgment of people who are different from them whom they encounter in their everyday lives. The workshop leader expresses this in the following way:

The purpose tonight is to really help you see things on a daily basis and be able to better understand those, and [... to] understand what an “intercultural moment” is. And that’s when you’ve gone through something and you just realize that you had to bring all of your sensitivity and awareness to bear in order to understand what just happened in that situation.

The workshop is designed to give participants a basic understanding of generalized cultural differences and how those can be expressed in individual actions so they will be able to identify cultural differences encountered in everyday life and suspend judgment about them.

During the workshop, the “tools” given to participants include an explanation of generalized differences among cultures. These generalized differences are broken out into rubrics, usually binary, onto which different cultures can be mapped. For example, cultures can be characterized as individual or collective, task-focused or relationship-focused, direct communication cultures or indirect communication cultures. When the workshop leader tells participants, “Eighty-five percent of the world’s cultures are collective,” participants from an individualistic culture can expect that people from other cultures might place more emphasis on group harmony and success than on individual self-reliance and success. Collectivism here is presented as a cultural value that shapes an individual’s actions. Using this rubric, participants can imagine meeting a person from a different culture who might not seem motivated enough to accomplish individual success, but then suspend judgment, realizing that, instead, the person is prioritizing group or family success over his own. Likewise, recognizing different communication styles (i.e. direct versus indirect), participants learn not to ask “Yes / No” questions when conversing with someone from an indirect communication culture, but to ask, ”Tell me about...” or ”What do you think about...” types of questions instead. This practical advice is offered for participants to navigate cross-cultural interactions more effectively and with less judgment. Workshop participants learn that there is so much to learn about cultures and the differences among cultures that can help them be more understanding of people from other cultures who act differently.
One volunteer English teacher Cathy expressed her belief that culture is ontological, saying, “When something is part of you it is part of your core. And you’re not gonna change that quickly. So even if you say to [someone] ‘you don’t have to say yes’… that’s part of who they are and they’re still gonna be that way.” Cathy emphasizes how difficult cultural exchange can be because of how difficult it is to adapt to a different culture that has different norms.

Workshop participants are encouraged to recognize intercultural moments when they need to suspend judgment of people from other cultures, consider their cultural rubrics, and attempt to communicate across a cultural divide. Volunteer English teachers said in interviews that it is natural for people to judge other people who are different and that this judgment must be overcome. Julie articulates how natural it is to look out for people who are like you, but how difficult it is not to judge people at the same time:

It’s a very uncomfortable issue to deal with… being the same and being different, and acknowledging each other without stomping all over each other…. I mean, trying to be somewhat non-judgmental but, being human…we like… the people who are like us… You watch out for your own family and your own society and your own country. But still… it’s hard not to stomp on other people in doing that.

Julie accepts that people are different and even that people naturally form strong social relationships with people in their own “family… society… and country,” but this acceptance conflicts with her knowledge that it is wrong to judge others. Nelda spells out how taking a relativist view can help people avoid judging others. She says that there “is no right or wrong, just different ways of looking at things.” If there is no right or wrong, there is no basis for judgment. Ina also draws on relativism to suspend judgment. She starts to talk about the “crazy stories” that her English student tells her, but then interrupts herself saying that “they don’t think it’s a crazy story! I probably tell them crazy stories!” Then she reverses her initial tendency to judge the “crazy” stories and remarks on the positive nature of cultural exchange: “They say something and I learn something new. It’s really neat.” This reversal is part of what she learned working with Intercambio because “organizations that foster cultural exchange [help teach you] how to not be so judgmental about things you don’t really know about.”

The primary goal of the workshop is clearly one of cross-cultural understanding and communication, grounded in the assumption that cultural differences exist ontologically and are relatively stable. Many volunteer English teachers remarked on the necessity that children experience diversity, cultural exchange, and cross-cultural understanding. Ina places so much value in cross-cultural experiences that she enrolled
her three children in a bilingual, multicultural school. She says that “they get this whole other cultural language thing that you can’t get anywhere else… [and] you can’t get rid of that… it sticks with you, helps you become who you are.” Beatrice agrees and points out that “you can’t teach tolerance to kids without diversity… a lack of diversity can cause prejudice.” Volunteers also remark how valuable cross-cultural education and understanding is for adults, including for themselves as individuals. Margaret says, “I think there’s a lot we can learn from each other. I don’t think any one culture, person, whatever is right. I think that’s why we get in lots of trouble, you know, have wars. So I like the idea of getting to know people who are different from me.” Bill points to Intercambio’s role in the Boulder community at fostering cross-cultural understanding: “A program like Intercambio is invaluable because it does give you so much, a real felt personal understanding of what this… group of our population is going through and who they really are, not who they are based on stereotypes in… newspapers.” Julie, a self-described “WASP” in her 60s, responded to my question of how Julie’s “clueless” friends would benefit from gaining knowledge about the lives of people from other cultures in this way:

I think it would make them kinder. It would give them much more kindness, and… it might alleviate a certain amount of guilt that people have about having other people be less fortunate than them. And I think it would alleviate a lot of anger. I mean I think a whole lot of the anger about immigration is very, um, I mean makes people very unhappy, and, and even the people who are angry are very unhappy and I think that it would make them a little bit calmer and happier and less frightened. Maybe less frightened is maybe the biggest piece is that people would be less fearful of other people. Julie describes many emotions that people experience in dealing with difference at both a societal level (”anger about immigration”) and as individuals (“it would make them kinder”). She went on to say, “I mean I th– there’s like little, little kinda comments that people make… My age group kind of grew up in a time when, when people, um, were more accepting of prejudice, and so it kind of trickles out in, in uh, in my peers, you know it kinda pokes its little head out a lot.” Despite her discomfort and hesitance about the topic, expressed in her halting speech, Julie sees being exposed to other cultures as a way to reduce meanness and prejudice. She implies that people reject prejudice now, even though prejudice still exists, at least among her peers, and it “pokes its little head out a lot.” She connects race explicitly with cultural difference by saying, “Your race implies some kind of cultural background that is different from somebody else’s.” Despite her hesitance in discussing prejudices, in accordance with social prohibitions around race, it is clear from Julie's narrative that the discourse of cultural difference intersects with racial discourse in important ways.
The discourse of cultural difference reinforces a particular understanding of difference as ontological and recommends the cure to this “problem” of difference through education and suspension of judgment. A concept of difference as always being created and reinforced is incongruous with this view. It hides processes of racialization that occur in everyday life by rendering the creation of difference to a separate space (other countries) and times (in the past). Since differentiation is reduced to a matter of extending one’s education and suspending one’s judgment, it protects the privilege of white subjectivity. This understanding of cultural difference hides the ongoing crisis of racialization.

**Unauthorized racial discourse**

*Racial silences and unauthorized racial discourse*

In the workshop analyzed here, the social mores limiting a public discussion of race enforce a silence about race in a workshop that is designed to prevent prejudice. These social prohibitions on speech are one way in which power acts through discourse. Thus, it is exactly the silence around race that belies the work of racial discourse in the discussion of cultural difference.

Even when it is not discussed, race can play a discursive role. Studying race as a discourse is part of the study of the general production of power (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 13) and the specific production of power through the operation of racialized meanings in society. Foucault (1990 [1978]) demonstrates that one way in which power is produced and reproduced through discourse is through social prohibitions, including prohibitions on speech. Thus, silences on certain topics are enforced in specific times and spaces, and those silences are “an integral part of strategies that underlie and permeate discourses” (ibid: 27). The administration of silences is part of the production of discourse (ibid: 12), and discourse is one technique of power. Thus, silences around race enforced and adhered to in a space such as a workshop about cultural difference are part of the discursive production of “race” and the power relations it maintains. Further, Foucault argues that

> [t]here is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. (Foucault, 1990 [1978]: 27)
The discussion of cultural difference is an authorized discourse about difference that hides the unauthorized racial discourse that undergirds it. The authorized discourse of cultural difference resembles racial discourse that has been emptied of references to inequalities or power.

Despite its central role in American history and society, race remains a contentious topic, and discussion of race almost always yields conflict, anger, pain, and misunderstandings. In this way, race can be viewed as an unauthorized or prohibited discourse. In a Western, liberal society, racial discourse constitutes a linguistic territory filled with landmines and exclusions, including racial slurs, racist jokes, and stereotypes. In interviews, workshops, and participant observation, I found that for many white people who do not want to be racist, there is very little they are comfortable saying about race, besides a simple identification of a person’s race (and as Thomas, 2008, points out, even that can seem contentious) or opposing racism. Opposing racism was the only explicit use of racial discourse that whites in interviews proclaimed confidently, without hesitation or anxiety. These prohibitions strongly shape the contours of race and difference in the U.S., yet, due to their very nature as prohibitions, they are rarely talked about.

What work do these prohibitions of racial discourse do in addition to (or instead of) their promotion of a color-blind and tolerant society? Many authors have noted that racial discourse, like all discourse, is fluid and changes in relation to other institutions and discourses (Hall, 1997; Omi and Winant, 1994). Ehlers (2006) gives the example of the development of anti-miscegenation laws in the early 1900s as an institutional response to a change in discourse. Ehlers argues that changes such as this one are instituted to protect the ontological status of “race.” Her argument that race is policed through and predicated upon a crisis of meaning suggests that contemporary prohibitions of racial discourse protect the supposed ontological status of race by preventing a realization of a crisis in racial meaning. Thus, even while discussion about race is extremely limited, “race” continues to be protected as a “fact” through its implicit presence in authorized discourses, including cultural difference discourse.

In the face of these prohibitions, authorized discourses such as cultural difference take their place in identifying, deciphering, and reinscribing social difference and, implicitly, racial difference. But, through what Pred (2000: 77) calls “deception and illusion… acts of discursive distraction… [and] the attention-diverting silences of white magic,” the racial and racist implications of the authorized discourses are hidden. For example, one can discuss older or younger generations as a “different culture,” as the workshop leader does.
below, and this idea of age as culture distances the concept of culture from discussions of race. Applying the label "culture" to a difference based on age makes it seem like a light-hearted concept, one that is easy to use and not offensive. It makes it seem like a friendly, useful, even playful concept. “Race” is most commonly thought of as the opposite of a light-hearted, friendly, or playful category. It is a serious, divisive, hurtful concept, one that often results in pain and punishment when it is discussed. So the use of “culture” to talk about the trite differences of “kids these days” from adults secures its place not only as a useful concept, but also as an authorized discourse (Foucault, 1990 [1978]). Because they are part of a painful and prohibited discourse, racial meanings present in the conversation about difference are at once acting and ignored. Racial discourse, through its material presence in the workshop, is an active silence.

*Ontological cultural difference*

Some volunteer English teachers interviewed see “culture” itself as a broadly defined set of life experiences that shape our differences from others. In interviewees’ definitions, multiculturalism almost always includes or revolves around differences of “ethnicity” or “race,” but several other axes of difference are always cited, including culture, language, and class. Often interviewees also mention “racism” in definitions of multiculturalism. In this way, definitions almost always center on the implication of communicating across or overcoming differences inherent in the concept of multiculturalism paired with a focus on multiculturalism as a celebration of the many ways of life, traditions, cultures, or languages in the U.S. Most volunteers interviewed remarked on how much they, personally, had benefitted from getting to know someone from a different culture, even when language ability limited communication and pitfalls of cultural difference were encountered. In their definition, as in the workshop, interviewees express an understanding of cultures as ontological and cultural difference as an obstacle to be overcome but with great reward if accomplished.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1991: 144) addresses the way culture, like race, can be portrayed as ontological. She shows that culture can function like race through a discourse that makes cultural difference seem innate. Cultural discourse, despite divorcing the “cultural” from the “natural,” often reinforces such a rigid concept of culture that it lends an ontological self-evidence to cultural difference (ibid: 143). Such rigid concepts of culture and ontological cultural difference dominate the workshop examined in
this chapter and punctuate interviews. Their essentializing nature is hidden by a concept of culture in which different cultures are positioned relative to one another on a flattened field of power relations that pivots on an anemic concept of “difference.” Thus, even when culture is understood as a set of behaviors and beliefs that are learned and can change, it tends “to freeze difference” in the same way that the concept of “race” does (ibid: 144). Anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran furthers this argument in her book-length exploration of the ways that “culture” stands in for “race,” and the “ways in which racism is rearticulated through the enunciation of cultural difference” (Visweswaran, 2010: 4, 7). For example, in social spaces such as the workshop examined here, it is understood that if a person grows up in Japan, he or she will inevitably learn “Japanese culture,” leaving no room for different cultures in Japan or Japanese cultural change. These uses of the concept of culture tend to present cultures as more coherent and homogenous than they are (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 146).

Viewed as ontological, cultures are not dynamic, and so they are easily divided into types and categories and mapped onto a generalized rubric. The following example of emphasizing cultural difference as a way to understand social relationships shows how the workshop leader listens to a participant’s comment and maps it onto a generalized rubric of culture. The workshop leader uses the example to show that, culturally, “tasks” are more important to Americans than “relationships.” In this example, not only does the workshop leader portray American culture as homogenous in its focus on tasks, she also reiterates an us/them binary, which works to position the workshop participant as an outsider. When the workshop leader asked what participants found unusual visiting countries other than their home country, one young male participant who moved to the U.S. from Mexico said:

Participant: I been living here for three years, and two years in the same neighborhood, and my neighbors seems like they don’t go outside or they don’t say hi. Sometimes they just drive into the garage, and they go to the door and, you know? Like, the streets seems like [... silent].
Leader: It’s like little ants. They come home, close their door —
Participant: Well, I was living in Mexico, and you know almost all your neighbors, and also in the afternoon you can chat a little bit with them, so I feel more like it’s something that I’m missing from Mexico, I think.
Leader: I think that’s a good point. And it’s because we’re busy, and we have a lot to do, and it isn’t part of our culture, I think, to think about relationships as much as we focus on tasks and getting things done.

The participant says he misses the social nature of his neighborhood in Mexico and contrasts it with the private nature of his neighborhood in Boulder. The workshop leader fits his observation into a generalized
rubric in which the Mexican culture is relationship-focused and the American culture is task-focused. According to the workshop's goals, this explanation can help the participant understand that his neighbors' anti-social behavior need not be taken personally, and he ought not to judge them for being so aloof.

But, the workshop leader's analysis also turns the observation around to be about the ant-like neighbors, who suddenly become "us": "we have a lot to do, and it isn't part of our culture." The workshop leader displaces the participant from the subject position in the narrative of his own experience. She places "us" Americans in the position of normal cultural subjects who just happen to value tasks over relationships. This displacement recognizes the participant's observation of cultural difference, but instead of considering further his experience of the difference, it transfers the analysis to "American culture" and positions him as different from that American norm. Her statement acts to position the immigrant as "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996; Peake and Ray, 2001).

Simultaneously, the workshop leader positions herself – a white woman – as the American norm. She brings with her into the conceptual space of the American norm all of the American-born white people at the workshop, as well. Likewise, the other immigrants at the workshop are also portrayed as out of place. This positioning of the man from Mexico as an outsider has a different effect if the workshop leader is not white; she has to be white to speak so authoritatively as "we Americans" or about "our culture." What if the workshop leader were not white? If she were an immigrant, even with U.S. citizenship, her use of "our culture" would not make sense; it would prompt the question "which culture?" instead of pointing easily to American culture. If the workshop leader were a racial or ethnic minority, the question "which culture?" remains, as well, because of the convergence of the borders around "race" and "culture" in the U.S. For example, "black culture," "Hispanic culture," and "Asian culture" are still in common, if erroneous, use. If a black woman leading a workshop says, "It isn't part of our culture," then white workshop participants must pause to choose between "black culture" and American culture. With a white woman leading the workshop, the question of race is silenced, despite its discursive presence.

White Americans are normalized as "us" in everyday discourse. Cathy defines multiculturalism from a position of white normativity, which she occupies. She says, "To me it would mean respect... Multicultural means that... we have to spend time getting to know and understand why people do things the way they do." Reading Cathy's definition of multiculturalism from a position of white privilege emphasizes her separation of
“us” who need to “spend time getting to know and understand” from “them” who do things differently. The conceptualization of cultural difference at work ignores the racialized power differentials inherent in whites’ us / them statements.

This silent presence or invisibility of white racial identity is one way white privilege is maintained (Bonnett, 1997; Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Lipsitz, 2006). As a racial identity, “whiteness” appears to be an unmarked, autonomous identity (ibid). Common-sense understandings of race hide the relational nature of white subjectivity, making white identity seem objectively true, “a self-actualized achievement” that does not appear to reference a racialized other (Dwyer and Jones, 2000: 212). This “distancing” from its constitutive outside is what keeps white identity stable (ibid: 211-212). This apparent white racial ontology allows “white’ people [to] paradoxically hover over social diversity just as they become the yard-stick for its measurement” (ibid: 210).

Thus, the major theoretical contribution of scholars who study “whiteness” is their focus on “white” as a racial identity. Ruth Frankenberg (1993) argues that by naming whiteness, scholars expose dominant social structures and their effects and attempt to “mark” the “unmarked” and apparently autonomous white Western self. Likewise, Alastair Bonnett (1997) argues that scholars need to put an end to the view of whiteness as “normal and unexceptional” and instead identify the currents of power that make white identity look like the norm. But, as Audrey Kobayashi points out, “The practice of destabilizing life’s normative categories is one that is deeply unsettling and fundamentally geographical” (Kobayashi, 2003: 549). The tendency for white racial identity to persist as apparently invisible and ontological is strong.

The workshop examined in this chapter relies on racial discourses of “us” and “them” and solidifies racial privilege in the same way that anti-racist workshops and some studies of “whiteness” inadvertently do. Whiteness studies attempts to demonstrate that whites are aware of racial privilege and attempt to dismantle it, but there is a danger in the possibility, which critics point out, that the identification of whiteness as an object of study can actually solidify white racial privilege (Hartigan, 2005; Kobayashi, 2003; Mohanram, 2007; Wiegman, 1999). Recognizing whiteness, like acknowledging cultural difference, does not ensure a simultaneous recognition of the power dynamics, complex histories, and inequalities that racialization constitutes. Moreover, simply recognizing white racial identity or cultural difference often reinforces ontological understandings of both. “Whiteness” is a result of a process of identification and subject
formation, so in this chapter, I use the terms “white racial identity” to refer to white racial identification as a process, and “white racial subjectivity” to refer to the performative enactment of white racial subjects.

Two of the primary accomplishments of the workshop, quite separate from its goals, are endorsing “difference” as a cogent way to understand social relationships and reinforcing the cultural differences discussed in the workshop with white racial identity maintained as the American norm. These are accomplished through making the discussion sound like a neutral, objective description of ontological cultural differences, explaining cultural differences using an us / them binary, and portraying cultures as internally consistent, homogenous units. As Ruth Frankenberg says of a similar discussion of culture, “This mode of thinking about ‘difference’ expresses clearly the double-edged sword of what I have referred to as a color- and power-evasive repertoire, apparently valorizing cultural difference but doing so in a way that leave racial and cultural hierarchies intact” (Frankenberg, 1993: 197). This ontological understanding of culture, grounded in an us / them binary, incorporates the assumption that all people experience the difficulty of “understanding other cultures” in the same way and thus elides the power dynamics of belonging and exclusion that are necessarily constitutive of us / them divisions. Cathy was not the only person to use an us / them division in her discussion of difference. Lou, a white male in his thirties, remarks that “from a white American perspective it’s great to get a taste of another culture... because they’re part of our community too.” Lou presents this observation in the context of talking about the benefits English students gain from classes with Intercambio, including language instruction and cultural education. He adds that white Americans also benefit from this arrangement, a classic statement that cultural exchange is a good for everybody. This idea of a level field on which people from different cultures meet reinforces a silence around power. Because the workshop talks about “American culture” and immigration without explicitly addressing the racism that infuses the discussion of immigration in American media and popular debates, it also reinforces a silence around race. Implicitly, the workshop’s discussion of “cultural difference” is also mediated by racial discourse and reinforces, through its silences, hegemonic power relations of race in the U.S.

Chandra Mohanty (1993), Sarita Srivastava (1994), and John Hartigan, Jr. (2005) discuss the operation of racial discourse to legitimize power relations in anti-racism workshops. Examples include calling on people of color to talk about being victims of racism; in contrast, whites often talk about guilt, complicity, disbelief, or hope (Srivastava, 1994). These patterns and expectations of who is eligible to
comment from what perspective on racism – the victim, the racist, or the complicit white – reinforce the racialized identities that anti-racism opposes. My research furthers their work in demonstrating the ways that racial discourses work silently through discussions about “cultural difference.” That is, unlike the anti-racism workshops, the “Understanding Other Cultures” workshop, and discussion of it in interviews, does not take racism, race, racial equality, or racial justice as its topic. Instead, culture, cultural difference, and cross-cultural understanding are the topics covered in the workshop. Despite the silence around race and racism, the discussion of “cultural difference” nonetheless relies on racial discourse and acts to reinforce the ontological status of both racial and cultural difference.

The fundamental problem with the goal of increasing cultural understanding through increased cultural sensitivity (seeing the cultural reasons "beneath" the things people do) is that it fails to recognize the ways that the categorization (e.g. collective versus individual cultures) and description of cultural differences reinscribe the very differences the sensitization purports to overcome (Mohanty, 1993). The model of “understanding other cultures” fails to act dynamically, but instead yields a clunky, Linnaean categorization of cultural stereotypes in the name of respect and understanding of the "cultural differences." It reifies the differences.

Central to this project is a recognition that race is largely inescapable in American social relations (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Peake and Ray, 2001). Critical race theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994: 55) characterize race as "pervasive and hegemonic." Because various components of social life, including language and social structures, are infused with racial meaning, "it would be impossible for our social practices and structures not to reflect these racial understandings" (Pulido, 2000). Thus, as I demonstrated in chapter 1, geographers have analyzed the ways construction of race is tied up in colonial histories of governance and knowledge formation. An ontological concept of culture and cultural difference can replicate the power dynamics of racism, particularly because the two concepts shared an intimate relationship in the era of European colonialism. This history points to the complex and subtle roles that the concept of race plays in American society, both in academic and popular culture realms, as well as its power to shape people’s understanding of their world.

Jim Blaut (1992) also establishes a connection between pervasive racial understandings and conceptions of culture through histories of colonialism. He demonstrates that modern racist theories rely on
assumptions about cultural evolution that continue to locate innovation and progress in Europe in order to justify neocolonialism (Blaut, 1992). His analysis focuses on culture and racism in social science modernization theories. He demonstrates that even as religious and biological conceptions of race popular in the 1800s and early 1900s have been removed from the realm of social science, its modernization theory is nevertheless a racist theory (ibid). That is, despite the fact that “race” is removed from the framework, it is nonetheless racist. Blaut demonstrates the presence of a racial discourse in academic theories.

The tendency to naturalize both “race” and “culture” and assign them ontological status is also expressed as cultural racism. Cultural racism is distinguished from biological racism, in which “races” are seen as biologically distinct and organized into a hierarchy of abilities, aptitudes, morality, and a host of other characteristics, with “white” at the top of the hierarchy. Cultural racism, in contrast, can be seen as the division of people into a hierarchy based on culture (Blaut, 1992) or as the emphasis shifting from “hierarchy” to “difference” (Gilroy, 1990; Giroux, 1993). In Blaut’s version of cultural racism, individual members of minority races are blamed for not achieving a sufficient level of culture or civilization. Blaut’s “cultural racists” are people who believe they are not racist because they do not believe that members of one race have a greater or diminished capacity for education, civilization, or socialization than members of another race. They separate capacity from biology, and instead this capacity is expressed as culture (Blaut, 1992: 289-290). Blaut says many contemporary racists believe that those racial minorities who do not achieve high IQ scores or professional success or manage to stay out of prison have the capacity to acquire the cultural characteristics to accomplish those things but have not (ibid).

Paul Gilroy sees the turn from biological racism to cultural racism as a return rather than an entirely new development: “No surprise, then that in its postwar retreat from racism the term [race] has once again acquired an explicitly cultural rather than a biological inflection” (Gilroy, 1990: 266). He points out that “culture” was a term that did a lot of work of differentiation and hierarchization before the rise of “modern scientific racism” in the 1800s (ibid). Importantly, Gilroy sees the concept of “culture” that is central to

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41 For more on the history of biological racism, see Blaut, 1992; Omi and Winant, 1994; Goldberg, 1992; Baker, 1990; Livingstone, 1992. It is also important to note that, historically, “white” was not always positioned as the superior race in these hierarchies; “Asian races” were sometimes assigned that position in the racial hierarchy (Livingstone, 1992).

42 Blaut wrote this article in the early 1990s.

43 See also MacLaren (1994) who categorizes Blaut’s “cultural racists” as “conservative multiculturalists.”
cultural racism as "conceived along ethnically absolute lines, not as something intrinsically fluid, changing, unstable, and dynamic, but as a fixed property of social groups rather than a relational field in which they encounter one another and live out social, historical relationships" (ibid). He sees an ontological concept of culture as central to cultural racism. Allan Pred, in his study of white racism in Sweden, also sees an ontological view of culture as central to the discourse of cultural racism (Pred, 2000: 72). He demonstrates how Swedes' characterization of immigrants to Sweden as “the other” and the resultant marginalization of immigrants in Sweden rests on the conception of culture as static, paired with the conflation of ethnic stereotyping. In his distinctive prose, he says:

Cultural racism—wherein negative ethnic stereotyping leads to racist effects, to discrimination and segregation, to marginalization and exclusion; wherein skin pigment, hair color, and other bodily markers are unreflectedly translated into highly charged cultural markers; wherein outward biological difference and cultural difference become automatically (con)fused with each other and entire groups thereby racialized—is, practically and discursively, now clearly the most prevalent form of racism in Sweden. (Ibid: 66)

Pred's linking of biological difference and cultural difference is particularly helpful because it encourages an examination of how biological or physical characteristics are linked to cultural or behavioral characteristics through assumptions and stereotypes in everyday language (including media, conversations, and policy). In this model, racism is not "no longer about biology" and culture is not completely separated from biology. Rather, racism is furthered through overlapping concepts of race and culture, both of which are naturalized and given ontological status, and cultures are seen as having irreconcilable differences (Mirón and Inda, 2000: 98), which causes cultural clashes because of the perceived "'naturalness' of cultural boundaries... and the consequent impossibility of harmonious 'race relations'” with immigrants (Pred, 2000: 4). This concept of cultural racism, in which racism relies on both biological and cultural characteristics, proves most helpful in understanding how people who do not intend to be racist still draw on and perpetuate racial meanings and stereotypes.

*Othering and the us / them binary*

Part of the colonial history behind cultural racism is the worldwide division between "us" and "them" or as Stuart Hall puts it, “the West” and “the Rest” (Hall, 1996: 189). He argues that the discourse of “the West” and "the Rest" simplifies the world into a rough-hewn dichotomy, reducing "the Rest" to a homogenous
mass of otherness and reducing “the West” to a homogenous mass of sameness, hiding the presence of its own internal “others.” “That is what makes the discourse of ‘the West and the Rest’ so destructive – it draws crude and simplistic distinctions and constructs an over-simplified conception of ‘difference’” (ibid). As demonstrated in the workshop, the discourse of cultural difference draws on and reinforces this understanding of the world as the West and the Rest through its naturalization of simplified concepts of cultural difference and racial difference. Naturalization of racial difference dovetails with the naturalization of racial categories (or “races”) as ontological truths (Ehlers, 2006).

The casual delineation between “us” and “them” that Stuart Hall describes starts almost immediately in the “Understanding Other Cultures” workshop. At first the us / them binary focuses on age and generation differences, making it appear innocent, but the designation of young people as different culture also acts to hide the unequal power relations embedded in discussions of cultural difference, particularly when the discussion shifts to immigrants’ experiences in the U.S., as described above. At the beginning of the workshop, the leader describes an experience teaching college students: “I’m having great fun great dealing with 21-year-olds. You all know that that’s a different culture, right? [participants laugh]” This delineation between “us” (the workshop participants) and the 21-year-olds in terms of “culture” is expanded on:

And I have come to love them and to worry about them in the same breath. But I want you to know that there is good news about the Millennials – which is what the twenties and thirties are called. They are confident, connected – meaning they are tied to their iPhone and their computer even during class – and they are open to change.

Despite these luke-warm accolades, two minutes later she, reading from a handout, said, “Practice active listening, we have two ears and one mouth,’ but try telling 21-year-olds that!” In a very concrete way, the workshop leader formed 21-year-olds as “other,” in opposition to “us.” In her easy joke, “You all know that that’s a different culture, right?” she draws on tired tropes of rebellious or indecipherable youth, a kind of “Kids these days...” statement. And in the process, she alienates young people participating in the workshop. She sets “them” apart from “us,” ignoring the possibility that “we” (workshop participants) might actually be “them” (young people, including me at age 32). The positioning of “us” and “them” throughout the workshop was not as innocent or objective as it seemed. The lines the workshop leader drew around cultural differences were very well as suspect as the ones she drew around my generation – “a different culture.” And
yet, the entire workshop was predicated on the idea that we were learning a new “framework to be able to understand differences across cultures... in a way that we respect and understand and value the differences.”

The individualization of cultural difference

Like the workshop leader, interviewees tended to promote a very broad definition of culture, as “everybody and everything.” For example, Lou said:

I mean, just somebody that grew up down the block who is... from a more wealthy family or a less wealthy family has a different culture. So, I mean, multiculturalism in some sense is multi-individualism. It’s everybody and everything. It’s how you relate to other people.

His concept of culture centers around cultural difference, but it also takes that concept down to an individual scale, as “multi-individualism.” This shift is indicative of the way interviewees adapt the concepts of culture and multiculturalism to their own, individual experiences of difference. Culture becomes a useful tool to explain almost any difference a person encounters, not only differences that result from growing up in different countries (what most interviewees defined as “ethnicity”) or different customs. Some people go as far as to include a whole range of individual descriptors. For example, one person who works for the organization Intercambio says:

I think what we talk about in our [volunteer] trainings, honestly, is that we’re all multicultural. You know, we all have our own culture. Every interaction we have has to do with our multicultural background, so I think the term multiculturalism— you know, everyone thinks of the picture of everyone holding hands, you know, a black guy, an Asian guy, and a white woman, people from different skin color cultures, but to me everything is multicultural... because we all have our own unique culture. I have, I’m middle-class, white, short, you know [laughs], Jew, non-profit [staff], you know, soccer player, like, I got all those different— that’s what makes me me.

This expansion of culture to describe how each individual is different from every other is a tricky shift. The staff member makes it clear that he wants to see multiculturalism, as what makes an individual unique, in factors beyond just “skin color cultures.” His aim is to widen the view of the experiences that shape individuals far beyond race or even immigrant status. So, in his “own unique culture” he includes his class, race, height, religion, profession, and participation in sports. As the workshop leader’s reference to age as a cultural category does, this inclusion of personal characteristics such as “short” and “soccer player” acts to shift the focus away from identities such as “middle-class” and “white,” which are racial and class identities that draw discrimination and are maintained by hegemonic power relations with specific social histories. This shift does not necessarily entail an ignorance of discrimination or power, but it tames the concept of
difference by reducing it to the scale of the individual, where power and structural inequalities are very difficult to trace.

This emphasis on individualism and “individual cultural difference” makes room in the cultural difference discourse for individuals to have multiple, complex, intersecting identities instead of singular identities based on race or class or gender, but it also avoids an analysis of social power and structural inequalities. Adding multiple factors to the construction of difference does complicate the concept, freeing it from being determined by class or race alone. But, in this view each of the factors remains largely static, and they are only dynamic in the way they come together. Class, race, height, and religion remain static building blocks that construct a person out of unique combinations rather than dynamic categories that are recreated through everyday life.

Interviewees attempt to explain complex social differences and inequalities by focusing on more concrete differences experienced by individuals, even hypothetical individuals like “just somebody that grew up down the block who is… from a more wealthy family or a less wealthy family.” Talking about an individual rather than an entire race or culture gives the appearance of not stereotyping but instead treating each person as unique. But cultural as well as racial stereotypes are still prevalent in these descriptions of individuals. Cathy told a story about throwing a dinner party and inviting several of her students: “I said, ‘Come to dinner at 6:30.’ The Chinese people were there at 6:30 and the other people [from Latin America] were there at 7:30.” Because of the prevalence of the cultural stereotypes about when it is acceptable to arrive at an event, this statement reinforces those stereotypes.

Stuart Hall says stereotyping is an important part of how a racialized regime of representation works. Stereotyping takes specific, observable characteristics about a person and reduces “everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate[s] and simplify[ies] them, and fix[es] them without change or development to eternity… [S]tereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’” (Hall, 1997: 257, emphasis his). Volunteers’ eagerness to reduce difference to the individual scale is a retreat from the pitfalls of stereotyping that they understand in the context of racism. Volunteers’ awareness of the damage that racism can do prompts them to avoid racial stereotypes and discussion of race. Instead, they reduce and naturalize many kinds of difference and claim that the unique combination of those differences “makes us who we are.”
The individualized concept of cultural difference still focuses on a naturalized and ontological idea of difference, in income, nationality, or language. It ignores the social relations of power that create and maintain differences and the inequalities that depend on their articulation. Racial discourses and cultural difference discourses are not about race or cultural difference. They are enactments of power/knowledge that create and sustain the ideas about race and cultural difference as ontological, that act as fulcrums for social inequality. Focusing on an individual’s experiences of one type of difference or another reifies the difference and ignores the relations of power its reification maintains. It is not that differences do not exist. Quite the contrary, differences are consistently reinforced through performative discursive practice, by drawing on and reiterating norms along axes of differentiation that have their roots in colonial and other historical enforcement of naturalized inequalities (Butler, 1993a; Hall, 1997). Expanding a view of cultural difference to include racial discourses that undergird it is the first step towards also examining relations of power/knowledge reinforced through the discourses of both cultural understanding and race.

Because “culture” is often understood as a set of shared meanings and practices, this shift in scales to “multi-individualism” also reduces the concept of culture and draws on discourses that devolve social and economic responsibility to the individual. This reduction of “culture” to the individual or household scale is a distinctly neoliberal shift. As cultural racism focuses on the capacity of individuals to be successful social citizens, neoliberalism focuses on the capacity of individuals to be successful economic citizens. Both assume that impediments to personal progress are exactly that: personal, not structural. As described above, the workshop assigns individual difference to culture, further reifying and naturalizing both culture and difference. The analytic of race and racism are pushed to the side or dismissed, and the onus of success or failure is placed on the individual (Roberts and Mahtani, 2010, see also Wilson, 2007). The ways that racism is embedded in U.S. society is hidden by the focus on the individual by both cultural racism and neoliberalism (see Goldberg, 1993).

Reassurance in acknowledgment of difference

Another accomplishment of the workshop, separate from its goals, is to legitimate the power structures “cultural difference” maintains by hiding the uneven terrain of power through seemingly objective portrayal of American cultural traits. The workshop’s goal is to give participants the tools to understand
other cultures better by being less judgmental and looking beyond actions to cultural values and beliefs. But, in the actual material of the workshop, the topic discussed is as often “our culture” as it is “other cultures” or “cultural differences.” The most provocative things the workshop leader said were about American culture. She said them in an off-hand manner, often in response to participants’ observations about American culture.

For example, when one white volunteer participating in the workshop began,

I haven’t observed this in other countries, or I wasn’t paying attention to it, but a custom here that kind of, just behavior here that drives me crazy, for example in the grocery store you don’t have enough time to finish your transaction before the next person is right up on you, the pushing and constant rush. I can’t even get my purse together before they’re right there! It’s like — [her tone is very annoyed and harsh],

the workshop leader interpreted,

— before they’re trying to take over. You know, we really are a very fast-paced impatient society sometimes, aren’t we.

In contrast to the participant’s harsh tone, the workshop leader’s tone was strangely soothing and very sympathetic. She almost cooed as she wrapped the participant’s observation up in a neat statement, a rhetorical question about Americans.

While the primary purpose of the workshop is to give people tools to understand each other, the primary accomplishment of the workshop is to reassure white Americans about themselves and their culture. “Our culture” in this case is a white American culture, coded as such through the silent racialization of the workshop leader as a white American woman and her positioning of non-white immigrant participants of the workshop as out-of-place. While a certain amount of self-reflection by white Americans could have positive effects in U.S. race relations, the problem is that the leader’s statements about American culture are implicitly undergirded by an ontological view of cultural difference. This view simplifies and preserves “our” quirky American culture that is marked by impatience and the need for a large personal space, extracting these characterizations from the social terrain of power that follows contours of cultural difference and racial divisions.

The leader’s statements simplify “our” American culture and position it within a rubric of cultural difference that purports to be about “other cultures” in which “we” could be anyone looking across any cultural divide. But that is not the case. The “we” is explicitly American, and not quite as explicitly white and middle- or upper-class American. "We" are the people with social power, but the uneven power terrain is
hidden by the assumption that we all deal with problems understanding other cultures and that the same tools will help all of us deal with the problems cross-cultural communication causes. This false equality is reinforced by the fact that the workshop participants included both immigrants learning English and volunteer English teachers. But, in fact, the problems are quite different because the people who experience them are located on different positions in a terrain of power (Moore et al., 2003).

This example demonstrates why “whiteness” must be studied not only as a racial identity but also as a racial identity marked by privilege. As evident in the workshop, part of the construction and maintenance of the position of whiteness is the denial of its privilege (Bonnett, 1997). Naturalization of racial hierarchies, racial differences, and cultural differences that are discursively tied to racial meanings hides the processes through which white racial subjectivity is produced and its privilege maintained (ibid; Hall, 1997).

White racial subjectivity is also produced through whites’ recognition of their racial privilege, feelings of guilt expressed concerning white privilege, and, as seen in the workshop, reassurance that white privilege is unavoidable. At one Intercambio event, a white male member of the organization’s Board of Directors said, “It’s hard to believe that we’re living in such a privileged city and unable to bridge the gap between separate communities” (Field notes, 2010). While his reference to privilege points to class, his mention of separate communities refers to a cultural and language divide; how can such a privileged city not overcome the culture and language divide? The Board member implies that privilege should be able to overcome cultural differences; privilege is a source of power that should be used for unity rather than a cause of division. His invocation of privilege confirms the white racial subject as the primary agent who can use class privilege to keep trying to overcome the divide between “separate communities.” By contrast, immigrants implicitly are defined by their separateness, difference, and lack of privilege.

One volunteer recognizes her white privilege in not being subject to police authority in the same way as her student. She points out that, unlike her student who is a man from Mexico, she will never be pulled over for being a white woman, and “no one’s ever gonna have a suspicious eye on me when I walk into a clothing store” (Heather). This recognition of white privilege acts to reinforce “white” as a privileged subject position. The matter of fact and regretful tone of the statements imply that the speaker takes the position of privilege to be a fact, about which nothing or very little can be done.
Guilt very often accompanies this acknowledgment by liberal white Boulder residents of white privilege as a fact. Guilt about social privilege fits snugly within U.S. liberals’ commitment to a progressive social agenda with social equality at its core. This is particularly true in Boulder, which has a self-proclaimed reputation for social and environmental progressivism above and beyond even an average liberal U.S. city. Hilde resists feeling guilty, but she sees how easy it is to feel guilty when she is living “in the lap of luxury” compared her student. She connects respect from her student with personal guilt:

As far as respect goes, [not to the point of] feeling guilty myself for where I am... I was thinking about this last night after my lesson, because coming from her apartment and her situation, which, she's not bemoaning it, and we all complain about how tough things can get and there’s not enough money and all that. Coming from that and then coming to our house, which is not necessarily the lap of luxury compared to Boulder County, but compared to her it is! And trying to reconcile that and just letting it go and not overanalyzing it, and, it is what it is, and you do what you can, for each other and for yourself.

Hilde puts her own relative wealth and her student’s poverty in perspective. She positions herself in terms of class between her student who lives in a small home and the very high-income residents of Boulder County. Her relationship with her student both raises her awareness of her low-income neighbors and mitigates her feelings of guilt because she has developed a personal relationship with her student and noticed many commonalities. After the comment about respect and guilt, Hilde continues,

Also what I've gotten out of [teaching] is how much the same we all are. Because we both have children, and I have worked full time raising kids before. We both laugh when we talk about sitting down to watch TV and we immediately conk out. Just all the similarities. It doesn’t matter what language you speak or where you’re from. We’re all pretty much the same. It’s nice to have that reinforced.

Hilde mitigates the income and language differences she sees with the similarities of life experience she shares with her student. Like Hilde, Julie has feelings of guilt mixed up in her experience of income difference:

[Working with Intercambio] has shaken up my ideas about poverty and wealth... I had to totally reexamine my feelings about what to do with wealth.... It made me feel so guilty for a while. I kind of had to really reexamine all of those things and think about... when I go buy something extravagant... what are the consequences to people somewhere down the line?... How does it affect somebody somewhere else in the world? And on the other hand, if you have money you should hire people and have them do stuff for you because they need money. It made me feel so much less guilty about having a housekeeper 'cause she really needs the money. Instead of feeling like, “Gosh I’m really bad ‘cause I don’t clean my own house,” I feel like, “You know, I really need to keep having this because she needs the money.”
Julie’s new perspective on how she spends her money mitigates her feelings of guilt. Her participation in a market economy shifts from a cause of guilt, for buying something extravagant, to a venue for social good, through employing someone who needs work.

Mary Thomas (2008: 2871) explores the issue of guilt in a multicultural paradigm. In one of Thomas’s interviews, a high school girl says that she wants to describe someone by race, but she feels like “it's kind of racist.” Thomas argues that the girl’s feelings of anxiety and guilt for perpetuating difference do not fit “with multiculturalism, which celebrates diversity and exists only through a celebratory articulation of racial difference as self-identity, rather than racialization – which marks the power of others to racialize” (ibid). Thus, any guilt associated with recognition of difference or privilege is necessarily followed by reassurance and a shift to a celebration of ontological difference. In Hilde’s case, the recognition of class privilege was offset with a celebration and reassurance that “we’re all pretty much the same” despite language and class difference. Julie’s reassurance comes in the form of recognizing that her spending can help those who are different from her.

The guilt expressed by volunteers is treated through reassurance rather than responsibility. Kobayashi and Peake (2000) say whites need to take responsibility for whiteness, not just feel guilty. Julie Ellison defines liberal guilt and white guilt as one and the same and says this guilt “designates a position of wishful insufficiency relative to the genuinely radical” (Ellison, 1996: 345). “This inherently problematic position of white-liberal guilt lends itself to show rather than action: “In the throes of liberal guilt, all action becomes gesture, expressive of a desire to effect change or offer help that is never sufficient to the scale of the problem... One is sorry in advance for the social consequences of one’s acts” (ibid: 349). Reassurance provides a temporary cure for the inadequacy of white-liberal guilt.

For whites who already recognize their own racial privilege and feel guilty about it, the reassurance in the acknowledgment of difference takes the form of believing that privilege is unavoidable, a simple social fact. This “fact” is couched within the cultural difference and cultural diversity discourse, in which everyone is different and special, and everyone has some kind of privilege or another. The idea that everyone is special pairs with the concept of multi-individualism, in which each person has the capacity to accomplish great things. In this view, cultural differences and the position as other than the white American cultural norm can be advantageous or even competitive advantages (Mitchell, 2003). These positive cultural differences
include: the ability to speak more than one language, a distinct and exciting cultural heritage, a sense of family and cultural warmth (Eleanor), a cultural norm of large, fun parties (Becca, Bob), a tendency to be hardworking (Bob, Bill), and a culture of respect for elders (Julie). These discourses frequently promote cultural racism in their failure to recognize the operation of power. This racism is often expressed from a position of cultural relativism that values racial and cultural diversity, and, more specifically, locates “diversity” on the bodies of non-whites, including immigrants, but then reassures white liberals that valuation of diversity and participation in activities and institutions with diverse populations (like Intercambio) is the solution to the “problem” of cultural difference, and, implicitly, racial-ethnic difference. This discourse locating the “problem” in “difference” rather than racism or structural inequality distracts from those very social ills and draws energy and social approval away from identity-based political advocacy. It is part of a longstanding focus on “race” rather than “racism” and the continued tendency to try to explain human difference instead of the tendency people have to create difference (Jackson, 1987; Kobayashi, 2003).

Whites are also reassured that they have a place at the diversity table, even though they are the implicit norm. The discourse of multi-individualism allows whites to say, “I could be multicultural” (Ina) and “we’re all multicultural.” This inclusionary rhetoric is markedly different from an anti-racist approach that encourages whites to recognize their own racism. Instead, whites recognize their own multiculturalism. They reassure themselves that guilt is unnecessary. They focus on how everything is multicultural instead of on systematic, historical structures of power and inequality.

The discourse of cultural difference reassures “us” – white Americans – that our culture, despite its quirks, is alright, just like other cultures are alright, because we are practicing not judging others but understanding their cultural values and beliefs. And “they” are not judging “us.” Our suspension of judgment extends to our own culture, reassuring us that if we don’t judge others, then we are doing the work we need to in order to promote equality and inclusion in our society. We don’t need to change our own culture of hurry-up impatience and direct verbal communication. We’re all okay! This final assertion was articulated by one interviewee Mary Jo who had attended the series of workshops, of which this one was a part. When I asked Mary Jo how the experience of diversity makes her life better, she haltingly and emotionally expressed:

[T]o me, when I answer that it makes me feel so entirely selfish. But, it makes you realize that [her voice cracks a little] — you’re okay! That, that the whole – that we’re all very different. And that you, me, are just okay the way we are. We don’t have to judge ourselves or the rest of the world because
we— you know, until you walk in somebody else’s shoes you just, you— just don’t know what, what somebody else’s life is like and so it’s kind of— that’s always kind of very selfish to me is because it just makes me realize that we’re all, we’re all okay.

The relativism and suspension of judgment that Mary Jo’s awkward proclamation rejoices in is in part a response to white-liberal guilt. Emptied of discussion of power that is necessarily part of a conversation about race, the cultural differences rubric invites people to learn about other cultures without worrying about troubling racist or colonial histories or contemporary racial or ethnic inequalities.

Mary Jo’s feelings of selfishness also expose the racial discourses at work in the workshop. In a politically correct and diversity endorsing college town like Boulder, many white people have been trained to police their own thoughts, speech, and actions for traces of racism. Learning not to judge people from other cultures is learning not to be racist. The whites who attended the workshop are already trying not to be racist; they are exposing themselves to difference and learning about other cultures. They teach English to adults from other countries living in Boulder in individual classes, often held in the students’ home. These volunteers are encountering cultural differences that are confusing, delightful, offensive, and revealing. They come to the workshop to understand and reflect on their experiences. The workshop instructs them not to judge others, and not to bother to explore the power dynamics that underlie or create the differences they experience. What is actually taught at the workshop, learning not to judge oneself, erases the possibility of racism and replaces it with a rubric of cultural differences in which “intercultural moments” at their worst are still not racist. The cultural difference discourse reassures whites that they are doing their part to overcome the “problem” of difference.

The cultural difference discourse also reassures whites of the ontological status of culture and race. It hides Ehlers’ (2006) performative crisis point, in which race, and in this case culture, could have been exposed as unstable and socially constructed but instead white subjects are satisfied by their fulfillment of responsibility to their cultural-racial “other.” This crisis point results not in realization of ontological crisis but instead in reassurance of the ontological status of race. In the reassurance, white racial subjectivity is affirmed through its benign relationship with a cultural-racial other, whose otherness is also affirmed as ontological. This reassurance shifts the focus of the construction of difference from “us” (white) to “them” (immigrant, other), eliding the power it gives “us” as white racial subjects. It is a performative constitution of white liberal subjectivity. As such, it is a compulsory speech act, a discourse that serves to reinforce the
power dynamics established in the discursive formation of racism and at the same time comforts white racial subjects in the affirmation of the stability of their identity.

**Conclusion**

The workshop’s generalized description of culture reinforces a simplified understanding of “difference” as a viable and legitimate rubric for social relations without attending to the power or politics that create and maintain social inequalities. The discussion of cultural difference is an authorized discourse that hides the racial discourses that it relies on to make sense. The authorized discourse of cultural difference resembles racial discourse that has been emptied of references to inequalities or power. It reinforces the hegemonic racial power structures through hiding the work of racial discourse. The suspension of judgment about “others” and “ourselves” that is endorsed in the workshop through its separation of “us” from “them” and its focus on “our” culture releases white Americans from anxiety about racial privilege and white guilt. It hides the power dynamics that support and give meaning to understandings of cultural difference. It hides the racial discourse that undergirds both the infamous “judgments” made and the “cultural” descriptions of American life. The suspension of judgment uses a lens of culture to release social anxiety about racism through confirming racial ontology and white racial subjectivity, while never explicitly addressing race. White American participants leave the workshop with the hope that they will recognize “intercultural moments” and bridge the chasms of cultural difference, but in their very recognition they reinforce the differences they hope to overcome and reinforce their own privileged position in society, guilt-free.

A performative analysis of race shows how racial norms are cited and reiterated discursively in unexpected or subtle ways because it focuses on the racial meanings that people enact in speech and embodied social actions. Racial discourse overlaps with the discourse of cultural difference. Racial meanings are implicit but necessary in understanding many things people say about their experience of difference in their everyday lives. People’s articulation of cultural difference relies on an ontological understanding of culture that reinforces cultural and racial differences through their performative reiteration. This reiteration, in turn, subtly legitimizes unequal power relations that continue to cluster around racial meanings in U.S. society while denying the work of unauthorized racial discourse.
Chapter 4: Hidden Hispanics, environmental progressivism, and racism

Introduction

Analyzing spatial articulations of difference and belonging as processes of subject formation offers new insight into processes of racialization and the maintenance of white privilege in a socially progressive context where racism and white privilege are ostensibly rejected and their effects resisted. Racialization is a socio-spatial process in which subjects’ spatial and racial practices are performative. As performative, subjects’ practices have the potential to reinscribe or transform social norms and dominant social values. I find that white volunteers reinscribe hegemonic racial and spatial relations in Boulder instead of recognizing the potentially transformative nature of their socio-spatial practices. White volunteer English teachers and their immigrant students disrupt the hegemonic socio-spatial segregation in Boulder and thus rearticulate socio-spatial relations in new, transformative ways through their everyday movements and social interactions, but the teachers’ descriptions of a “hidden” Hispanic community in Boulder reinscribe hegemonic white privilege in the city and position immigrants as other, different, and out of place.

Analyzing these descriptions of a “hidden” Hispanic community in the context of Boulder’s environmentally progressive history brings into view the complicated overlap between environmentalism, progressive politics, and racism. I examine the history of how Boulder became a “green” and “white” city as a socio-spatial process through the environmental planning efforts from 1963 to 1974 when the city adopted normative values of the modern American environmental movement that shaped its identity as environmentally and socially progressive. The appearance and assumption of social progressiveness and anti-racism in the city is undermined by the characteristically and hegemonically white nature of the environmental movement and the politics in which it is embedded. Boulder’s overwhelming whiteness is not a result of population percentages alone; the white racial identity that accompanied the establishment of the greenbelt is a significant source of Boulder’s characterization as “white.” In chapter 1 I showed that the moral discourse of environmentalism overlaps in important ways with the moral discourse of racism. In Boulder this overlap facilitated the cultivation of a particular form of white subjectivity and privilege through the linkage of environmentalism with a progressive social politics that apparently precludes racism but often in fact fosters racist assumptions and stereotypes. White subjectivity has remained the performative norm in
Boulder, despite increasing numbers of racial-ethnic minorities, particularly immigrants from Latin America, in the city's population since 1990.\textsuperscript{44} The white subjectivity cultivated performatively through environmentalism remains a significant barrier to whites' overcoming the view that immigrants and Latinos are "out of place" in the city.

In this chapter I present a puzzle of expectations in Boulder that bundle environmentalism, progressive politics, and racism. I explore how this contradiction plays out performatively in norms established and reinforced through historical and contemporary everyday socio-spatial relations. Boulder's greenbelt and progressive politics play an important role in socio-spatial relations including racial subject formation.

A relational view of space has been established in the social science and geographic literatures. Analyzing space as relational allows a view of space as both a product of and factor in social relations. The goal of Edward Soja's 1989 \textit{Postmodern Geographies} was to reintroduce a spatial analytic to social science theories. Soja's relational analysis of space rejects the reification of space as either a static Cartesian cartography or as a transparent medium for representation. Most importantly, Soja argues that "spatiality [...is] simultaneously [...] a social product (or outcome) and a shaping force (or medium) in social life" (Soja, 1989: 7). Similarly, David Harvey describes a relational view of space as one in which "there is no such thing as space or time outside of the processes that define them [... and] [p]rocesses do not occur in space but define their own spatial frame" (Harvey, 2006: 273). Doreen Massey claims space to be "created through a process of interaction" (Massey, 1999: 279) and John Agnew (1993) adds more simply that it is necessary to reject the idea that spatial boundaries "contain" non-spatial processes and instead see space and society as intertwined. A relational view of space rejects the idea that space can be "a neutral medium that stands outside of the way it is conceived" (Crang and Thrift, 2000: 3). Thus, though "space" is often viewed as a container for social relations, particularly in the practices of everyday life, that view extracts spatiality from its constituent processes of social production. Spatial meanings are necessarily related to the social histories and flows of power that they permeate. Extracting "space" from social relations can act ideologically to hide the histories of social spaces (as in Boulder's open space history described in chapter 2). This extraction can

\textsuperscript{44} The City of Boulder's Latino population has increased from 4\% in 1990 to nearly 9\% in 2010 (City of Boulder Department of Housing & Human Services, 2004; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010).
also lend an appearance of stability and discreteness to space as well as to the other social relations that constitute it, including racial identities (Dwyer and Jones, 2000).

Social power dynamics are enacted through everyday, spatial experiences of difference. In his project of the reintroduction of space in social thought, Soja draws on earlier work by Michel Foucault, who calls for an analysis of space in addition to time and history (Soja, 1989: 10) and space as heterotopia in the modern world (ibid: 16). Foucault’s heterotopias are heterogenous spaces of sites and relationships (ibid). A heterotopia can juxtapose a “real place” with several “utopia” spaces embedded in it, even when the two seem logically incompatible (ibid). Foucault points to the “actually lived (and socially produced) space of sites and the relations between them” (Soja, 1989: 17). Lefevbre also makes an argument for the “actually lived and socially created spatiality, [that is] concrete and abstract at the same time” (ibid: 18; see Massey, 1992).

As space is socially produced, social relations including racialization are also spatial. Following Audrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake, racialization “always has a specific geography, and all geographies are racialized” (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000: 395). Racialization of space fortifies the hegemonic racial meanings that shape daily life. Race, as a construction, “is what it is and does what it does precisely because of how it is given spatial expression” (Delaney, 2002: 7). Kay Anderson (1988) demonstrates the spatial nature of racialization in her examination of the racial history of Vancouver, British Columbia’s Chinatown. She connects the way Chinatown becomes defined as a racialized space with the ideological processes of colonialism, the production of difference, and processes of racialization. This connection allows her to demonstrate the spatial nature of the race definition process, in which “Chinese people” in Vancouver were confined culturally, ideologically, and spatially to the space of “Chinatown” (ibid). This ideological and spatial containment marked the residents of Chinatown as foreigners and “others” and excluded them from belonging in the nation of Canada (ibid). Thus, not only was the space of "Chinatown" utilized in the exclusion of “Chinese people,” the production of the racial category “Chinese” was itself a spatial process created and later reinforced by the simultaneous production of “Chinatown.”

Because racialization is a spatial process, racial privilege, belonging, and exclusions are enacted spatially. Boulder’s norms of environmental and social progressivism were established through socio-spatial historical processes and the residual effect on contemporary discourse is visible in empirical data about racial privilege, belonging, and exclusion. By analyzing the everyday spatial processes of racialization in the context
of their historical establishment of the racial-spatial norm, I argue that people who attempt to interrupt racial privilege and exclusion often reinforce existing dynamics of privilege and exclusion by drawing on hegemonic racial understandings to interpret the cultural, class, ethnic, and racialized differences they experience. These hegemonic racial understandings are often articulated spatially, delineating spaces of privilege, spaces of difference, spaces of interaction and cross-cultural exchange, transgressions of space by subjects who do not belong, and new knowledge of city spaces. A socio-spatial analysis thus offers insight into how hegemonic dynamics of privilege, belonging, and exclusion are inscribed through everyday embodied experiences of difference.

Racialization is always embedded in social context, and white racial subject formation in Boulder is intricately tied to characterizations of the city. Understanding how Boulder has come to be portrayed as “green” and “white” provides a place-based historical context for contemporary processes of racialization as socio-spatial practices. The establishment of the Open Space Program and the city’s acquisition and protection of open space in the 1960s and 1970s was a reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations through which the residents of Boulder renegotiated their relationship with the land and environment. The newly forming modern environmental movement played a major role in this reconfiguration through the adoption of its norms, values, and practices as mainstream in Boulder’s policy, lifestyle, and reputation. The historical reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations through the establishment of a greenbelt and subsequent redefinition of Boulder through its relationship to that open space continues to influence contemporary socio-spatial relations including racial subject formation. Fundamentally influenced by the character of the city as “green” and “white,” white Boulder residents define their values as same-as or different-from the norm in Boulder and have expectations of how people in the city ought to behave as progressive environmental and racial subjects.

I examine the environmental and politically progressive norm established through the past four decades expressed in politically progressive white city residents’ socio-spatial explanations of what difference looks like and where it is located in Boulder. As argued in chapter 3, volunteers’ views of a vast, ontological cultural divide between themselves and their students reinforces the differences they purport to overcome. In the second half of this chapter I analyze volunteers’ spatial performative disruptions and reinforcements of ethnic-racial difference through exploration of the concept of a separate, “hidden” Hispanic
community that exists within the larger Boulder community. The discourse of hidden Hispanics in Boulder expressed by volunteers in interviews is explicitly and implicitly spatial. I explore processes of spatial subject formation through volunteers’ explanations of how a hidden Hispanic community can exist and remain hidden. This framing draws on geographic arguments that space is relational and that social relations including racialization are necessarily spatial. Embodied, performative discursive practices must also be seen as socio-spatial, as they draw meaning from and embed meaning in the built and natural physical world. White city residents’ ideas about difference are articulated through belonging (fitting into the Boulder green and white norm) and linked to social values including safety, order, healthy diet, healthy lifestyles, and environmentalism.

**Characterizations and expectations of Boulder: Establishing a white and green norm**

Volunteers’ descriptions of Boulder, including who belongs where in the city and what a typical Boulder resident is like, outline a particular set of values that they expect to find in the city. People who visit or move to Boulder from other places in the U.S. come with expectations that are grounded in Boulder’s particular socio-spatial history of environmentalism and progressive politics in the city’s population and policies. These expectations performatively mandate certain behavior in the city. In reference to racial, ethnic, and cultural difference, the expectation is a model of openness and inclusion rooted in progressive politics. According to these socially progressive norms, racism, prejudice, and stereotyping are unacceptable under any circumstance. Further, the white volunteers I interviewed all expressed a desire to learn more about other cultures and about the lives of racial-ethnic minorities living in Boulder. These volunteers are the type of people who immediately interrupt and condemn racist jokes or statements and speak out against racism they witness or hear about in social interactions. Some even resisted answering my interview questions about whether cultural difference is at all related to race or ethnicity; they stated passionately that no generalizations can be made from a person's race or ethnicity. Yet, generalizations and stereotypes were embedded in their articulation of their relationship with their immigrant English students and their experience of diversity in Boulder. In this section I first outline the general expectations and norms for life in Boulder expressed by interviewees then illustrate the bundling of environmentalism, progressive politics, and racism in one interviewee's statements. I use the latter as an example of the complicated overlap
between the three discourses and how establishing a norm of environmentalism and progressive politics can create a social space for a certain type of racism, which I analyze throughout the remainder of the chapter.

I use the concept of white privilege, the tools and processes used to maintain whites’ privileged status (Pulido, 2000: 15), to analyze the spatial nature of racialization. Space can be used as a resource in the production of white privilege (ibid: 30) through the performative repetition of racialized norms of belonging and exclusion in the social landscape, especially through discourses about the “normalcy” of a space that hide racial privilege even as they reinforce it (Reitman, 2006). Such “normal” spaces can appear raceless, implying the absence of racialization, but these spaces are in fact some of the most intense spaces of the production and maintenance of white privilege (Guthman, 2008; Peake and Ray, 2001). Thus, normalcy acts as a racial ideology through which white privilege is erased (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000). In such situations, racism can become invisible because it is easy to belong in normal (white) spaces if you are white, but it can be more difficult if you are not white, or not white enough (ibid). The normalcy obscures the performative socio-spatial processes of belonging and exclusion (ibid).

Everyone I interviewed agreed that Boulder is a city characterized by its environmentalism and environmental conservation. Near the end of interviews, I asked the question, “I often hear people talk about Boulder as a city concerned with the conservation of nature and environmentalism. Do you agree with this view?” Before I asked the question, the majority of interviewees brought up environmentalism, nature conservation, hiking, and other environmental characteristics of Boulder on their own in response to more general questions about living in Boulder, confirming the central role of the discourse in white Boulder residents’ practices and identities.

Despite the resounding agreement that Boulder is a very environmental place to live, volunteers made some remarks that exposed the specificity of environmental and social behavior acceptable in the city. Ricky and Becca, a white couple in their late thirties, thought of several attributes that would make someone feel like he or she does not belong in Boulder. These included people who “aren’t very outdoorsy,” people who like hunting and four-wheel driving, and people who drive a “Ford Ram 2500 truck.” In contrast, typical Boulder residents drive Subarus or Priuses, “have traveled to Nepal... have a chocolate lab... and work out of coffee shops on weekdays.” These statements are performative delineations of the environmental norms that shape belonging in Boulder.
Though they do not have a dog, they do drive Subarus and have traveled to Nepal, and Ricky and Becca consider themselves to be “pretty stereotypical” Boulder residents. But Ricky remarks that he thinks the stereotype is not actually representative of most residents, not because it is slightly absurd, but because he thinks the markedly liberal or “beyond liberal” politics in Boulder masks a fundamental conservatism that is anchored in people’s reluctance to inconvenience themselves for the sake of conservation. He tells me how shocked he is to see ten or twenty solar panels on some people’s roofs when he knows that the energy company will not support panels for more energy than a household consumes. He asks rhetorically, “What are they running in there?!” Another interviewee remarked on how indignant she feels that people in Boulder dry their clothes in a dryer instead of on a clothesline. When she lived in rainy, cold Ireland she air-dried her clothes indoors, and it is certainly easier in Boulder’s sunny, dry climate. She condemns these and similar wasteful activities city residents engage in. These pointed examples indicate a certain type of environmentalism that is predicted on consumerism and green spending rather than consuming less or living a simpler lifestyle that is the performative norm in Boulder.

Besides environmentalism, volunteers offered a suite of characterizations of Boulder and its typical residents. These descriptions themselves, as speech acts in interviews, are performances of normative social values in the city. Multiple respondents said that Boulder residents are well educated and intellectual, wealthy, have liberal-progressive politics, are socially open, friendly, relaxed, and accepting, are healthy in terms of diet and exercise, are athletic, engage in outdoor activities, like to travel, and are curious about the world. They also characterize the city by the presence of the university, which they see as a source of educational, intellectual, cultural, and artistic opportunities. The university and research labs contribute to environmental research, and the presence of a significant technology sector fosters innovation and entrepreneurialism in the city.

The concepts of belonging and exclusion establish the performative boundaries of identity, which are often drawn by racial logics. Because representations support existing power relations and norms (Hall, 1986), the dynamics of racial exclusion in a community can be identified through the analysis of discursive representations of that community. Representations of a place’s identity are normative descriptions of how things should be within that community (Häkli and Paasi, 2003). These descriptions draw boundaries around identities and performatively reinforce ideas about “us” and “others,” so they can reinforce spatial practices of
racial privilege, belonging, and exclusion (ibid). One example of the use of spatial identity in exclusion is offered by Daniel Trudeau’s (2006) examination of the forced closure of a small-scale Hmong-owned slaughterhouse in Minnesota, in which the normative rural character of the area was called on to prohibit what was characterized as a “commercial” venture that did not belong in a rural area. This normative characterization of the place as rural elided the more complicated religious and cultural components of the conflict about the slaughterhouse and supported the existing power relations (ibid).

Studying representations of a place also exposes the racial boundaries and norms in a community when those norms are not readily apparent to residents. For example, Phil Hubbard (2005) describes a case in Great Britain in which white town residents opposed the siting of an accommodation center for asylum seekers, claiming that it would impinge on the open space surrounding the town. In their objections, Hubbard shows that residents ignored the “multiple origins and ethnicities of asylum seekers to depict them as an undifferentiated Other group” (ibid: 52). Hubbard argues that this opposition can only be understood through an analysis of the specific discourses people utilized to oppose the asylum center, which referred both to open space and to race. With a socio-spatial analysis of belonging and exclusion, the racial components of this complicated conflict become visible. People were not only trying to preserve open space or keep outsiders out of their small town, they were also defending their white privilege “against the imagined threat of a racialized Other” (ibid). The residents reinforced their insider status in their town and at the same time reiterated racial assumptions about immigrant asylum seekers. Here Hubbard’s socio-spatial analysis reveals that the boundaries of belonging and exclusion around insider / outsider and white / non-white coincided in the racialized discourse.

Geographical analysis of belonging and exclusion necessarily includes a spatial or place-based analysis. Geographer Tim Cresswell explores the spatial implications of belonging in his aptly named work In Place / Out of Place (1996). He argues that “geography and ideology intersect” (ibid: 5) in the ways places are portrayed in order to include or exclude certain populations. A specific example he draws on is New York City Mayor Edward Koch’s justification for excluding the city’s homeless population from certain spaces in the city. He says Koch and planners “use the taken-for-granted aspects of place to turn attention away from a social problem (homelessness, racism) and reframe a question in terms of the quality of a particular place” (ibid: 8). This discourse of the “quality” of a place plays an important role in the emergence of Boulder’s
identity as a "green" city in the 1960s and 1970s. Through coded discourses such as "quality," the idea of belonging can be used as a tool that draws on naturalized understandings of a place and the activities and people that are appropriate to it. Similarly, Linda Peake and Brian Ray (2001) demonstrate that portrayals of Canada as the “great white north” represent people of color in Canada as out of place. This portrayal has very real implications for people in their daily lives, which Peake and Ray show in the description of a long history of positioning domestic workers as “from somewhere else” (ibid) and the reporting of violent events in news media as highly racialized through situating them in non-white racialized places (Ruddick, 1996).

The question of belonging is explicitly addressed through generalizations about Boulder and the ways interviewees position themselves as like or unlike the typical resident whom they describe. Like most interviewees, Beatrice, a white woman in her sixties, describes the typical Boulder resident as “white, highly educated, left wing, athletic, environmentally aware, and outdoors [enthusiasts]; everybody's always outdoors!” I ask her if this generalization is accurate, and she says, “I guess it’s a stereotype but it seems pretty accurate.” I ask her if she thinks it describes the majority of the people who live in Boulder. She says, “Yes, I do. I mean, ‘cause you read all of the ‘this city has more PhDs per capita than any city of its size,’ ‘this city votes Democratic in huge numbers,’ ‘this city is politically aware,’ and so, yeah, I think so. [Pause] I think the stereotype fits. [Laughs]” 45 Then I ask Beatrice how similar she is to that typical resident, and she says,

B Very! I mean I’m describing myself. What did I say?
A White, educated, left wing, athletic.
B There you go. [laughs]

Despite having moved to Boulder only five years before, Beatrice feels very at home. She says she feels like she fits in “a hundred percent” in Boulder. Her whiteness, education, politics, environmental awareness, and outdoor activity help her feel like she belongs in Boulder. In Beatrice’s narrative, Boulder emerges as a space of white privilege, buttressed by environmentalism. When asked if she thinks there are some people who fit in better than others in Boulder she says, “If you’re a Hispanic immigrant and you’re undocumented you don’t fit in at all. So, in that sense, yes, but not in terms of the majority of people, no.” Beatrice draws a strong distinction between a retired professor like herself and undocumented immigrants who “don’t fit in at all.”

Boulder’s environmentalism is a major characterization of the city that makes Beatrice feel at home there. Beatrice describes the ways in which Boulder is environmentally aware:

45 Italics in interview quotes indicate speakers’ emphasis. All names are pseudonyms.
Just among the people—Well, first of all, in the city: the number of people who walk, the number of people who use the bus, the Ecopass system [in which businesses buy employees' bus passes in bulk at a discount], which I think is fantastic. The number of people who bicycle as a means of transportation, so that effort and that ethic, I guess I would call it. I think there's a good environmental ethic here. And I think that's pretty noticeable in the recycling programs and composting. Kind of everything. Today I see [in the newspaper that] we're not going to sign another long-term lease with Xcel [Energy], and I think some big changes will come out of Xcel as a result of that. And the efforts at solar energy and the rebates. Almost everything about it seems to me to be environmentally conscious.

Beatrice's view of Boulder is totalizing. She paints the city green in her description of it. She also includes herself as an agent in the city's left-green politics in her statement that she sees that “we're not going to sign another long-term lease with Xcel.” In Beatrice's words, “almost everything about [Boulder] seems environmentally conscious.”

Beatrice's narrative allows a view of the complex overlap between environmentalism, progressive politics, and racism in Boulder. I asked Beatrice in what ways Boulder differs from other cities of its size and in the area, and she said, “It’s prettier. It’s more liberal. It’s more forward thinking. It’s more progressive. It’s more educated. And it’s more white.” Then we had the following conversation, in which Beatrice connects Boulder's whiteness to its quality as a safe city:

A What do you like best about living in Boulder?
B It's more white – I'm kidding! [Laughs]
A [Laughs]
B Ah, hiking.
A And what do you like least about living in Boulder?
B [Pause] Well since I love it one-hundred percent I almost have to make that up. But I would say its lack of diversity, but you know when you say that you have to admit that probably its lack of diversity is one of the reasons there’s a low crime rate, and there’s not much – you know. In other words, that’s, that’s a complicated thing. But its lack of diversity. I wish there was more – for my little grandkids who live here, I wish they had more friends who were black or who were Hispanic, and they don’t have any.

Beatrice mixes a complicated set of discourses. First, subscribing to progressive politics, she establishes the fact that she is not racist by making a joke about liking Boulder because it is white. No good liberal-progressive would ever say such a thing seriously, and making a joke about it positions her on the right side of the issue (pro-diversity, not racist). Then she expresses a desire for more racial diversity in Boulder, fulfilling a compulsory expectation in the performance of liberal whiteness. But then she immediately exposes two assumptions she makes. The first assumption is patently racist, the presence of people of color

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46 While this issue did come up for popular vote in November 2011, Beatrice's comment was about an earlier City Council decision, which she did not actually take part in.
correlates with higher crime than in white-only areas. She partly qualifies that statement with the assertion that “that’s a complicated thing” but does not rescind the association between “diversity” and crime. The second assumption that white children need to be exposed to diversity at a young age to develop tolerance is central to the discourse of diversity and returns within the bounds of the non-racist liberal-progressive discourse of desire for diversity. In these statements, Beatrice does not seem to notice that she couches a blatantly racist stereotype that people of color commit crimes (or white people do when living in a diverse society, clearly not what she meant) between two expressions of desire for increased diversity in the city. She frames diversity as positive, then negative, then positive again. Beatrice establishes Boulder as an environmental, white, liberal city, where she belongs because she is a white liberal environmentalist. The only fault she can find with the town is how white it is, its lack of diversity. Covered by her environmentalism and progressive politics, Beatrice does not notice her own expressions of racism in her performance of liberal whiteness.

As explored at length in chapter 1, like most white liberals, many white Boulder residents assume that racism is separate from liberal-democratic institutions instead of constitutive of them (Hesse, 2004; Mehta, 1999; Stoler, 1995). Drawing on what Michel Foucault calls the “discourse of race struggle” (Foucault, 1997: 61), through which society’s race and class conflicts can be seen as stemming from “an earlier binary conception of the social body as part of the defense of society against itself” (Stoler, 1995: 130), Ann Stoler argues that racism is “a foundational fiction” within the modern liberal state (ibid). She draws on Uday Mehta, who argues that even the “quintessentially inclusionary philosophy of the European bourgeoisie” of the eighteenth century “had written into it a politics of exclusion based on race” (ibid: 131).

Beatrice’s lack of awareness of the racism embedded in her statements about diversity suggests that this assumed separation between liberal-democratic institutions and racism might act to hide racist assumptions and stereotypes. Residents see Boulder as an iconic progressive place, socially and environmentally, and they perform liberal whiteness within that socio-spatial norm. Boulder’s history of activist dissent from the mainstream and history of progressive politics suggest that the city is immune to larger social dynamics of racism. However, Barnor Hesse (2004) argues, there is a “double-bind” of racism in liberal-democratic societies, in which racism is denounced generally and widely, but certain claims of racism are excluded from being categorized as such. In this double-bind, extreme racism is seen as paradigmatic,
and racism is represented by the paradigmatic racist event of the World War II Holocaust (ibid). “Particular” examples of racism are always compared with paradigmatic ones, and the racism constitutive of colonial governance is denied (ibid). The double-bind is a constant process of revealing and affirming some the paradigmatic or extreme instances of racism while concealing and denying those embedded in routine governmentality and liberalism (ibid: 14). In Boulder, many extreme examples of racism are revealed through their condemnation, but others, including stereotyping, generalizing about racial-ethnic populations, and linking specific values to experiences of difference and expectations of urban space, go unacknowledged in the performance of liberal whiteness and environmental subjectivities. As I demonstrate below, the establishment of environmental values in line with modern American environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s worked against, rather than for, a progressive racial politics in the city by affirming environmental values that are built on racial privilege and ideas of racial and national purity linked to wilderness.

**Reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations, 1963-1974**

The solidification of white privilege in Boulder occurred in part through the reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations between city residents and the land around the city vis-à-vis the modern American environmental movement. When Boulder established its Open Space Program in the 1960s and 1970s it adopted central values of the environmental movement, which was also transforming at that time as a national movement. As argued in chapter 1, these environmental values are racialized as white (see also Cronon, 1996; Kosek, 2004; Taylor, 1997). The characterization Boulder fostered of itself in relationship to its new greenbelt between 1963 and 1974 reinforced a specific form of white privilege in the city. The white privilege associated with environmentalism, environmental policies, and environmental lifestyles in Boulder is one of the primary reasons that white residents continue to perceive Latino residents and immigrants as outsiders in the city. The establishment of open space in Boulder’s history was a reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations focused on the land around the city that also shaped socio-spatial relations within the city, including racialization. The modern American environmental movement influenced the new socio-spatial relations through the city’s adoption of its norms, values, and practices that themselves became an iconic part of Boulder’s social landscape. Environmental values, including idealization of the past and fear of population growth and environmental destruction in the future, shaped Boulder’s open space and environmental policies.
in the 1960s and 1970s. This socio-spatial reconfiguration was also a racial process because the establishment of open space was embedded in and performative of broader social and environmental discourses, which were and are still predominantly racialized as white.

Boulder’s redefinition of itself in relation to its greenbelt fostered a particular form of white privilege protected by environmentally and socially progressive social values central to liberal-progressivism established in the years 1963 to 1974. A large part of this claim of progressive politics is grounded in the city’s environmentalism and environmental planning, and the characterization of Boulder as “green” enables white residents to declare and expect progressive social politics, including anti-racism. Yet, environmentalism is notorious for ignoring the politics of race, and the modern American environmental movement is overwhelmingly white. The characterization of the city as “white” is not usually seen as a direct effect of its environmental politics. Instead, as described in chapter 2, Boulder’s whiteness is seen as an effect of class; residents see environmental planning as the cause of the high cost of living that keeps out many poor people, including a disproportionate number of racial minorities. Policies and political attitudes developed and fostered in the 1960s and 1970s laid the foundation for Boulder to become both green and white through the environmental movement and liberal social politics that disavow explicit racism while they simultaneously condone racial characterizations through the guise of cultural preferences for or against outdoor recreation and class-based assumptions of environmentalism as a luxury.

Changes in ownership

The city and citizen groups, such as Citizens for Greenbelts, fostered a sense of ownership of the land among city residents during and after the campaign for the Greenbelt Tax referendum in 1967 (Citizens for Greenbelts, 1967). The city invited residents to go out and visit its open space land with the express purpose of fostering an environmental ethic in the city residents so they would continue to support the Open Space Program (CMACOS, 1969, 6/5; Nye, 1969). Residents were expected to adopt an environmental ethic and continue to protect the natural landscape around Boulder for the benefit of themselves and future generations, that is, to conform to the moral discourse of environmentalism through adoption of certain environmental values, aesthetics, and practices. One city resident expressed the opinion that residents
cannot be relied on to continue to fund the Open Space Program unless they feel ownership over the open space lands:

The City's green belt program has received widespread popular support, lastly in the November 1971 City election. But unless the City's residents are made aware of the uses of their second sales tax penny, and continue to have a firm feeling that the Greenbelts are theirs to use and enjoy, we cannot expect them to continue supporting it. The best protection for our open spaces are continued use and enjoyment of them by the people. (Anonymous, n.d. [1972])

Fostering popular, individual, personal sentiments of ownership was an important part of establishing new socio-spatial relations between the city residents and newly acquired open space land. It shaped the performative norms of environmental practices of its residents and environmental identities of both the city's residents and the city itself. Further, this expression of ownership was a discourse embedded in class elitism. The Open Space Program was established on the firm foundation of environmental ethics embodied by wilderness and open space landscapes, so ownership over open space lands is predicated on valuation of land conservation and protection for recreational use and aesthetic value. Cronon (1996) argues that the valuation of nature in pristine wilderness landscapes is predicated on the fact that people holding those values do not work the land itself, otherwise they would value nature for its role in everyday life. This separation of nature from everyday life to a realm to which people "escape" is an elitist aesthetic.

Furthermore, ownership in the United States is necessarily a racialized discourse. The dispossession of racial minorities from their land and promise of land ownership never given to African Americans (e.g. forty acres and a mule) was a practice established long before the founding of the nation. Dispossession of racial minorities from their land or denial of land promised continued well into the twentieth century in the continued dissolution of tribal lands through termination acts (Wilkinson, 2010) and real estate practices including redlining and federal mortgage subsidies given only to whites (Lipsitz, 2006, 2011). Even fostering popular ownership over public lands encounters a rocky racial terrain; racial politics pervade the relationship between a government and its people. For example, Carolyn Finney's (2006) research on African Americans' low visitation to national parks because of exclusionary practices including a territorializing white privilege shows that just because protected federal lands such as national parks are open to all does not mean that all will feel welcome there. In addition, as I demonstrate in chapter 5, white Boulder residents continue to assume that whites' ownership over open space is quite natural but immigrants' feeling of ownership over
open space is impossible or, at best, unlikely. Thus, the performative process of encouraging feelings of ownership over open space lands rely on and reinforce racialized valences of land ownership itself.

The establishment of the Open Space Program and acquisition of open space land fundamentally changed the way residents thought about and moved through the land around the city in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though these efforts were phrased as acting to “preserve Boulder’s distinctive character” (ibid), they in fact did much more than “preserve.” They produced a normative expectation of support for land and environmental protection in the city among city residents as well as a reputation of the city as green. At the parcel scale the reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations included acquisition of land by the city through its Open Space Program and Greenbelt Fund (funded by a .4 percent sales tax passed by popular vote in 1967), protection of land through conservation and other easements, and designation of new names for acquired parcels. Through this new structure of land tenure and management by the city, city residents changed their relationship to the land around the city from passive enjoyment and use to active management by the government, and passive use encouraged by feelings of ownership by the public.

Parcels the city acquired or protected by easement were managed in a way to preserve them in their “natural state” (as argued in chapter 2). This natural state refers to a time in the past before rapid urban development and expansion threatened the landscape. At the same time, parcels were developed for recreational use with the addition of amenities such as parking lots, trash cans, restrooms, fire roads, signs, and, especially, trails (Ehrler and Donahue, n.d. [1973]); this type of development for recreation and aesthetics did not count as destructive development from which land was protected. Access by all people in the community was often mentioned as a priority in open space acquisition and management (ibid; Anonymous, n.d. [1972]; City of Boulder, n.d. [1970]; City of Boulder Assistant City Manager, 1970, “Memorandum,” and 1971, “Greenbelt”; City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Greenbelt”; Committee of 100, n.d. [1968]; Special Committee on Park Sites and Open Spaces, 1963). With the purchase of open space and protection of land with easements, the city took over physical management of the “natural” lands and invited residents to take ownership over them.

This shift in residents’ socio-spatial relationship with the landscape was both a literal expansion of state ownership of it as well as figurative expansion of residents’ sentiment of ownership, based on a manifest destiny type of need to acquire all of the mountain backdrop as well as scenic land and open space in the
valley. Residents had hiked some trails for years, especially in the foothills and mesas west of the city. This tradition reached back to the early Chautauqua years when summer residents were called to a “test of... strength” by nature’s “vast mass of granite” which many visitors had ascended, “conquered the barrier, and stood triumphant at the summit” (The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association, 1900, May). This masculine expression of testing one’s strength in the crucible of wild nature, to have “conquered” and “stood triumphant” is firmly based in the wilderness tradition’s separation of humans from nature. The sentiment continued through the mid-century reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations, but by then possessing the landscape through human’s conquest over nature, a kind of spiritual ownership, was still necessary but no longer sufficient. With modern environmentalism came the need to protect the natural landscape from the scourge of development and modernity, so the city needed to own the land outright in simple fee title or own the development rights through conservation easement. The city’s efforts to purchase the totality of the “mountain backdrop” visible west of the city thus marked a significant shift in the way ownership over the landscape was articulated. The spiritual and everyday ownership over the landscape continued and expanded through the change in the property relation. Use shifted from popular use of limited city-owned and privately owned lands to widespread access to almost all foothills, mesas, and canyons west of the city and increased visitation to open spaces established north, south, and east of the city as well. This expansion of literal ownership facilitated the expansion of residents’ feeling of ownership over the land and their performative compulsion to protect it.

This massive effort to acquire open space for residents' recreational and aesthetic enjoyment was part of a larger shift in the attitudes towards land in the environmental movement at the time, which were rooted in racial values of purity and pollution. For example, Aldo Leopold rejected the view of land as mere property (de Steiguer, 2006). He encouraged a shift from a social ethic based in economics or economic growth to a land ethic: “[Q]uit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (Leopold, 1966 [1949]: 262). This was the ethic that Boulder residents articulated in their acquisition of land for environmental protection in and around their city. But, the definition of “what is ethically and esthetically right” took place in the context of hegemonic white values. As I argue in chapter 2,
the values apparently came from the landscape itself, embedded in the tendency “to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community,” but in fact were rooted in specific values of the purity of nature in contrast to the chaos and pollution of society. The latter were formulated in explicitly racial terms during the early twentieth century, when support for the wilderness movement was articulated in the same terms as the eugenics movement, brought together in the broad compulsion to protect the purity of the nation (Kosek, 2004).

The city government’s decision to rename parcels purchased was part of the manifestation of the shift in the relationship between Boulder residents and the land around the city, based on expanded land ownership, but erasing the property relation itself. At the end of 1969 the City Manager’s Committee on Open Space (CMACOS) recommended to the City Manager that the practice of referring to acquired parcels using the names of previous owners be replaced by assignation of “geographic or historic names” (CMACOS, 1969, 12/4). Visits to open space lands before establishment of the Open Space Program were limited to the city’s long-time ownership (including the foothill land west of Chautauqua) or to a traditional understanding between land owners and visitors in a small-city setting (Boulder’s population in 1960 was just under 40,000). After acquisition and subsequent renaming of 1,725 acres of open space in 1969 (Tedesco, 1969), the private property relation was removed from residents’ experience of nature. Ownership by the city facilitated a rejection of the view that land is “mere property” to be used to satisfy individuals’ needs, and changing the name of the land reinforced the environmental ideology that the city government was protecting the natural landscape rather than producing a particular set of socio-spatial relationships between city residents and the land. Residents were invited to explore the land in its “natural state” unmediated by private property relations. This invitation elides the intensive maintenance of open space in favor of a simplified idea of protecting the environment and getting back to a pure, pristine nature central to the environmental movement.

*Scientific and aesthetic valuation of the valley*

Socio-spatial relations were reconfigured at the city and valley scale through the social and scientific assessment of the land’s aesthetic, recreational, and environmental attributes. The decision of which landscape features and locations to prioritize in the protection of open space was a process through which
city managers defined the ways in which they valued the land. They highlighted specific attributes that made some lands more valuable than others and in the process redefined the city’s relationship with the landscape around it in accordance with modern American environmental values, reinforcing a performative norm of environmentalism. One of the important steps taken in the Open Space Program was the definition of the “Boulder valley.” It was decided to include about 58 square miles bounded to the west by the mountains, to the south by Davidson Mesa, to the northeast by Gunbarrel Hill, and to the north by the ridge between Mesa Reservoir and Boulder Reservoir (CMACOS, 1973, 2/16).

As part of the larger environmental movement, decision-makers in Boulder communicated with national environmental organizations and environmental scientists. Archival data show that Boulder residents and government communicated with major environmental organizations including The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as well as ecological scientists from universities including the University of Colorado and the University of Wisconsin. In April 1968, The Nature Conservancy sent a representative to Boulder to find out more about the city’s Open Space Program. The representative distributed a brochure titled “Gifts of Land to The Nature Conservancy” that the City Manager’s Advisory Committee on Open Space (CMACOS) planned to use to develop its own brochure about donation of land and conservation easements for open space (CMACOS, 1968, 4/15). The city even anticipated some assistance in funding acquisition of open space from the federal government and The Nature Conservancy (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Greenbelt”).47 The protection of “gifts of land” sought by TNC and the City of Boulder is firmly rooted in the environmental ethic of protecting the national patrimony from modern, technological defacement. The protection of land, both wilderness and open space, is inseparable from the protection of the purity and strength of the nation, values embedded in the natural landscape through environmental ethics that emerged during the colonial era (Kosek, 2004, 2006; Olwig, 2002). The protection of land is thus performative of the values of purity and nationalism to some extent today.

The reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations to conform to values, practices, and norms of the emerging environmental movement occurred in part through the codification of the Boulder valley using environmental science. University of Colorado faculty participated in the development of the new interdisciplinary field and its application in the valley through collection and analysis of extensive environmental

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47 Boulder is now home to the headquarters of the organization’s Colorado chapter.
data. The framing of the discussion of environmental characteristics and quality was influenced by a professor from the University of Wisconsin who gave a presentation to the city government. The presentation of his study helped the city solidify and confirm its environmental values in its finding that “a number of aesthetic and cultural values which should be preserved in an open space program tend to group together in distinct patterns” that were labeled corridors of environmental quality, a term borrowed from the researcher (City of Boulder, 1970).

City open space planners incorporated the concepts of the emerging field of environmental science into their management plans, conducting extensive scientific inventories of parcels and the entire newly defined Boulder valley. According to the Assistant City Manager, in 1970 the city was “inventorying the Boulder Valley and... plotting on maps information pertaining to flood plains, surface water, aquifer recharge areas, slopes, rims, cultural and historic points of interest, vegetation characteristics, unique natural features, soils composition, earthquake susceptibility and ownership” (City of Boulder Assistant City Manager, 1970, “Memorandum”). This inventory, like similar ones in other areas of the country, helped managers identify corridors of environmental quality as areas to be preserved (ibid). The Assistant City Manager pointed out that the inventory would help the city set priorities on lands they might acquire for the Open Space program, depending on the cost and likelihood of development (ibid), and this identification of high quality environmental areas was part of a widespread effort to establish which particular environmental features and locations the city valued most. Faculty at the University of Colorado published a report titled “Environmental Data for Planning Boulder, Colorado” (Madole and Williams, 1973). The report outlined major environmental characteristics of the Boulder valley, including geology, slopes, soils, and vegetation, among others. The report’s editors explained that the purpose of the study was to serve the city’s Growth Commission and the County Planning Department in an ongoing “effort at gaining an ever improved understanding of the physical environment of a complex area containing mountains and plains” (ibid).

Explicitly or implicitly, many of these studies were directed at limiting urban growth in the Boulder valley and the preservation of the environment directly connected to environmental values coalescing across the country. By 1973 the city and county had agreed to limit growth and development according to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (Boulder City Council and Boulder City Administration, 1971; City of Boulder, 1972; City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Annual Report”). They commissioned the environmental survey
to gather data about the valley environment to inform their planning process and priorities. The chapter on vegetation (Krebs, 1973) put the study in the context of the development of environmental science as a field with a unique perspective. Krebs described this as “improvement made in the analysis of natural resources and man’s impact on the environment,” including “an increased intensity of man’s ecological awareness,” the new technological tool of remote sensing, and the resultant shift in scale of analysis to the “ecosystem unit” (ibid), again pointing to the influence of the new language of environmental science of the era. Tim Forsyth highlights this political nature of the field of ecology in that it established “a new political agenda questioning the destructiveness of human behavior” and this trend of use of ecology for political purposes continues today (Forsyth, 2003: 5) and is at times a performative expectation of environmentalism in Boulder.

The definition and study of the valley were part of a broader establishment of priorities for open space acquisition based on the explicit valuation of specific environmental attributes of valley and mountain lands. One of the earliest of the city’s efforts at establishing the Open Space Program was a report by the Special Committee on Park Sites and Open Spaces to the city’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The report inventoried “future park sites” and recommended priorities for acquisition (Special Committee on Park Sites and Open Spaces, 1963). These priorities divided the land into three categories: stream courses, mountain areas, and lakes (ibid). The committee emphasized the importance of preserving streams in the midst of subdivision of parcels and development of land (ibid). The committee anticipated that the sites they inventoried as future park sites including Boulder Creek, South Boulder Creek, Settlers’ Park, the Mesa Trail, and Wonderland Lake “will be lost forever in the near future unless we take positive action now” (ibid), echoing the need to acquire ownership of the land to protect nature.

By 1967 these priorities were viewed as important enough to include in the Citizens for Greenbelts’ fact sheet for the Greenbelt Tax vote, distributed to the public. The fact sheet established the land to the west of the city and above the Blue Line (a line of elevation above which the city would not provide water and sewer services) as the top priority for acquisition, then listed “property adjacent to Boulder Creek, South Boulder Creek, undeveloped strips along the Turnpike and the Longmont Diagonal, large bodies of water, drainage ways and other natural areas” as other high priorities for acquisition (Citizens for Greenbelts, 1967). In a document outlining the policies of the Greenbelt adopted by the City Council in 1968, the City Manager described the priorities for open space acquisition:
Perhaps the most important objective is that of preserving the one natural area which has given Boulder much of its character - its beautiful mountain backdrop.... Other natural areas, characterized by unusual terrain, flora and trees native to the area, geological formation such as the White Rocks, should be preserved for future generations. Lakes not only serve as open space, but also provide water-based recreation. The opportunity still exists for preserving the scenic vistas which one now finds upon approaching and leaving the city. (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Greenbelt”)

The establishment of value of “unusual terrain, flora and trees native to the area, [and] geological formation” (ibid) was a solidification of the city residents’ relationship to the greenbelt land through valuation of certain land features over others that were rooted in past praise of the landscape, matched values of the broader modern environmental movement, and must be contextualized as hegemonic white aesthetic environmental values. These were early performative articulations of Boulder’s “character” as green, natural, sublime, environmental, different, quality, and special. In addition to the special landscapes of “unusual terrain... [and] geologic formation,” Boulder was filled with special people, who appreciate special landscapes. The city residents were made to feel special through their foresight concerning the protection of nature. As it drew on hegemonic white aesthetic and environmental values, this self-affirmation was a self-reinforcing, performative racial discourse.

Rooted in past adulations of the landscape, these calls to protect the landscape performatively rearticulated it as something that needs protection and saving. The need to preserve nature’s most beautiful areas in their pristine natural states follows the values established by early American preservationist John Muir. The emphasis on aesthetic and recreational value of land followed the logic that predated the modern environmental movement, but remained at its core. The sense of beauty and purity that the pristine landscapes offered was a cornerstone of the ecocentrism of the modern environmental movement. The rearticulation of this value against development and in favor of protection of “quality” environments for a “quality” city was central to Boulder’s reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations in establishing both the greenbelt and itself as a green liberal city.

The invocation of pristine wilderness and pristine open space preserved in its natural state are performative reproductions of racial beliefs embedded in environmental ontologies and values embedded in the past and projected into the future. The values embedded in environmental protection expressed in the 1960s and 1970s include references to Boulder’s past and to its future. References to Boulder’s forefathers’ foresight in the acquisition of the Chautauqua grounds, Flagstaff Mountain, and Green Mountain drew on
longstanding views of health, recreation, and aesthetics attached to the surrounding landscapes. These landscapes were necessarily idyllic and emphasized progress or environmental knowledge of agriculture rather than agricultural labor or harsh qualities of extractive industry such as mining, on which the city was founded. Modern environmentalism preserved past landscapes as ones people can continue to enjoy.

“Untouched” mountain views and traditional (not modern) agricultural landscapes were preserved as part of the land ethic. Critical histories of environmentalism show that this valuation of pristine nature has class and racial histories and implications, which are often hidden, but center on white privilege and wealth (Cronon, 1996; Kosek, 2004, 2006; Taylor, 1997). The protection of pristine nature reinforces a dualistic view of humans and nature that ignores or devalues physical labor on landscapes because landscapes are seen as always already natural and sublime or as destroyed by humans (Cronon, 1996; Mitchell, 1996). In this dualism, wilderness is also portrayed as a space of escape from modern worries of industrial pollution and social turmoil, including “polluting” immigrant populations in the early twentieth century (Kosek, 2004).

Open space literature’s references to the future warned of exponential population growth, overwhelming development, and environmental destruction. The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, in particular, emphasized the dangers of population growth in its justification of environmental and city planning. On the first page of the brochure outlining the plan, next to a graph of exponential population growth in which the city’s population was predicted to quadruple from 1960 to 1990 (40,000 to 130,000), the text explained, “Livability has diminished with increased size. The question of stopping growth frequently is raised by residents of the Boulder Valley, who are concerned that the quality of our environment is slipping away…. With proper planning and a concern for our environment, the Boulder Valley can be preserved and strengthened as an exciting, quality area” (City of Boulder, n.d. [1970]). The report went on to warn the reader about the hazards of an unplanned environment in the midst of population growth:

Even assuming a slowing of recent trends, the population of the Boulder Valley could still nearly double in the next 20 years to 140,000 people.... In the 1970’s, the future of the Valley stands at a crossroads. Either growth and redevelopment will be guided in a logical and planned manner, or it will likely develop in a haphazard fashion, ignoring the human scale of the community. (Ibid)

It was decided that Boulder would “discourage new primary employment centers from locating in the Boulder valley” to keep the population growth under control (City of Boulder, 1972).
These fears of population growth at the local scale echoed fears of population problems at national and global scales. Fears of population growth that were, and to some extent still are, central to the modern environmental movement have a sordid history of racism, disdain for supposedly lazy poor people, and racialized fear of uncivilized foreigners using up the planet’s resources. Paul Ehrlich’s book *The Population Bomb* (1968) was an expansion on Hugh Moore’s (owner of the Dixie Cup Company) pamphlet of the same title (Jalsevac, 2004: 40-42). Moore was a primary publicist for John D. Rockefeller’s population control campaign (ibid). Part of Rockefeller’s inspiration to establish the foundation was the evidence of overpopulation he saw in visits to Africa and Asia, and Rockefeller’s organization the Population Council was established with the help of a well known eugenicist Fredrick Osborn (ibid).

The issue of population growth was also intimately tied to fears of the city’s physical growth in the form of “sprawl.” Thus, open space was not only valued for its aesthetic, recreational, and environmental qualities, but as an alternative to and protection against urban growth, development, and sprawl. As a follow-up to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, the city asked voters in 1971 to approve a resolution to limit growth in Boulder (City of Boulder, 1972). One item in the interim growth policies that the City Council adopted after the vote was a required “statement evaluating environmental impact” of any proposed development in the city (ibid). The phrasing suggests that this requirement was influenced by the 1969 passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at a national scale that required Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. The broader American environmental movement was also responding to the specter of rapid urban and suburban development and sprawl as forces of environmental destruction. Boulder’s residents and leaders made it clear in the 1960s and 1970s that they were not ready for, nor would they allow, changes of the magnitude predicted in their city or valley. They did not want to see Boulder grow beyond its bounds, willy-nilly; they wanted a slow, planned, controlled, contiguous growth surrounded by open space and low-density rural land with an agricultural or wilderness character. This desire was a performance of a particular city identity and concept of belonging shaped along racial and class lines and expressed through an environmental ethic.

The same greenbelt document by the city manager as above stated, “As the city continues its growth, open space can be introduced into the fabric of urban land use – residential, industrial and commercial. Open space can define the limits of physical growth” (ibid). Potential land development played a
major role in the committee’s decision whether to acquire lands; lands at high risk for development were assigned high priority for acquisitions and the city was willing to pay more to acquire them (City of Boulder, 1970; City of Boulder Assistant City Manager, 1970, “Memorandum”; CMACOS, 1970, 2/24 and 4/16). Stuart Udall’s 1963 *The Quiet Crisis* drew attention to the loss of natural habitat and people’s failure to live in harmony with the land (de Steiguer, 2006). Part of this view was protection of habitat for flora and fauna, especially those endemic to an area.

Sprawl, which is still decried in bitter tones by Boulder residents today, was constructed as an antithesis to a well planned, clean, orderly community and environment. Sprawl and population growth were nearly one and the same in Boulder. As more people moved to the city, more homes and neighborhoods were constructed on the outskirts of the city on former agricultural and grazing land. The influx of people and their physical presence on the landscape was a direct offense to the sensibilities of Boulder residents who valued the small city atmosphere. Quickly, seemingly all at once, their small, friendly city with few to no traffic lights, nestled at the foot of the mountains and surrounded by wild-lands and pastoral scenes was being penned in by lines upon lines of suburban ranch style houses. The city was losing its innocent 1950s character, its apparently effortless compactness and harmony with the environment around it. Residents observed the anonymous suburbs, which lacked the character of older Boulder homes. They began to grow nostalgic, and efforts at historic city preservation were born (Pettem, 2006). The city located its special status in the natural environment around it, and channeled its efforts into protection of the landscape and the quality of the landscape and community.

The *quality city*

The establishment of the greenbelt as a socio-spatial process was not limited to the land around the city but also affected the city itself through performative redefinition of the city as a “quality” city in relation to the greenbelt. Prior to the 1960s, Boulder residents and visitors valued the city’s environment for its qualities of health and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Early Chautauqua literature touted it as a healthful respite for the “overworked businessman or brain-fagged scholar” (The Texas-COLORADO Chautauqua, 1898, April). As argued in chapter 1, at that time the environment itself was seen as the source of health. Mental irritability and great depression of spirits could be cured by the mountains because of “[t]he
stimulus and object which they afford to muscular exertion; the bracing atmosphere, rousing the physical energies and re-awakening the sense of powers unimpaired and unexhausted" (ibid). Because of the healthful qualities of the air itself, even a drive or ride into the mountains was a healthful activity (ibid). In the 1960s, Boulder altered these environmental discourses, turning away from the healthful attributes of the climate towards the necessity of environmental protection and planning.

The city began to brand itself as a “quality” city through direct reference to its forward thinking environmental and city planning policies. The greenbelt became an ever-present symbol for and reminder of Boulder’s quality. In 1968 the City Manager declared, “The Greenbelt Program will have an impact, exceeding that of any other municipal project, on much of what happens in Boulder. It will serve as a constant reminder of the strong feeling of Boulder’s citizens and government for the exceedingly valuable, natural heritage and environment of the community” (City of Boulder City Manager, 1968, “Greenbelt”). In a large information sheet and map of Boulder’s Greenbelt, the city promoted the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan as its rational plan for development in the valley (City of Boulder, n.d. [1970]). It asked the reader: “Can the Boulder Valley truly become one of the quality communities in the country?” (ibid). The answer according to the document was yes. With Boulder’s “heritage of environment,” state university, and scientific research labs, Boulder had “the capacity to create ... good things.... [and] seek a balance which respects our environment and accommodates new growth in a harmonious manner” (ibid). Boulder’s opposition to suburban sprawl and rapid urban development and expansion was a major theme in defining Boulder as a “quality” city in contrast to a large (“quantity”), sprawling city like Denver. The 1970 Annual Report issued by the city also promoted the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. Under the heading “The Quality Community” it explained how quality, not quantity was the answer:

On both sides of the Growth question the real concern is quality. So the Plan’s sponsors decided that the number of people in Boulder Valley is a secondary issue. The REAL issue is how to keep Boulder’s QUALITY through growth. QUALITY is the genesis of the Comprehensive Plan. QUALITY growth means that as Boulder grows we must ensure that high quality for which Boulder is famous. (City of Boulder, 1971, emphasis original)

The report described many areas of life in the quality city, but the Greenbelt stood out as most important. The goal was to convert thirty percent of the Boulder valley into open space:

Preserve the mountain backdrop, land along the major streams, land around lakes, mesa rims and slopes, and unique natural features. Preserve nature – wildlife and vegetation. Create facilities for everyman’s adventures: fishing, boating, camping, and just roaming... Lace the valley with
“greenways,” narrow strips of land for man on foot and bicycle. Work Nature into our daily lives. (Ibid)

The city defined itself in relation to its greenbelt. The greenbelt’s aesthetic, recreational, and environmental values helped Boulder become a quality city, one which staved off the inevitable forces of modernity and development through planning and foresight and the intentional incorporation of nature in everyday life through the greenbelt and greenways. This brand as an environmental city with a high quality of life engendered specific racial qualities through the adoption of environmentalism into the mainstream in the city, becoming the norm. Like the valuation of quality environmental attributes, the characterization of Boulder as a quality city emphasized certain lifestyles and values over others and established a performative norm to which city residents must adhere or actively resist.48

Environmental planning became a central part of environmental values through the emerging importance of protection of land around cities. Nature was no longer seen as merely there (out there in Colorado) to come enjoy (the majesty of the mountains, etc). It had to be protected, and the city of Boulder worked hard to do just that. This idea that nature needs to be protected through environmental planning, land acquisition, and easements was central to the modern American environmental movement. The focus shifted from the protection of far away wilderness heartlands found in national parks far from cities or intensively managed “neighborhood” parks to protection of “natural settings” surrounding cities like Boulder (Special Committee on Park Sites and Open Spaces, 1963). Citizens wanted to freeze the landscape in its pristine natural and agricultural states, before it was destroyed by modernity. The specter of destruction was central to the philosophy embedded in justification of environmental planning and establishment of the greenbelt in Boulder: “Our society has made technological gains in the past 50 years that far outweigh all technological gains of mankind prior to this 50 period, but during this same era of phenomenal scientific discovering, we have been losing some of our most valuable resources [of clean air, mountain streams and green mountain backdrop] due to our rush to get some place, although we are not quite certain just where” (Miller, 1967).

Longstanding references to the health and outdoor recreation in Boulder were rearticulated through values aligned with the modern American environmental movement. In the 1960s health was no longer seen

48 Resistance to a performative norm is also a performative process of subjectivation in accordance with the norm and, in this case, subject formation through the discourse of environmentalism (see Foucault, 1990 [1978]).
as something that one could acquire simply through breathing the lovely air, which at the turn of the century had been sufficient: “The air coming from the hills, where it is purified by contact with pine and spruce trees, is so invigorating that it seems almost life itself” (The Texas-Colorado Chautauqua, 1898, April). By the 1960s the concern over environmental destruction shifted the discourse of health to the wellbeing of the environment itself. In a 1973 public opinion survey, city residents declared that air pollution was the “most serious environmental problem facing Boulder,” followed by population growth and other types of pollution (Landon, 1973: 30). In addition, three-quarters of residents surveyed also agreed with the statement, “I am quite concerned about growth in Boulder” (ibid: 37). Pollution and environmental destruction became primary enemies, and a clean environment the primary goal. In his document advocating the establishment of an open space program in Boulder, one resident pointed out, “Our industries are clean and are the type that attract the most desirable employees and citizens” (Miller, 1967). The view was that clean industry promoted a healthy population and a clean environment. A clean, protected environment, in turn, contributed to residents’ mental health. The greenbelt fostered mental health because even “a drive through the countryside is enjoyable because there is countryside--a psychological relief from urban noise and congestion” (City of Boulder, n.d. [1971], “Brochure,” emphasis original). This concept of a clean space to escape modern “urban noise and congestion” was central to Boulder’s quality. As pointed out in chapter 2, “clean” industry is also free of working-class “rif-raff,” and the countryside is only a psychological relief to those who subscribe to a specific view of nature as sublime and as a source of spiritual renewal (Cronon, 1996).

The story of open space acquisition in Boulder had themes of both environmental and social values (described in chapter 2), but Boulder’s branding as an environmental city that fit within the normative values of the American environmental movement played a significant role in prioritizing environmental values over social ones. The branding of Boulder as an environmental city shaped the way residents defined themselves and the city in subsequent years. The rearticulation of Boulder’s environmental values through the newly emergent modern American environmental movement promoted specific performative norms that were attached to the branding of Boulder as green and have lasted for decades. The adoption of the norms was one of the reasons the city continued to emphasize environmental values over social values. Emphasis on environmental values fit within the normative values and practices of the national movement, including
protection of pristine landscapes as part of a symbolic protection of a pure nation and national race (Kosek, 2004, 2006).

The reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations between the city residents and open space land was a racial process. Dorceta Taylor argues that the history of American conservation most often relayed is “really a history of middle class white male environmental activism” that omits alternative environmental agendas and conceptions of nature (Taylor, 1997: 16). The middle-class white male history of conservation is hegemonic in Boulder. The environmental justice movement demonstrates that American environmentalism has long excluded those who hold more expanded definitions of environment as where people “live, work, and play” (Di Chiro, 1996). Boulder aligned itself with American environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s. The city streamlined its environmental values to fit the norms of the movement, separating them from social values such as affordable housing and the desire for everyone to access the benefits of environmental protection and open space. Whites performatively reinscribe racial privilege without thought today partly because of the way open space itself was established through reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations to land in the context of the white environmental movement.

“Hidden” Hispanics and racialized spaces of privilege

The norms of Boulder as a green and white city established in the 1960s and 1970s are still played out in everyday socio-spatial interactions between white volunteers who teach English to immigrants in Boulder and their students. In interviews with volunteer teachers, the idea of a “hidden” Hispanic community surfaced repeatedly. Volunteers introduced this idea into interviews most often in response to the questions “What have you gotten out of working with Intercambio or how have you benefitted most from working with Intercambio?” and “Has your work with Intercambio changed your experience living in Boulder? How?” This section explores volunteers’ explanations of how a Hispanic community comprised of over eight thousand people can remain hidden in a city whose population is less than one hundred thousand (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010). My argument is threefold. First, socio-spatial relations play a major role in reinforcing common conceptualizations of cultural, ethnic, and racial difference based in historical characterizations and norms. Second, Hispanics’ perceived status as “hidden” depends on and reinforces performative racial and class-based coding of urban space and open space, and the perception is predicated on the white view from
“outside” the “Hispanic community.” Third, volunteer English teachers’ socio-spatial practices disrupt actual spatial segregation making Hispanics more visible (less hidden), but they draw on representations of belonging grounded in white privilege and the city’s history of environmentalism that represent Hispanics as outsiders who do not belong in Boulder. These ideas of belonging are articulated through socio-spatial explanations of difference in Boulder, performatively expressed through the values of safety, order, health, and environmentalism.

Volunteers’ subjectivities are formed, questioned, and reformed through volunteers’ discourse about how and why a hidden Hispanic community exists in Boulder. I categorize volunteers’ comments into three different ways Latinos are described as hidden and descriptions of how or why a hidden Hispanic community exists in Boulder: spatial segregation of the Hispanic community, social invisibility of individual Latinos, and volunteers’ awareness without “knowing” about the Hispanic community. Each of these categories of hidden Hispanics is a product of white spatial subject formation rooted in the city’s normative environmentalism and progressive politics. These descriptions of segregation, social invisibility, and new knowledge or understanding of the perceived Hispanic community draw on the characterization of Boulder as a white city established in part through its environmental history, and they reinforce hegemonic white privilege there. They are performative socio-spatial articulations of the complex overlap between environmentalism, progressive politics, and racism. Viewing these practices through the lens of performative subject formation gives insight to the ways they simultaneously draw on multiple and even conflicting discourses in everyday practice.

Spatial segregation

The most clearly spatial explanation offered by volunteers for how a supposedly hidden Hispanic community exists in Boulder is the spatial segregation explanation. The characterizations of Hispanics as hidden and living segregated lives made by whites appears to be “about Hispanics” but, like the workshop analyzed in chapter 3, they are performative socio-spatial enactments of white privilege and draw on racialized assumptions about difference and order in urban spaces that are linked to the city’s environmentalist history and character. Volunteers say that Hispanics live in different neighborhoods, work in different places, shop at different stores, and recreate in different places from the places the white
volunteers do. In this view, the “white community” and the “Hispanic community” in Boulder occupy separate spaces that rarely overlap; they are spatially segregated. To some extent, this perception matches actual spatial practices of whites and Hispanics in the city. Many Hispanics live clustered together in specific, identifiable areas of town. According to the American Community Survey, the city's immigrant population is concentrated in two locations, in North Boulder in the area north of Iris Avenue, south and west of U.S. Highway 36, and east of Broadway, and in East Boulder in the area just east of the University of Colorado campus between 28th Street, Foothills Parkway, Baseline Road, and Arapahoe Avenue (Meltzer, 2010, “Boulder County”). The immigrant population is nearly a quarter of the total population in each of those areas (ibid), but many immigrants and Latinos live in other parts of the city, as well.

Volunteers’ conceptualization of a spatially segregated Hispanic community relies on and reinforces cultural, ethnic, and racial assumptions and stereotypes, despite often being couched in neutral statements about who lives or works where that conform to a progressive politics. The generalizations about where Latinos live discursively bound them in certain areas, blocks, or apartment complexes. For example, while many volunteers refer to their “Hispanic neighbors” they use the term metaphorically; not one white volunteer mentioned a Hispanic family living next door or even on the same street. The spatial scale at which Boulder is racially or ethnically integrated among whites and Hispanics, according to white interviewees, is the neighborhood scale at finest. The “Hispanic community” is viewed from the outside by white residents as hidden in specific, special locations, while white residents just live in regular neighborhoods, presumably not hidden from anyone. This view of Boulder’s socio-spatial segregation is often expressed as a neutral observation of the Cartesian spatial reality; volunteers suddenly find or see “Hispanic areas” of town. In line with the discourse of progressive politics, volunteers do not explicitly judge the Hispanic areas. To the contrary, several volunteers expressed excitement about discovering Hispanic neighborhoods or stores and positive views about the potential for socio-spatial integration. Nevertheless, the identification of these “special” places performatively reinforces racial understandings of belonging in the city through the discourse of socio-spatial segregation. These racializations of space facilitate racist assumptions about Hispanic spaces articulated by white volunteers through opinions about social order, environmentalism, and health, as well as assumptions about cultural, racial, and ethnic differences.
The volunteer English teachers I interviewed express this spatial segregation in several overlapping ways. Nelda, a white woman in her fifties, connects spatial segregation to social segregation: “[T]here’s this sort of hidden world that a lot of us don’t even really know about. And, and it’s hard on both sides to find out about it without groups like Intercambio or other cultural things, you know. I mean, how do you—how do you know?” Lou, a white male in his thirties, articulates this spatial segregation in terms of communities:

I’ve always recognized [Latinos] as part of our community, sort of in a theoretical sense, but they’re not really part of my community. You know, I mean, they don’t – I don’t work with any Latinos, I don’t, they don’t live in my neighborhood. And so, it was good to be a part of that community even just sort of on the outskirts with [my student] Frederico. But, for my day-to-day life, it hasn’t actually changed it at all.

Lou describes Latinos as part of “our” community but not really part of his community. Before teaching Frederico in a one-on-one class, Lou did not see Latinos during the day in his neighborhood or at his work, except the man who cleans the office. His interactions with Frederico make him feel a little bit like a part of the Hispanic community, but only on the outskirts. Despite his twice-weekly classes at Frederico’s house, the spatial segregation of the two communities, as Lou sees them, remains largely intact. His actions disrupt the socio-spatial segregation, but his description of Frederico’s outsider status in “his” – Lou’s own – community reinforce the racial-ethnic and socio-spatial norms of belonging and exclusion in Boulder.

Edith, in her twenties, also remarks on the spatial segregation of Latinos, both residential and at a broader community scale. Edith is the only volunteer I interviewed who identifies as multiracial. She is herself an immigrant from France whose parents immigrated to France from Madagascar. Like other volunteers, she explains that she did not know about the Hispanic community until she visited a neighborhood where many Hispanics live:

[T]he funny thing is, when I was working for Community Cycles... during the summer we go [out] to [the] community, and that’s where I got to see the Hispanic community.... I was like, “There’s a community, this whole Hispanic people right there. There’s no white people that come here.” So I feel like maybe the seclusion a little bit, like they’re in their own part, and I don’t really see that much, ‘cause really I didn’t – in what I do, let’s just say I don’t– ... a lot of time, [I feel] like, “Wow, I’m the only black person here,” or “I’m the only colored person here.” So I was kind of surprised to see like all those people. I know they were there, but like all those people in one place, and I’ve never seen them before somewhere else.

Edith’s surprise at seeing “all those people” whom she has “never seen... somewhere else” demonstrates the perception that the hidden Hispanic community remains out of sight because it is literally located in distinct, isolated areas of Boulder.
In reality, those seemingly isolated areas of Boulder are often located very close to where white volunteers live. Margaret, a white woman in her fifties, admits that she did not know that Latinos, including her English student, lived so near to her own house, and that working with Intercambio has changed the way she views her own neighborhood:

M We live almost in the same neighborhood. I wasn’t even aware that there was an apartment complex that pretty much everybody that lives there appeared to come from Mexico.
A And it’s in your neighborhood?
M Yeah! How cool is that?! And... so you know I run into brother-in-laws or people at the Safeway, you know. That would have never happened before [I started volunteering with] Intercambio.

She’s excited to discover Hispanic spaces so close to her home and excited at the way her relationship with her student changes her everyday socio-spatial interaction in her neighborhood grocery store.49

The conceptualization of a spatially segregated Hispanic community relies on and reinforces cultural, ethnic, and racial differences and stereotypes as well as the common assumption that people from the “same culture” tend to interact only with each other. In volunteers’ descriptions, “regular” spaces such as apartment complexes, neighborhoods, stores, or parks become spaces of difference when it is discovered that Hispanics live there, own a store, or visit there regularly. These spaces of difference are seen to contain the immigrant population, which, in part, explains how Hispanics remain “hidden” in the city.

Latino immigrants are often also described as self-isolating. Cathy, a white woman in her sixties, says that this isolation results from the efforts in the city to accommodate residents who speak only Spanish. Cathy believes that there are enough resources in Spanish that Spanish-speaking immigrants can use those. She does not think that Latinos necessarily need to branch out into shops or services where Spanish is not used:

I think there’re enough Spanish-speaking places to shop and do whatever you need to do that they can manage to live in a more isolated community. I’m thinking of this one couple I know. They’re in their mid-fifties, and the wife only has a third grade education, and the husband probably graduated from high school. She’s still, after two or three years, [at English] level two and he’s [at English] level five going to level six.50... But she can manage fine in Boulder. She doesn’t have to know English. They clean, and do things like that [for work], and as long as she has her husband to do certain things she’s fine.

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49 Margaret lives on the border of the area east of the university campus where many immigrants live.

50 Intercambio’s English curriculum has seven levels.
The presence of the woman’s husband who speaks English at a proficient level is only necessary for a few activities. Cathy portrays this linguistic segregation as part of what maintains the isolation of the hidden Hispanic community; Spanish speakers just talk to Spanish speakers.

Similarly, Nelda says it is natural for people to stay near people with whom they have connections:

N: I think it’s that the people who don’t speak English tend to stick together because it’s easier for them. People move to where they know people and have families. So – I don’t wanna say it’s like a ghetto because it’s not enforced from outside, but I think it sort of is a natural thing that happens is that people go where they have connections and feel comfortable. And so you have these areas, the neighborhoods where it’s all Spanish speaking, and so it’s not as integrated. I think the most integrated places are the schools where the kids are in classes, and that’s where that integration is happening, and that’s where you see that Boulder is not as white. I think probably if you ask young people who are in school they would disagree with that. Whereas the, you know, the rest of us who aren’t, you know, you don’t see it.

A: And then what about public spaces? You mentioned the grocery store and Target, in terms of public shopping areas, but do you think we just use different public spaces?

N: I think so! I mean we even use different grocery stores [laughs]. You know, I go now, there’s a frutería up on Glenwood in there, kind of hidden. It’s a great store. [My student] Flor told me about it, and... that’s all Mexican. If you want Mexican food and the huge array of different kinds of chiles that’s the place to go....

You know, I did take Flor down to the public library and we got a library card, but there– she did see her brother in law there [laughs]. But, I don’t– you know he was using one of the computers – But I, I, yeah. I don’t know. I think I don’t go out enough myself to know [laughs].

But places like um, hiking, um, it’s, you don’t see very many minorities hiking or, um, in the open space or, and um, Yeah, and I think maybe that’s just a cultural thing.

Nelda explains that not only do people who do not speak English “stick together,” they also tend to use different amenities, such as “all Mexican” grocery stores. Interestingly, Nelda’s description of this spatial segregation is punctuated by comments about integration as well. She says that the schools are the most integrated spaces in Boulder, where the smooth landscape of whiteness is interrupted by Spanish-speaking immigrants and other minorities, but people who do not work in schools do not see this integration. When Nelda says she took Flor to the public library, she is referring to a large building in downtown Boulder in a part of the city where relatively few Latinos live. By saying “she did see her brother in law there” and laughing, she implies that she took Flor to a new, foreign space in the city, where she did not expect to see many Latino immigrants. In this description Nelda shows that even the spaces that seem segregated are surprisingly integrated at times. Then Nelda qualifies her own remarks by commenting on her own lack of activity or “integration” in the larger community (“I don’t go out enough myself to know”). In individualizing her experience to a few observations, she attempts to reduce the impact of her confusing observations of whom she expects to encounter where. When members of the supposedly self-isolating cultural community
are seen outside of their designated special spaces in the city, the socio-spatial structures of difference that shape whites’ perceptions of the city are disrupted, revealing the instability of the socio-spatial segregation discourse and the spatial-racial performative norms that it reproduces.

The last public space that Nelda considers is Boulder’s open space. She concludes that it is rare to see minorities – ethnic Hispanics or people of color – hiking on the trails, and she thinks there might be a cultural reason behind that particular spatial segregation. Much later in the interview than his quote above, Lou draws a similar conclusion that immigrants do not use open space or recreational amenities in the city:

> Of course there’s a huge immigrant population here that’s, in a lot of ways it’s invisible to me because I don’t work with them, I don’t see them regularly. You know, and they don’t get out on the bike paths very much, right? They don’t utilize the same amenities that I do, even though they’re free and open to the public. I’m not sure why that is exactly. It’s sort of not part of their culture, it’s not – they’re working, probably! [laughs] Two jobs, you know, two jobs.

Like Nelda, Lou thinks that Latino immigrants’ tendency not to use the city’s amenities, even though they are “free and open to the public” is probably because of cultural reasons or because of socio-economic status. These seem like safe statements to make in a city and an organization (Intercambio) that respects cultural differences and values cultural diversity and that advocates for respect for low-income racial and ethnic minorities, as they are firmly within the discourse of social progressivism and performative of liberal whiteness. Yet, these assumptions about Latinos’ culture reinforcing an inactive way of life or immigrants who hold two jobs reinforce a view of Latinos as different from the Boulder norm, which instead focuses on outdoor activities as a central part of Boulder’s “quality of life” that balances with a limited workday. Using such assumptions to explain Hispanics’ “hidden” status in Boulder subtly relies on the idea that “we” (regular, white Boulder residents) do not see “them” (Hispanics) because they are so different from us; they live and work in different places and have a very different way of life. These assumptions articulated through socio-spatial understandings of difference performatively draw on racist stereotypes of hardworking Latinos whose culture prevents them from valuing the natural environment, health, and exercise the way whites do.51

While some volunteers view this social segregation as a problem, a sin against progressive values of social integration and diversity, others see it as just the way things are, as a natural manifestation of natural differences that must be respected. Both the desire for diversity and integration as well as the mandate to

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51 I explore the topic of immigrants and environmental activities and values as perceived by white city residents at length in chapter 5.
respect difference fit squarely within social progressive understandings of cultural and racial difference. For example, Lou perceives that white Boulder residents and Mexican immigrants in Boulder rarely interact socially:

L  I mean, in Boulder, you've got your white culture and your white ethnicity, and they're basically synonymous. And you've got a Mexican culture and a Mexican ethnicity, and a, like, Latino race which is basically all one thing, right? And those are, like in Boulder that is the culture.

A  And those are two distinct?

L  Yeah! Really distinct! Yeah, really distinct. I think in Boulder there's not much crossover.... You don't have a lot of white people hanging out with the Mexicans or vice versa.

His assessment of Boulder's social segregation is neutral. It is also naturalized by the reference to the two “really distinct” cultures, the white culture and the Mexican culture, which together comprise the totality of the culture in Boulder.

Lou implies that it would take a lot of effort to overcome this apparently natural cultural and language divide and resulting socio-spatial segregation, and he respects that difficulty, but also sees the value in diversity and with being comfortable in racially and ethnically diverse settings. Lou says that throughout his life as the child of a member of the U.S. military he has experienced effortless social interaction with people from many different cultures and races:

A  As you know, one of Intercambio’s major goals is to foster cultural exchange. How well do you think that this is accomplished?

L  Not having been to many of the events, I mean I think that the classes themselves are a really great way to do it. I guess, at a very individual level. You know I don't know if I'm – It's a little tough for me because of all the experiences that I've had. I mean, I lived in Germany when I was a kid... I’ve had Asian friends, since as long as I can remember, a lot of friends from a lot of different cultures. My dad was in the military, so we were always in a melting pot situation. And so it's not really that new to me.... You know, there's always segments, and natural groups forming, you know, just sort of natural segregation, because you're around the people that you can communicate with, and that you can understand, and so there's always room to reach out. But, at the same time, it's a little bit natural for me. It's not a huge leap for me, and so I don't know how it would be for someone who's not in that mode, not in that mindset.

For Lou, both segregation because of communication and integration because of the “melting pot situation” are natural. A little earlier in the interview, Lou also shared some of his experiences with Latinos in Boulder, including his student Frederico:

L  In the past in Boulder I’ve had some experience with Latino communities. I volunteered for the Obama campaign and we would go into all neighborhoods in Boulder, like trailer parks to, I mean, high end houses. Sometimes I would knock on doors, and I’d get Spanish speaking families that are like [hands out to his sides, elbows bent, and shrug, “I don’t know”] I don’t speak Spanish you don’t speak English, so, you know. Not much to talk about here. And, one of my roommates in college [at the University of Colorado] married a Mexican girl, and she lived with us, so I’ve been exposed to the language and the food and things like that, so it’s not like I’m completely new to it. And so it wasn’t a
huge, you know, I mean, they always had fresh fruit in the kitchen and Frederico’s cousin was always cooking something, and, you know. But it was always, it was never anything that was like I felt – it wasn’t like a total shock or surprise to me.

A: You were like “What is that??” Something like that?
L: Yeah, exactly. So, I mean, but I could definitely see if someone, if someone hadn’t had an experience like that, that that would be eye opening and really cool for them, but, you know, not a huge deal for me, I guess.

Unlike many volunteers, Lou does not describe his experience teaching English to a man from Mexico through Intercambio as new for him in terms of developing a relationship with someone very different from him. He sees the segregation as natural, because people want to be with people they can communicate with, and sees the segregation as relatively complete (“You don’t have a lot of white people hanging out with the Mexicans or vice versa”). But, Lou also sees a more utopic future of integration, as he has experienced in his own life, when language barriers are broken down and recent immigrants get ahead socio-economically and are no longer as invisible. Segregation is naturalized as a way of life, which elides the power dynamics that very often accompany segregated neighborhoods and cities. The elision is a performative justification of the norm of racial segregation.

Lou is not entirely clear on exactly how much integration is necessary or possible, but he is very clear on who is interacting: whites and Latinos. This is the crux of the critique of liberalism embedded in progressive politics. Social and political debates cover issues of diversity, integration, and equal opportunity, but they accept the idea of society’s internal “others” – what Foucault, (1997: 61) would call “subraces” – and relatively little debate or change occurs concerning who falls into that group and how power operates through that differentiation. This naturalization of difference is performative of liberal whiteness.

Other volunteers do not see social segregation as neutrally as Lou does. Ina, a white woman in her forties, for example, sees a self-isolating immigrant community from Mexico:

I didn't know that a lot of people in Boulder – the Spanish speaking people from Mexico – are from like three different towns almost. They’re from a lot of the same area. And a lot of them know each other or have family together in Mexico, so they’re very tight, and they have very tight communities, and so then it’s even harder for them to break out of that.

Ina sees social ties that existed before people immigrated to the U.S. that become even stronger in the U.S. and reinforce socio-spatial segregation in Boulder. Her expression of the difficulty of “breaking out of” one’s own, tight community dominates the way she talks about inter-cultural exchange in Boulder. She does not see this social containment as one-sided, either. She has herself struggled with the difficulty of cross-cultural
communication at events at her children’s school, which is bilingual. She describes getting to know people through her English student, whose children are also at the school, as “literally breaking through” to glimpse what it is like to live as an immigrant in Boulder:

[My student and I] got paired through the [kids’] school, so we have a lot of things in common through the school. And now that I know her I kinda feel like, if we're at a field trip or some kind of gathering, I can go hang out with her, and she can introduce me to other people, and I can at least break the– because otherwise I would be standing with people who speak English because I wouldn't know– you know, and you kinda try and you smile and you're like, [softly:] “Hi how are you?” But it's really challenging, so yes, I literally feel like I’ve broken through and had a glimpse to what, [pause] you know, a different family, a Spanish-speaking family, moved here from Mexico, what their life is like – one family’s. So it's really been great.

This discourse of “breaking out” or “breaking through” emphasizes the experience of socio-spatial segregation as separate communities that have something like a wall in between them. Ina describes this wall as existing even at school events where Hispanics and non-Hispanics are present. This wall is the object of many volunteer and staff discussions at Intercambio. Lou suggests that Intercambio should hold even more social events like dances that would be “a fun way to bring the communities together.” The wall between the cultures and the spatial and social segregation it causes are seen as real problems in Boulder, but the operation of power through differentiation and through reference to the city's socio-spatial norms are neglected.

Volunteers’ description of a hidden Hispanic community in Boulder constitutes a socio-spatial process of white subject formation that is made possible by and reinforces social dynamics of belonging and exclusion rooted in Boulder’s environmental history. The articulations of socio-spatial segregation rely on the logic that when Hispanics move into an area, such as an apartment complex, their cultural and language differences from the white norm in Boulder make the residential space a space of difference that acts to contain Hispanics and hide their presence in the larger Boulder community. The discourse itself plays a role in performatively creating the socio-spatial differences that the volunteers describe, and it relies on and reinforces assumptions about Latino culture and what constitutes order within an integrated, environmental, health-oriented city. In doing so, it performatively reinforces the white norm in Boulder and white socio-spatial identities as a stable referent against which other identities are compared.
Social invisibility

Social invisibility is the second reason volunteers use to explain Hispanics’ hidden status in Boulder. In this explanation, white volunteers performatively construct Hispanics as outsiders in Boulder by relying on assumptions about who belongs where based on complex interrelated concepts of ethnicity, culture, and class. The logic of Hispanics’ social invisibility relies on the socio-spatial logic of belonging embedded in understandings of Latinos’ general invisibility in the white environmental space of Boulder. This invisibility is interrupted only by views of Latinos as low-wage services workers or Boulder’s underclass in the white imagination. Geographer Mary Thomas argues that “[t]he spatiality of racial and gender difference governs subjects and bounds them to racial identities and categories, and indeed this occurs through racialized bodies of ‘matter,’ but only through these subjects’ own reincarnations of that spatiality” (Thomas, 2005: 1241).

White volunteers’ expectations of where they will or will not see Latinos shapes their own socio-spatial experience in Boulder. When volunteers do not expect to see Latinos, that expectation can render those unexpected racialized bodies invisible to the white volunteers in certain spaces. The invisibility is manifested through immigrants’ racialized difference in relation to the white subject, and it performatively reinforces racist socio-spatial structures in the city.

For example, a Latino waiter, kitchen worker, or construction worker is an expected person in an expected place, but a Mexican immigrant in volunteers’ neighborhoods or kids’ schools is “out of place.” Those “in place” are invisible, as Cathy says:

*I guess, well, people that wait on us are more invisible to us, in a way. You know? We’re paying them to bring us food. We’re not associating with them at all.... I’m probably a little aware too because I live right across the street from Columbine Elementary School, and so I can see the, all the children [... and the school is] probably like eighty percent Hispanic, and so I see that. And [pause] they work, they work a lot. Oh, and the other thing I see is the park across the street from us. On Sunday it’s all Hispanic soccer teams there. But they’re not part of my neighborhood. So maybe they live more in clumps? I guess generally people that do stuff for us we don’t consider them part of our interaction.*

Cathy distinguishes between her neighbors, who are not Hispanic, and people who work in the service industry, who are Hispanic. She admits that Hispanics are not always invisible, she can see them at the majority Hispanic school across from her house. But, the children who attend the school and the “Hispanic soccer teams” who use the school fields are not part of her neighborhood. Here Cathy assumes a residential spatial segregation despite the daily movements of Hispanics across her front sidewalk. In this way Cathy constructs Hispanics as others who work in the city’s service industry, have children, and play soccer. She
then distances them from herself socially and spatially by asserting that they do not live in her neighborhood. These socio-spatial articulations of belonging and invisibility performatively reinforce social inequalities in Boulder and rely on racist assumptions about Latino culture and its proper place in Boulder's white socio-spatial landscape. Despite her progressive stance expressed through her concern about cultural-ethnic segregation, Cathy confirms cultural and ethnic differences through her socio-spatial depiction of her neighborhood as white.

In line with progressive politics, many volunteers lament the social invisibility of Latinos and immigrants in Boulder. They explain how much they have gained from overcoming the invisibility and learning about immigrants' lives in Boulder and how they have benefitted from the experience of diversity. They imply that the invisibility of the Hispanic immigrant community in Boulder must be overcome for Boulder to mend both its social divide and its ignorance of the inequality inherent in its iconic quality of life:

A Do you think that it’s important to other Boulder residents who aren’t immigrants to have an organization that fosters cultural exchange? Do you think they benefit too? Or “we” [volunteers], do you think we benefit?

C Oh, do we benefit from—Yes! Because you—‘cause you don’t—[pause] you know, every— you have to—I feel, personally, [emphatic, enunciates each word:] I have to really stop and think about these other people that live in Boulder. You know? And, you know, with the downturn in the economy [tone is a little mocking, laughing:] and you feel sorry for yourself every once in a while ’cause you’re not making the money you used to, you go, [quietly, almost a whisper:] “Okay, these people are functioning, how are they functioning, and they actually kinda look happy.” You know? And so, yeah, I think it’s good for people to know that there’re that many people here serving them and doing jobs for them. Even if they only read about it in the paper. You know, they may not necessarily participate in it, but at least if the, if it’s in the paper and they know that this is going on, I think it’s very important.

A Why do you think it’s important for people to know that?...

C Well I think just by our human nature we’re very self-centered, and we want what makes our own life comfortable, and a lot of times we forget about what makes our own life comfortable, you know? We take for granted the standard of living we have here, the freedoms we have here, and we forget that there was something paid for that. [Cathy starts to cry, but also laughs a little]

Cathy very strongly believes that she has personally benefitted from the service work Latinos do that provides her with the quality of life she enjoys. She knows that other people have benefitted too. She thinks that those people need to be aware of that reality and aware of the people who make their quality of life possible who are usually simply invisible. She feels guilty that Latinos’ hard work and low pay go unrecognized, and in the process she limits the category of Latino to poor, overworked but underemployed immigrants. Making immigrants visible as part of progressive politics tends to bring into view only poor or
disadvantaged immigrants, leaving moderate-income and wealthy immigrants in the shadows of the white geographic imaginary and reinforcing racist assumptions about immigrants, particularly from Latin America.

Like Cathy, Betty, a white woman in her sixties, says that she benefits from the reminder she gets teaching a larger, introductory English class that she is “pretty lucky.” She tells me about a time when her daughter had just returned to the U.S. from the Peace Corps. The two of them went to a nearby shopping mall, and her daughter said, “I can’t handle this…. I see people buying things they don’t need, and I lived with people who can’t buy what they do need.” Betty uses this rubric of ability to buy what you need to explain how she benefits from teaching English:

That’s the reminder I get when I’m teaching. These students have all they can do to get to class. They maybe have to take two buses, have to come up with the money for that. Questions they would ask about terminology used at work, that they don’t feel comfortable to ask at work. I think about how lucky I am. I get in one of either car and drive however far I want to go. It’s nothing for me. I like being reminded about need versus want because it’s so easy to get caught up with stuff that’s really not that important. I really like the humbling aspect of it, the reminder that I am pretty lucky. And I always leave [class] feeling happy and fulfilled.

Teaching immigrants helps Betty not “get caught up with stuff that’s really not that important” through the consistent reminder of “need versus want” provided by her students whose poverty makes her aware of her own relative wealth. In Betty’s story, immigrants fill the slot of the impoverished, oppressed underclass in relation to whom Betty performatively confirms her position as within the social norm but also recognizes the privilege of that norm. She benefits from her interaction with the impoverished other.

In a similar statement, Julie, a self-described WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) in her sixties, describes Latin American immigrants in Boulder as an underclass or servant class. When I ask her what multiculturalism means, she expands her observation beyond the mere presence of Hispanics or immigrants in Boulder to address power, privilege, and inequality. She compares them to African Americans in the southern U.S. under Jim Crow:

A What do you think “multiculturalism” means? What do you associate it with? What does it sort of trigger in your mind when you think about it?
J [Pause, Laughs] I’m not sure. It’s kind of a term that’s come about, you know, later in my life. But I think [pause] it would mean [pause] having cultures mix and having people of different cultures know more about each other’s culture.
A That’s a great answer. So it is about an exchange of cultures on a societal level, but also on an individual level?
J Yeah. Well, yeah, and [pause] you know like and a lot of times one culture knows a lot about the other, but not the other way around.
A Like the immigrant would know about the place where they came to ‘cause they have to? That kind of thing?
Uh huh. Or, or that, that even, [pause] like when black people were like pretty much a servant class, like, a long long time ago, they kind of knew everything that was going on in the places that they worked and they knew all about the customs of the people that they worked for and everything, and there was that big power differential which I think you know is now between Hispanic and whites, at least in Boulder, and so, they know a lot about us, but we don’t know very much about them, and I think it would be really good if we, if we had that going both ways. Because most of my friends, you know, they don’t have a clue. They don’t have a clue what’s goin’ on in any other cultural group in Boulder, [pause] or how people think or what they do. I mean, I think it’s good if it, if that knowledge goes both ways.

Julie recognizes the privilege enacted by her white friends’ cluelessness about “any other cultural group in Boulder” and compares it with the time in the U.S. when there was a “servant class” of African Americans. Moreover, this privileged situation is the example she uses to discuss what multiculturalism means. In her eyes it means a two-way cultural exchange between Hispanics – a current servant class – and whites like her friends who have no idea of what is happening beyond their own white cultural-racial horizons. Julie sees cultural diversity and cultural exchange as opportunities to foster understanding across different cultures. Notably, Julie sees this exchange as particularly important for people like her friends, the privileged, white Boulder residents. Disadvantaged populations often serve to teach the lesson of privilege to those who are more wealthy; they serve as a reflection of one’s own privilege, rather than as a complex subject position of their own.

Julie’s quote also highlights how current understandings of “difference” and “cultural difference” are mediated by historical as well as contemporary racial discourse. Julie’s comparison is particularly useful because it shows how volunteer English teachers who struggle to understand the socio-economic differences they observe in their relationship with their English students reach for popular American themes of difference or iconic moments in U.S. history in which difference and inequality are bundled together in a legible way. In the interview Julie refers to the novel The Help by Kathryn Stockett, set in Jackson, Mississippi in 1963. The novel addresses race relations as experienced in everyday life by African American women who work as maids and the white women they work for during the civil rights movement. Julie’s use of this example draws attention to the ways white Americans often use the civil rights movement as a touchstone when trying to come to terms with racism and racial inequality. The making of difference in America has thematic parcels like the civil rights movement that travel through space and time to be used in new and different ways. In this example Julie uses the civil rights movement as a template for understanding racial-ethnic difference in Boulder, particularly through the example of women who clean houses for a living.
The language of Hispanics as hidden performatively renders Latinos legible only as an often invisible service class. Explanations of Latinos’ invisibility in Boulder are influenced by high income inequality in the city. Boulder has fostered an active consumer culture, and wealthy city residents spend their money on goods and services, especially dining out. Ina points out that this is not true everywhere. She says,

My sister lives in a small town in Wisconsin, and does not go out to dinner. Those people do not go live the life of luxury that we live in Boulder. [Emphasizes and punctuates each word] They work hard. And if they don’t have anything to do, they will find something and work hard.... People who – and this is just one part of Boulder – they worry about where they’re gonna eat, what restaurant, and where they’re gonna go out, and where they’re gonna– you know? It’s different worries than other people have.

The income inequality that Ina points out between much of Boulder’s immigrant population who work low-wage service jobs and Boulder’s wealthy professional class of technology sector employees, investors, venture capitalists, federally employed researchers, and university professors provides white city residents with a venue to conceptualize difference. The difference between the “white culture” and the “Latino culture” in Boulder can be seen in part as a class difference, which in many ways is easier for liberal white Boulder residents to come to terms with than inequality resulting from racism (which they know exists but do not want to be the cause of in their city). Yet, as argued in chapter 3, the performative enactment of class difference and racial-ethnic difference are intricately intertwined in white racial subject formation, even, or especially, when whites do not think they are talking about race.

Making Hispanics visible among white social progressives often means seeing them as a disadvantaged, poor population in need of social welfare services and assistance. Because of the perception of Hispanic immigrants as hidden in Boulder, those who want to see increased integration and equality among Boulder’s “two communities” first want to make the hidden Hispanic community visible. The liberal-progressive logic behind this desire is to expose the oppression of Hispanic immigrants. But in this logic, Hispanic immigrants are always already oppressed. Like Julie’s reference to the civil rights movement, volunteers sometimes use the knowledge of structural inequality to point to racial injustice or immigrant rights, but they just as often retreat to portrayals of Latinos as a hardworking population subject to the pitfalls of poverty and in need of social services. For example, when I conducted a survey of Hispanic and Latino perceptions and use of open space in the county in 2008, white Boulder residents expressed this view of hardworking but impoverished Hispanics. Many white residents who work for the city or county
suggested that, if I wanted to find Hispanics to fill out my survey I ought to go to the county social services office where they distribute food stamps and to the free health clinics (Field notes, 2008). This suggestion also reveals the conflation of “Hispanic” with “poor” in Boulder County. While there are many people who identify as Hispanic or Latino who are poor in the county, there are also many who are not. Boulder has a significant U.S.-born Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano population that existed prior to the increased population of Latin American immigrants since the 1990s, who are on average not as poor as many of the recent immigrants (Field notes, 2008). Hispanics are hidden, except when they are visible as hardworking, oppressed service workers.

Recognition of Hispanics’ segregation and invisibility is coded as socially progressive and even liberating, but this articulation of their oppression through their ethnicity, language, culture, and class performatively reinforces racist understandings of difference. It naturalizes Latinos’ position as low-wage service workers and forecloses other discursive framings of the inequality, including a type of racism that is embedded in liberalism, progressivism, and environmentalism. The pre-packaged portrayal reinforces immigrants’ status as outsiders in Boulder because they are relegated to the underclass, an identity that is in direct conflict with understandings of Boulder as an environmental city and environmentalism as a luxury afforded only to those who are wealthy enough to worry about environmental issues. Hispanics who are “regular” community members – who do not work low-wage service industry jobs – are viewed as exceptions to this categorization; they are no longer categorized primarily by their immigrant or racial-ethnic identity unless they assert it themselves.

Awareness without knowing

Volunteer English teachers’ socio-spatial practices performatively disrupt spatial segregation in Boulder. Their socio-spatial practices make Hispanics less hidden, less segregated, and less invisible in volunteers’ personal lives. Despite this socio-spatial reconfiguration and disruption of racial and spatial performative norms, volunteers continue to reinforce Hispanic immigrants’ social status as outsiders who do not belong in Boulder and reinforce whites’ social privilege in the city. Hispanics’ status as hidden is

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52 I examine the process of social exclusion of Latinos in Boulder through contemporary environmental discourse and subject formation at length in chapter 5.
dependent on the view from outside the Hispanic community, from the location of the “normal” white Boulder population.

The final explanation offered by volunteers of Hispanics’ hidden status centers on volunteers’ articulation of how their ability to see Hispanics and understand their lives has changed as a result of teaching Hispanic immigrants English. This transformation of subjectivity is enacted spatially by volunteers’ new ability to see Hispanics in public spaces and their new knowledge of the spaces of Hispanic immigrants’ lives, including their homes, where English classes are held. Volunteering with Intercambio gives white city residents a framework for understanding immigrants’ lives because volunteers build personal relationships with immigrants and witness the joys and pains their students experience. The framework of understanding that this personal relationship offers gives volunteers the ability to see the supposedly hidden, segregated, invisible Hispanic community in the city, even in their daily lives in “regular,” non-Hispanic spaces in the city.

Teaching Hispanic immigrants English leads some volunteers to look beyond an abstract figure of “The Hispanic Immigrant,” a figure fought over in political and social debates who is seen as a member of the service class and accommodated locally by courts and social services. This figure often overshadows volunteers’ views of what life for Latin American immigrants might actually be like. Volunteers articulate their new view beyond the figure of The Hispanic Immigrant in terms of previous awareness of Hispanics living in Boulder, but after teaching they gain a new knowledge of the lives of Hispanics in their city or even in their neighborhoods. Cathy says simply, “There’s a whole subculture of people that are invisible in Boulder. And most people don’t know that…. I now know those people individually. And we talk enough in class and I know why they’re here and who they send money back to, and how they live with their families. I have a sense of that.” And Nelda explains it thus:

I’ve got this whole new understanding about this whole Hispanic culture in Boulder. I mean I knew there were a lot of immigrants from Mexico, but in my life I didn’t meet any people. You know, maybe waiters in restaurants or something. But now I’ve met this whole new, sort of, culture that’s sort of hidden in Boulder, and I’ve been to parties at Flor’s house, and I went to her daughter and her son’s first communion at the Catholic church, and it was just amazing. I mean, there were 65 kids makin’ their first communion. The church was absolutely packed with people, and there were like three gringos in the whole place. And it was like, “Wow!” I didn’t even know that there was this whole sort of other culture going on. And that’s been really good to have that awareness.

Nelda explains that she was aware that there are Hispanic immigrants living in Boulder, but she “didn’t meet any people” besides maybe waiters. After teaching Flor, going to her home, developing a friendship with her,
and even attending important family and community events with her, Nelda gained new knowledge of a
“whole... other culture” active in Boulder.

Nelda appreciates this new knowledge about Flor’s life and community. But this relationship has also
allowed her to increase her awareness and her knowledge about other Latinos in Boulder whom she has not
met. Immediately following the quote above, we had this conversation:

A Since you started seeing this sort of hidden culture do you notice it more when you’re not with Flor?
N Oh yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
A And can you think of any examples?
N Well, I notice it, I certainly notice it in the schools ‘cause I work as a substitute teacher, so I’m much
more aware of the more Hispanic kids in the schools, and just when I’m out and about, in the grocery
store, in Target, wherever I happen to be.
A What’s your reaction to that, your immediate reaction? Like, “This is great!” Or, “Wow, there’s
really—”
N Well, I’m— because my whole family, we’re all immigrants as well. [Laughs] I think it’s great. I’m
really happy that my granddaughter will grow up having that cultural diversity and meeting people
from other places and being exposed to other languages, and I think that that’s what has made this
country a vibrant place is the constant sort of influx of immigrants from all over the world.

Nelda’s vague awareness of the presence of immigrants from Latin America is transformed through her
classes with Flor and her participation in Flor’s social and family life. At the same time, her ability to see
Hispanics in the community beyond her student’s social relationships is developed. In response to this new
knowledge or new form of awareness, Nelda refers first to her own identity as a member of an immigrant
family from Ireland and then to the advantages of a culturally diverse town for children to grow up. She
closes by characterizing the U.S. as a country of immigrants who make it a “vibrant place” by the ongoing
“influx of immigrants from all over the world.” For Nelda, exposure to and participation in cultural diversity
is a source of personal growth and national vitality that is not complete or finished but constantly in flux.

Despite its positive framing of immigration and cultural diversity, Nelda’s explanation of her shift
from awareness of the presence of Hispanic immigrants to knowledge of Hispanic community members and
their activities in Boulder continues to rely on a rigid division between Hispanic immigrants and herself. The
cultural differences between Hispanic immigrants and herself are expected and readily apparent, particularly
in the context of the performative white Boulder norm. Thus, Nelda’s American narrative of the constant
influx of immigrants who do become American – like her parents, husband, children, and even herself, though
born in the U.S. lived in Ireland for several years as an adult – seems to offer a cultural flexibility through
assimilation or increased inter-cultural understanding. However, it relies on rigid conceptualizations of
cultural difference inherent in the concept of diversity itself.

Like Nelda, Heather, a white woman in her twenties, has a changed perspective on Latinos’ lives in
Boulder from volunteering with Intercambio. She says that teaching her student has changed the way she
thinks of other people from Mexico whom she meets in Boulder:

A  [Do] you see anything new since working with Intercambio... [has it] changed the way you live in
Boulder at all?
H  I think it just goes back to it enables me to have a different perspective on Mexican people living in
Boulder. Even when I encounter Mexicans in my workplace, like at the hospital, or in the schools, I
feel like I have a different way of relating to them, or I have a different empathy or world knowledge
of their experience. So that’s the only way it’s changed me.

Working with individual English students through Intercambio changes volunteers’ experience in the Boulder
community, particularly their experiences meeting immigrants in their daily life in the city.

Nelda’s new knowledge of the Hispanic community changed her experience living in Boulder by
increasing her awareness of the city’s diversity:

A  Has your work with Intercambio changed your experience living in Boulder?
N  Yeah.... It’s made me more aware of just how diverse Boulder is. People say “Oh Boulder is so white,”
and it’s like, “No it’s not!” [Laughs] If you look hard enough you’ll see, it’s not.

Here Nelda points out a new understanding not only of the Hispanic community in Boulder but also a new
understanding of the racial diversity of Boulder’s population. Not only that, this new knowledge of cultural
and racial diversity challenges the hegemonic discourse that Boulder is “so white,” interrupting the
performative norm of whiteness in the city. Nelda even implies that the claim that Boulder is “so white” is only
tenable if you don’t “look hard enough” to see that it is not. Specifically, one would have to look past the
figure of The Hispanic Immigrant to see Hispanics as individual people, which is exactly the process that
volunteer English teachers describe.

When volunteers develop a relationship with immigrants through English classes they see individual
people experiencing joys and difficulties. This vision extends beyond the individuals they meet through the
English classes. Like Nelda, Julie says she was aware of a Hispanic population, but after teaching English to
her student, she says:

I think that I see now, you know I used to kind of go, “Well, I think there are a lot of immigrants in
Boulder. I think that we have a Hispanic population.” But now, I go to the store and I see people. You
know, and I listen, I kind of listen, and I kind of listen and think, “Gee, I wish I could understand” and I
really notice a whole lot more immigrants from all kinds of places speaking different languages.
Julie describes how her relationship with one Latin American immigrant opens her eyes to many other immigrants living in Boulder and leads her to view these others in a new way.

Margaret’s new knowledge of the immigrant community was not as big a realization as Julie’s. She had interacted with Hispanic immigrants and their children in her work as a juvenile probation officer for the city of Boulder, but she says those relationships were different from her experience teaching English:

A Has your work with Intercambio changed your experience living in Boulder?
M Well I guess a little bit, knowing that there are people really close to my neighborhood that come from a very different country than I do, you know a totally different country, not European. And, yeah I feel like I’m more in tune with the immigrant community now, and I like that.
A Can you think of an example of... how are you in tune, can you say more about that?
M That, first of all that they exist, right? in my community. And second of all that I know them as human beings or I know some people as human beings. I mean I knew a lot of folks as clients from my job, but when I retired I knew I didn’t want to be in a position where I was telling people what to do anymore. I was so done with that. And I wanted to help people still, even. And I feel like I’m doing some of that but I also feel like there’s a relationship there and that it’s working well for me also.

Margaret’s feeling that she is “more in tune with the immigrant community” points to her increased knowledge of a community that she already knew existed and had even worked with before. Beatrice describes a similar shift from awareness to knowing:

A Do you think your experience is maybe a small step in Intercambio’s fostering cultural exchange, achieving that goal?
B Oh sure! Sure. I would say a big step. And because of my background, and my being a teacher, my being a Peace Corps volunteer, and having a daughter from [Central America], I’ve been pretty hyper-aware, and I always go out of my way to speak to Hispanics and to try and help them. So I mean there’s not this huge leap, “Oh, I didn’t know they existed” or something. It’s not like that at all, but, I’m aware in a different way, and it’s good.
A Because of that personal relationship?

Margaret’s and Beatrice’s personal relationships with their students expanded their previous knowledge about Hispanics’ lives in Boulder. That is, even these two white city residents who had prior experience with Hispanics in Boulder feel that their relationships with their students changed the way they understand the city and its cultural diversity.

After developing a personal relationship with Hispanic immigrants, volunteers’ new knowledge helps them see more immigrants in the community. This visibility is not only a result of visiting neighborhoods where Hispanics live. Like Julie, volunteers see people, they notice people speaking Spanish in ordinary everyday spaces in Boulder such as the grocery store or retail stores, spaces that before seemed simply normal or white. Volunteers’ new knowledge of the hidden Hispanic community reveals that it is not as
hidden as they had thought. Rather, it is visible not only in Hispanic neighborhoods but elsewhere in Boulder, including the spaces of volunteers’ own daily activities. This new knowledge and new visibility of immigrants that volunteers experience is a shift in socio-spatial relations and a performative interruption of the racial-spatial norm in the city. And, because subjectivity is enacted through socio-spatial relations, volunteers’ ability to see the hidden Hispanic community demarcates a potential to shift in their own subjectivity.

This shift in volunteers’ subjectivity is especially visible in their descriptions of the emotions that accompany developing a personal relationship with their students. The new knowledge of the lives of Hispanic immigrants transforms many volunteers’ lives in Boulder. Most volunteers talk about hidden Hispanics in response to two interview questions “What have you gotten out of working with Intercambio or how have you benefitted most from working with Intercambio?” and “Has your work with Intercambio changed your experience living in Boulder? How?” For many volunteers increased exposure to and involvement in Hispanic immigrants’ lives is a very emotional experience. These volunteers experience the joy of developing a relationship with someone and getting to know a different culture, as well as the pain of witnessing poverty or injustice. For example, Beatrice, before she talked about her background and her new awareness, said:

It’s interesting, I find myself thinking in Spanish, even though we [Beatrice and Pati] hardly talk any Spanish in the class, but it’s still. It’s just a joy. But the student I have is just spectacularly good. She’s just an amazing person I think, and so it’s been a pleasure. And, you said ‘benefitted’ and I wouldn’t call this a benefit, but, I’ve just really learned a lot, which I knew intellectually but not viscerally, about how hard it is, especially for undocumented immigrants, I’m guessing, to be an immigrant. It’s really a hard life they’re living, and I think because it’s one-on-one and we’ve become kind of close, so it’s kind of painful, in that sense. But, the joy of it – I’m a teacher, I’m a retired professor – the joy of teaching her is just terrific.

The way Beatrice describes her new knowledge as “visceral” points to the emotions that her new relationship brings with it. This description of “intellectual” versus “visceral” knowledge also expands on Beatrice’s and other volunteers’ description of “being aware” before but “knowing” about the hidden Hispanic community now. In a city famous for its majority and even extremely liberal political affiliation and its above-average level of education, personal relationships with Hispanics immigrants bring the abstract knowledge of societal inequalities, that is central to social values of the political left and a subject of study of the social sciences, into the realm of the personal.
Volunteers experience first-hand or hear personal descriptions of the everyday inequalities and difficulties posed by low income levels as well as instances of racism by Boulder police. When Beatrice describes the experience of “becoming kind of close” to her student as “kind of painful," she is referring in part to a specific encounter with the police that her student had. This incident is the most extreme example offered by volunteers of their students’ experiences with the police or justice system. As Beatrice describes it to me in her interview, this experience was an extremely emotional one for her student and for herself:

[My student Pati] was expecting a package from her mother in Mexico. And so she had asked me how to say “Has my package come yet?” because it wasn’t coming as quickly as she thought it should. And finally she got a call from the Post Office that her package had come but she couldn’t pick it up at the main post office, she had to pick it up at one way outside of town... At the edge of town... They don’t have a car, so this was a problem... So she and her husband and her four-year-old boy went out and picked up the package, and as she turned around, eight–nine SWAT team cops arrived in big trucks, fully masked, big guns, threw them on the ground, handcuffed them. And it turned out, I’m leaping way ahead now, [then the police] opened the package. They thought it contained marijuana [rolls her eyes]. And it didn’t. It contained clothing and books, and mementos. And recipes, and a small ziplock bag of an herb called herba buena, which is used if you have a stomachache. And that’s why she was anxious for it to come because her little boy had been having stomachaches – I don’t blame him! And so I called the police and filed a complaint and so forth and so on.... She called me the next morning, crying, and asked me if I could help her understand what had happened, ’cause of course she wasn’t, she’s at a low level [of English instruction], so she wasn’t able really to even grasp what was going on or why it was going on. But of course I’m at a high level of English, and I couldn’t grasp it either! I mean it was– That was an embarrassment for Colorado, not to mention a really big waste of taxpayer dollars.

Beatrice is incensed by the injustice of the experience Pati relates to her. The detailed knowledge of how her student, as an immigrant, is treated during a mundane activity such as getting her mail is painful for Beatrice. The abstract knowledge that some immigrants are treated unjustly is not an emotional experience, but hearing it first-hand from her English student, whom she has come to like and respect, is a visceral, even painful lesson.

Beatrice’s recounting of the painful experience of hearing her student’s story of being accosted by the police at the post office also demonstrates how Beatrice’s relationship with Boulder itself is changed through knowledge gained by getting to know her student. In her own statements about Boulder and diversity, Beatrice is largely unaware of racism and stereotyping, but in her student’s life she is outraged and pained by the injustice faced by her immigrant student. Moreover, Beatrice sees the prejudice and cruelty in a story of her student being set-up by police as a direct violation of the norms of openness and progressiveness expected in Boulder. She is surprised that such a thing could happen in the city, and she says it damages her relationship to the place:
I mean, it was such an eye-opener to me about our own culture and: Boulder?! Boulder?!?! You know. That was a real eye-opener for me, but also her dignity in handling it, I was just so impressed by. And I’ve also just been so amazed by her determination. She wants to go home pretty badly. But she wants to go home speaking English so that she can get a better job and a better career, and, you know, I see her as an individual, really striving, so that’s been very nice.

And when you say about the police, you know “Boulder?” what do you mean? Do you mean “How could that happen here?”

Yeah! [laughs, her tone says: ‘obviously!’] I mean I still, I can’t believe it! I can’t believe– and that’s what I told the detective. I said, “I just can’t believe that you would spend your time doing that,” and I said, “Why didn’t you open the box before she got there?” So they set her up, you understand. That’s why they had her come out there, so that the police could arrive in a way they couldn’t have done downtown. And I said, “Why would you set someone up like that?” You know? And I just, I can’t believe that that’s what we’re spending our police money on. And, you know, since I have no problem with marijuana being legal, the fact that there might have been a ziplock bag of marijuana in there and they would send out nine policemen for that. So it was disappointing to me about my own culture and about my relationship with Boulder– not huge, I mean, it didn’t kill it, but it was a disappointment certainly.

Seeing Boulder through Pati’s eyes gives Beatrice a new perspective on the city. Generally, she sees it as a place for people who are “athletic and always outdoors, white, highly educated, left wing, environmentally aware,” but Pati’s experience at the post office contradicts the city’s liberal-progressive characterization, interrupting that performative norm. Beatrice could simply blame the police and feel sorry for her student, but instead she reflects on the city itself, struck by the mismatch between the incident relayed by her student and the city’s reputation. Her understanding of the incident includes a reflection on what kinds of activities, even police activities, belong in the space of Boulder: How could such a liberal city commit such a racist act?

The police’s activities exceeded the threshold of unnoticeable racism and appeared as blatant, prototypical racism (Hesse, 2004), in which a single immigrant was suspected of receiving drugs simply because she is from Mexico. Meanwhile, Beatrice’s own racist stereotypes about people of color committing crimes described at the beginning of this chapter fail to rile her to outrage because they dwell safely within the range of cultural stereotypes acceptable within many progressive white populations under the guise of respect for cultural difference.

Later in the interview Beatrice describes a different incident in which the city’s reputation is tarnished. In this example the child of a same-sex couple was denied admission to a private Catholic school:

I was so offended by what the Catholic Church did to those children kicking them out of the school. That was a huge issue for me. And, and again I’m going, “In Boulder?!” So these moments when Boulder or some aspect of Boulder doesn’t live up to its potential and its reputation and its overall attitude, I’m really disappointed. And that was the biggest example, I guess.
The disappointment that Beatrice describes is a performative practice of policing the values embedded in the characterization of the place through its history of progressive environmental and social politics. The “potential,” “reputation,” and “overall attitude” of Boulder as a progressive, liberal city are expressions of the normative expectations of values and behavior there. Residents expect Boulder to be a social space free of bigotry, racism, hate speech, and anti-immigrant sentiment. Expressions of disappointment like Beatrice’s demonstrate how seriously some people take these characterizations of Boulder. They characterize Boulder as green, white, and liberal and expect this characterization to remain uninterrupted, even in the lives of immigrants that the volunteers themselves at times stereotype or ignore, despite the ways that they interrupt the norm and witness the norm interrupted on a daily or weekly basis in their English classes and beyond.

Ina also contrasts her expectations of Boulder as liberal with her experiences of racism and bigotry in the city. She says,

I’m still kinda– I’m surprised at [pause] how lily white it is. When I moved here I was like “Okay, I wasn’t quite ready for that.” And then the attitudes, some of the stories that were circulating in the newspaper, maybe the first or second year that we lived here, the racial attacks, students– on students or student-aged people on the Hill. I was like, “Are you kidding me? In Boulder, free-thinking, liberal Boulder?” I could not believe it. And then working in the [immigration] law firms, it was reinforced from another perspective [where the people were racists, bigots]. You know it was pretty pasty-white in the law firms. I just got very judgmental of the overblown sense of entitlement here… I saw a lot of money.

These expectations point to Boulder residents’ ignorance of how thoroughly racism pervades social relations in the U.S. (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Omi and Winant, 1994; Peake and Ray, 2001). Residents’ belief in the social progressiveness of Boulder precludes their openness to the possibility of racism in the city. When racism is observed, it is seen as an exception to the norm of social friendliness and openness in the city. Beatrice’s socio-spatial experience of place contradicted her utopic vision of Boulder. Contradictions like these can lead people to turn to familiar, comforting, stable discourses in place of the messy, contradictory reality embedded in heterotopias. The stories of police over-reaction and church-sponsored anti-gay sentiment that Beatrice tells are viewed as exceptions to, rather than constituent values of or even interruptions of, the politically progressive, accepting norm in the city. These exceptions are performatively stabilized by discourses of Boulder as a green and white city, a city different from its conservative Colorado surroundings and American political climate. Immigrants are exceptions to the white Boulder norm, and bigotry and police violence are exceptions to the progressive politics.
The home

The intimacy of the home as the English classroom adds a special kind of vantage point for volunteers’ newly gained knowledge of the hidden Hispanic community. While the home grounds volunteers’ experiences with their students in a cozy and specific setting, it is also permeable to more widely circulating socio-spatial relations, narratives, and social inequalities, including stereotypes and racist assumptions.

Volunteers’ weekly or twice-weekly visits to their students’ homes for English class transform socio-spatial relations in the city. Most volunteers teach one-on-one classes with individual students in the students’ homes. Typically, classes are held twice per week. These frequent home visits foster volunteers’ knowledge of the perceived hidden Hispanic community, and it is in the home that white volunteers’ emotional personal relationships with immigrant students collide with volunteers’ generalizations and stereotypes.

Environmental, political, and racist discourses get tangled up in volunteers’ expressions of social values of safety, order, and health.

Students’ homes are the primary locations where volunteer teachers and English students get to know each other. A few volunteers interviewed remarked on the experience of visiting his or her student’s home. Lou said simply, “Going to someone’s house that you don’t know is, you know, a little uncomfortable.”

As described above, because of Lou’s past experience meeting people from other cultures, including people from Mexico, he attributes the discomfort not to being in the home of someone from a different culture or ethnicity, but to being in a stranger’s home and taking a position of authority as a teacher:

It took me a little bit to get comfortable with being the English teacher, because I didn’t study English, my grammar’s not perfect. I’m a native English speaker clearly, buuuut, I’m like, “well who am I to teach this person English?!” You know? And I’m not a teacher, you know. So, just sort of trusting the process of it was a challenge for me…. And also, you know, I mean like, I don’t have kids, I’m not really an authority figure at work, and so, to go into someone’s house and if the tv’s on or the kids are running around, to sort of – and I’m thankful that I didn’t have to do this much, but it’s like, [ducks his head a little] “Do you mind if we turn the tv off?” You know? “Is that –” Like, “Can [your sister] go babysit the kids?” You know? That’s not a role that’s comfortable to me either.

It is uncomfortable for Lou to come to a Frederico’s home and ask him and his family to behave a certain way, including what to do with their kids and whether to have the television on, how to order their own home space. Yet, the position as a teacher forces him to take on some authority in his student’s home, even though he does not occupy such a position of oversight or authority, as a parent or boss, in any other part of his life.
The discomfort and reluctance that Lou expresses references the broader socio-spatial setting beyond the home, as well. At the social scale of the English classes, the non-profit organization Intercambio has structured the class with Lou as the volunteer teacher and Frederico as the student. Because the classes are individual, they are personalized and often even cooperative. However, the power dynamics of the class reflect the power imbalance at the socio-spatial scale of the city, in which English-speaking whites are a normalized majority and Hispanic immigrants are marked as a special population. As a special population, Hispanic immigrants are seen to have particular needs, including needs for social services (housing assistance, access to public transportation, inexpensive medical care, and English instruction). Most importantly, the normalized English-speaking white community is seen as the natural provider of services for the Hispanic immigrant community, as well as all immigrants and even other people of color in the city. This role as provider is in part a characteristic of the city’s politically progressive majority, which is committed to addressing social inequalities that are seen as a legacy of U.S. society’s racist past and continuing structural racism in society. Lou’s discomfort in acting out a position of authority that is partially vested in him through his left-leaning politics and his racial identification in his student’s home signals a wider-scale anxiety about “accommodating” “other cultures” in a multicultural society that is still structured by racial meanings, racial hierarchies, and racial ideologies. Lou is torn between his desire to help Frederico learn English and his reluctance to discipline him as a student of English and a student of American culture. For immigrant communities to receive services such as English instruction, their members like Frederico must conform to bureaucratic as well as behavioral norms that are purportedly color-blind but nonetheless structured by racial discourse, particularly in relation to their “needy” status.

Margaret also brought up the particular socio-spatial relations of her student Yolanda’s home in my interview with her. Margaret’s discomfort focused on the second story of her student’s two-story apartment, where she has never been but imagines as containing a way of life that might embarrass Yolanda:

M You know... they live in this small apartment with her seventeen-year-old daughter, and her daughter’s child, and her daughter’s boyfriend – the father – and then the teenage son, and then the nine-year-old girl. And what’s interesting is it’s two stories, and you can come in and it’s just – it’s the perfect little living room, kitchen area, and we sit at the table. And I’ve never been upstairs, and I don’t think she wants – you know, this is where you greet, this is where you have company. And, it’s always immaculate and clean. And I think she’s proud of it, or I hope she is... yeah, I think she is, and I always let her know how wonderful or how nice it is to be there, and it is! I always make sure to go to the bathroom before I go.
A ‘Cause the bathroom’s upstairs?
Yeah, I'm sure there's one bathroom upstairs. And I just wouldn't want her to feel embarrassed or that - I don't know. But, I, you know, I could do all sorts of valued kind of things around "children having children" and all of that. But that's easier said than done too! There's plenty of kids from all different cultures, including ours that have young children.

Margaret contrasts her skepticism about what might be "upstairs" with her description of the downstairs as "perfect," "immaculate and clean," and worthy of being "proud of." But still the upstairs lingers as a space of possible overcrowding and disorder, a source of embarrassment for Yolanda that might even undermine the immaculate order she keeps downstairs.

As with Lou, Margaret's socio-spatial relations in her student's home echo relations at a wider scale. Margaret's anxiety about the potential disorder upstairs in Yolanda's home is discursively tied to broader social narratives about Hispanics' large, extended families living in crowded apartments, Hispanic teenagers having children, and even, more subtly, hyper-sexual Latina youth. But Margaret is careful to say that she could judge Yolanda ("do all sorts of valued kind of things") but does not because it is not her place and because Hispanics are not the only people whose children have children at a young age. Yet, Margaret refrains from going upstairs to avoid confronting something she might judge, or that Yolanda might think she would judge. This trope of Hispanics' crowded apartments stands as a specter, a potential danger or violation of standards of hygiene or purity, that white Boulder residents like Margaret do not want to see but assume are there, despite no real evidence. Whether it is viewed as caused by culture, necessity, or both, this tendency towards overcrowded living conditions oversteps the "anything goes" or "live and let live" tendency of white progressive cultural relativism. Even while Margaret says she is not judging, judgment looms around the assumed disorder of large families in small spaces.

Volunteers' visits to students' homes for classes each week help them see Hispanics in their community and transform their own spatial subjectivity. As outlined here, many volunteers were aware that Hispanic immigrants lived in their community, but they did not know who or where or how. Visiting his or her student's home transforms a volunteer's awareness of abstract Hispanics into knowing the inside of a specific person's home. Visiting their students' homes gives volunteers a new socio-spatial awareness of Boulder and a new, "visceral" knowledge of the people who live in their community. Once volunteers enter immigrants' homes and lives, they get an "insider's" view on the community they consider hidden. Here,
relationships and friendships help volunteers see beyond the figure of The Hispanic Immigrant. They gain a deeper understanding of immigrants’ lives and notice their presence in “regular” city spaces.

Conclusions: Boulder’s green and white heterotopia

Despite volunteers’ daily movement through purportedly segregated spaces belonging to the “hidden” Hispanics and their new knowledge of Hispanic immigrants’ lives gained through personal relationships with them, volunteers continue to rely on and reinforce static and stereotyped understandings of cultural and racial difference. This is most visible in volunteers’ performative repetition of tropes of cultural difference, in which Hispanic immigrants do not hike in open space or use bike paths because it is not part of their culture. It is also visible in stereotypes about Hispanics as hard workers who “work two jobs” and about Hispanics’ large families, who live together in small apartments. Volunteers mix these tropes with their own experiences, observations, and new knowledge about the Hispanic community in Boulder, seeing it, as Nelda does, as not “so white.” But at the same time, this new knowledge about diversity in Boulder and this “breaking through” the cultural barriers between the “two distinct communities” in Boulder takes “white” and “Hispanic” as static categories. Even as “white” and “Hispanic” are actually being performatively reconfigured through new socio-spatial relationships, volunteers fall back on performative norms through invocation of cultural and racial tropes, based in Boulder’s history of white environmental progressivism.

This new understanding developed through changing socio-spatial relations does not entirely overcome or replace the view of Hispanics as hidden. The two views (“hidden” and “visible”) coexist in volunteers’ narratives. Foucault’s concept of heterotopia helps decipher this contradictory narrative. Volunteers describe “actual places” (physical locations in Boulder) such as students’ homes, neighborhoods, and public spaces including grocery stores and schools. In volunteers’ narratives these places are juxtaposed with imagined ideas of the places as simultaneously segregated spaces, spaces of social invisibility, spaces of relationships, spaces of integration, white spaces, and “not that white” spaces. These heterotopias are a combination of physical and social spaces with social narratives of environmentalism, progressiveness, and racism. This particular assemblage of narratives is also best seen as a spatially understood heterotopia because it is normatively attached to Boulder – as a single, individual place containing multiple socio-spatial
truths – and because the three narratives seem to contradict one another, as progressives are not supposed to subscribe to ideologies of racism.

The descriptions of spatial segregation, social invisibility, and new knowledge of the perceived hidden Hispanic community continue to position Hispanics as other, immigrant, and outsider in Boulder. This performative designation of Hispanics as other creates a specifically raced and classed “constitutive outside” (Dwyer and Jones, 2000) that white Boulder residents contrast to their own lives and reinforce their own relatively wealthy white identity and their position as privileged “insiders” in Boulder, facilitated by the city’s environmentalist history. Volunteers’ socio-spatial subjectivity is performed through these spatial discourses of themselves as wealthy, white, and part of the norm in Boulder, a norm established through the redefinition of Boulder in the establishment of the greenbelt, which sustained certain social and racial values that solidified white privilege in the city. This attention to the white identity is apparent in volunteers’ use of explicit racial stereotypes or racial tropes in reference to their own racial identity or Boulder’s overwhelming, lamentable, and even laughable whiteness.

In this sense, volunteers need Hispanics to be different, in part because of the reification of “cultural difference” in the discourses of diversity. But they also need Hispanics’ difference in a more direct, everyday sense because the experience of difference is very exciting and fulfilling for volunteers. Their position as middle-class or wealthy and white – that is, as the norm in Boulder – is reinforced through their experiences and their articulations of just how different their English students are. Volunteers get the best of all worlds; they reconfirm their white socio-spatial subjectivity, reinforce that subjectivity as the norm in Boulder through environmental and social values, confirm their own political progressiveness, question their own role in racist institutions and racist stereotyping only a little, and have the advantage of being exposed to diversity (“diverse” bodies) that enriches their lives with vibrant culture or reminds them how lucky they are.

The narratives of race, space, and nature are seen as separable, as though one can distinguish the issues of race from the issues of environment. But the three were formed together in the forge of colonialism (Kobayashi, 2003; Kosek, 2004, 2006). Race and space are concepts developed in the colonial context for imperial purposes (Kobayashi, 2003). The ontological overlap between racialization and spatialization (ibid) prompts white volunteers to reinscribe racial privilege even as they reconfigure socio-spatial relations. Racialization and spatialization continue to act as co-constitutive performative processes. Faced with
complicated and contradictory spatial understandings held in tension within heterotopias, white volunteer English teachers in Boulder fall back on comfortable narratives of a green and white city formed forty years ago that performatively reaffirm their racial and environmental subjectivities. A transformative reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations will require people to embrace a more fluid understanding of difference than liberalism and liberal-progressive politics offer and to let go of the expectations of difference that exceed experience of it.
Chapter 5: Immigrants don’t hike and other exclusionary myths

Introduction

On a mountainside near Bailey, Colorado, at 8,500 feet elevation, I stand in a small forest clearing with a mountain stream trickling by. Some of my fellow hikers are sitting on benches resting, others are standing. One man is walking around joking with everyone as he takes pictures. Another man says, “You’re the photographer!” The “photographer’s” wife who is carrying their infant daughter says, “And I’m the pack-horse!” Everyone laughs. We rest and joke a little longer, then head the rest of the way up the hill. At the top a few members of the hiking party are winded, and some of us remark on this. One woman I have been walking with says to me, “Well, it is not such a difficult hike for those of us who walk.” I laugh and agree with her.

Many of the people I describe in this short account are Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico or Central America on a camping trip organized by Intercambio. I got the distinct impression that all the hikers, even if tired out by the hike, felt at home on a trail in the mountainous Colorado landscape. Everyone on the hike admired the view of the valley or the fine weather. Many immigrants and Hispanic Boulder residents hike, recycle, and participate in other iconic environmental activities, but most white Boulder residents, including many parks and open space employees, do not believe this to be true. Their disbelief is rooted in racial and geographic assumptions attached to environmental discourses.

In this chapter I debunk the myth that immigrants in Boulder do not participate in quintessential environmental activities such as hiking and recycling and demonstrate that this myth is a discursive enactment of exclusion of the immigrant and non-immigrant Latino population in the city and a performative reaffirmation of white subjectivity. Interviews and participant observation with immigrant and Latino city residents indicate that some do participate in environmental activities. White residents’ disbelief that any immigrants and Latinos hike, recycle, or participate in other environmental activities draws on regional geographic imaginaries of the developing world as a polluted place and on assumptions of proper environmental behavior contingent on class status. Reliance on these stereotypes actively reinforces immigrants’ status as “outsiders” in whites’ views of Boulder and reaffirms whites’ racial subjectivity.

Further, this chapter shows how environmental subjectivity is performatively enacted simultaneously with white racial subjectivity. Whites simultaneously reinforce their own environmental and
racial subjectivities and their status as “insiders” who belong in Boulder by refusing to believe that any immigrants and Latinos participate in environmental activities, ignoring those who do, or dismissing those who do as lacking environmental ethics. Whites employ a view of immigrants and Latinos through which they are legible as un-environmental and unhealthy people, who should be properly governed through health and environmental education and outreach programs. This insider / outsider division through environmental discourse is a specific example of how exclusion is enforced through the racialization of environmental spaces and activities in Boulder by liberal, socially progressive whites who actively seek interaction with immigrants in the city.

Belonging, exclusion, and geographic imaginaries

Characterizations of places

In a city where the norm is social tolerance and inclusion, white city residents continue to articulate the “outsider” status of immigrants and Latinos through environmental discourses, including the characterization of Boulder as a “green” or environmentally conscious city. Characterizations of a place are normative because they suggest how a place should be (Häkli and Paasi, 2003). Because Boulder is characterized as a place where environmentalists belong, the assertion by whites that immigrants and Latinos are not environmentalists is exclusionary. White Boulder residents subtly express immigrants’ and Latinos’ outsider status in the assumption of their supposed lack of participation in environmentalism. Many white Boulder residents believe that immigrants and Latinos have not developed environmental ethics or learned to participate in environmental activities, and this lack of environmentalism sets them apart from the performative environmental and racial norm in Boulder.

While whites think they are stating simple, commonsense facts about immigrants and Latinos being too poor or not having time to participate in environmental activities, they are actually drawing on stereotypes, performatively referencing a static and racist geographic imaginary of Latin America and other developing world locations, and creating exclusionary socio-spatial dynamics in the city. Edward Said’s study of the field of Orientalism in Great Britain shows that the discursive separation of the “East” from the “West” has material effects (Said, 1978). He offers the twentieth century example of Henry Kissinger who divided the world into the developed and developing world in order to reinforce the legitimacy of U.S. intervention in
and “containment” of the developing world (ibid: 46-47). Said further points out that though Kissinger’s tone seems neutral, he uses value-laden words, referring to “order,” “accuracy,” and scientific knowledge that set the developed world apart from the “pre-Newtonian” and “menacing” developing world (ibid). Stuart Hall expands on this separation and rephrases it as the discursive separation between “the West” and “the Rest,” a “crude and simplistic distinction” that reinforces an “over-simplified conception of ‘difference’” (Hall, 1996: 189). The developing / developed world, “the West” / “the Rest,” and First World / Third World distinctions shape many Americans’ geographic imaginaries. They employ the commonsense division that, as Hall points out, constructs and performs an over-simplified understanding of difference.

The expression of assumptions and stereotypes attached to these imaginaries works to form white American subjectivity. As Said argued in his analysis of Orientalism, “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient” (Said, 1978: 3). Through a similar process, the expression of regional geographic imaginaries by whites in Boulder gives more insight into the opinions and power of white Americans than into the lives of immigrants or Latinos. This performative reference to an external “other” who embodies difference relies on static understandings of regions and of the concept of difference itself.

Many of my interviewees’ comments draw directly from static and othering regional geographic imaginaries, in which immigrants are from underdeveloped areas that lack the modernization and capital flow necessary to engender environmental ethics. The stereotypes used by whites in Boulder draw on and reinforce conceptualizations of Latin America and the larger developing world as polluted, disorderly places where true environmentalism based on environmental ethics is impossible (except possibly in small, wealthy, urban areas), despite evidence to the contrary (cf. Martinez-Alier, 2002; Tsing, 2005). Immigrants from Latin America and the developing world are assumed to need to acquire environmental values and ethics from white Americans in Boulder, and this assumption by white environmentalist Americans serves to performatively reinforce their own racial subjectivity as educational resources about environmental ethics, knowledge, purity, and reason for racial and national others.

As Orientalism does not attempt to describe “the ‘real’ Orient” (Said, 1978: 5), this chapter does not analyze Latinos’ environmental practices in depth. Rather, I use first-hand observations from my research of some immigrants’ and Latinos’ participation in environmental activities as a backdrop or counterpoint against which I set white residents’ comments. Whites’ descriptions often do not match my observations,
which is a very important point, but the deeper purpose of this chapter is to explore the rationale and operation of whites’ comments about immigrants and Latinos to understand better how racism and racial logic operate through environmental discourses.

Characterization of Boulder as green

Descriptions of Boulder as a “green” or environmentally progressive city performatively reinforce a norm that those who live there subscribe to environmental values and participate in environmental activities, and position those who do not as “outsiders.” Boulder is a city in which residents praise the city’s infrastructure and policies related to environmentalism and admire its residents’ specific environmental values and behaviors. They single out the alternative transportation options in the city that reduce use of cars, the city’s longstanding protection of open space, city planning efforts that prevented urban and suburban sprawl, and the city’s progressive stance on energy policy. They identify residents’ environmental values in common activities of outdoor recreation, recycling, and healthy lifestyles.

Boulder’s history of environmental planning and open space preservation anchors the environmental lifestyles of many Boulder residents. Ricky and Becca feel that they personally benefit from the establishment of open space because without Boulder’s open space planning, “you’d have houses up to the Flatirons; it would be like urban sprawl.” Ina agrees that “otherwise there would be sprawl” and says that open space is something that she wants to pay taxes for. David and Betty compare Boulder to Colorado Springs, which they visited decades ago, remarking that “at that time the mountainside was pretty pristine, and now it’s spotted with houses, and that’s what Boulder would have been like if they hadn’t taken those actions [to buy up land and protect open space].” Heather agrees that the protection of open space in the mountains was an important accomplishment in Boulder and is grateful that there are no buildings in the Flatirons, for the protection of the natural beauty of the place.

Alternative transportation options are seen as an important component of Boulder’s environmentalism. Beatrice sees Boulder as a place where people are “environmentally aware” and notices this in transportation. She remarked on the number of people who walk, bike, and ride the bus with the Eco Pass program. The Eco Pass program allows employers buy bus passes for their employees in bulk at discounted prices. Margaret, who commutes almost everywhere in Boulder on her bicycle year-round,
the transportation infrastructure such as bike paths as an incredibly beneficial aspect of life in Boulder. Cathy also highlights transportation as an important aspect of Boulder's environmental lifestyle. She appreciates that she and her husband can own only one car because it is so easy to walk or take a bus anywhere they want to go. Because she lives downtown, she says, “I can literally get anywhere by bike or on foot.”

Like alternative transportation options that reduce the amount of driving in Boulder, residents point to energy policies that set Boulder apart as a city that values energy efficiency and reduction of its carbon emissions. Interviewees mentioned programs to make homes more energy efficient and opportunities to participate in alternative energy production as central green policies in Boulder. Cathy cited the extensive support for installation and repair of solar panels as indicative of Boulder's environmentalism. Lou noted that he received a free energy audit on his house thanks to the city and said he appreciates the programs such as loans with low interest rates available to make improvements to the energy efficiency of homes in Boulder. David highlighted Boulder’s policies that shape its role in the region and the country as a leader in environmental efforts, which makes it unique.

In addition to Boulder’s protection of open space and city planning, interviewees cite recreation on open space and trails as one of the most important environmental activities that Boulder residents engage in. Beatrice is impressed with residents’ consistent support for environmental preservation and for open space through referendum votes. Ricky and Becca, Hilde, and Nelda love the extensive bike paths and hiking trails. Heather enjoys recreation in the open space, including training for triathlons. She considers open space to be “like my huge backyard.” Lou and Ina also both appreciate the beauty of the area around Boulder preserved in open space and the outdoor lifestyle of the people who live in the city.

Interviewees mentioned the city’s curbside recycling and compost collection program most frequently in regard to what makes Boulder a city concerned with environmentalism. David and Betty said that the recycling program in Boulder is really great. They compared it with Lakewood where their son lives, where there is not curbside recycling. Cathy, Ina, Beatrice, Mary Jo, and Hilde also see Boulder's curbside recycling as central to Boulder’s environmental lifestyle.

Residents see Boulder as a place where people live healthy lifestyles and have a high quality of life because of environmental values and activities. Margaret typified Boulder as a place where there is “much more emphasis on ecology and keeping Boulder a safe, healthy place to live as far as how we take care of our
earth or our world.” She noted that “Boulder’s a bubble that way.” Boulder’s healthy character and residents’ care for the environment sets it apart from other cities in residents’ views. This healthful environment also encourages a balanced lifestyle and emphasizes the value of making time for outdoor recreation. Ricky and Becca see the desire for a work-life balance as part of environmentalism and quality of life in Boulder.

To someone who lives in Boulder, these observations of the city’s environmental characteristics are common sense. The hegemonic view of Boulder is that it is a city that prioritizes the environment in its policies and planning, and it is filled with people who hike, recycle, eat good food, and exercise. All of these commonsense green characteristics of the city make for a healthy, high quality life that makes people who live in Boulder “the happiest residents of any city in the United States” (Boulder Daily Camera, 2011, October 26).

**Hikers who don't count, impossible environmentalists, and recycling out of necessity**

_Hikers who don't count_

_Late one summer afternoon, hiking up a steep hillside in the Sanitas open space area on the west edge of Boulder, I stop to catch my breath and enjoy the view. In Spanish I ask my hiking companions Rita and Neli why they hike, and they tell me for the beauty of the environment and for health. We look down into Boulder Valley, covered in trees. I remark that I learned that all the trees were planted since the town was founded, and Neli says she didn't know that, but offers additional information that the landscape that is now mountainous used to be the bed of a large lake, long ago. We rest a few seconds longer and then catch up with the rest of the women from Mexico and El Salvador we are hiking with. At the top, we meet another pair of woman from El Salvador who are out for a hike, and we make friends and exchange phone numbers for future hikes together._

Several white volunteers expressed the opinion that immigrants and people of color do not hike or participate in outdoor recreation the way typical white Boulder residents do. Instead of attributing the cause of the small number of people of color or immigrants they see on trails and in open space to the small population of racial minorities and immigrants in the city (which they cited freely at other times, remarking that Boulder is “so white”), volunteers saw immigrants and people of color who hike in Boulder as exceptions to the rule that only whites participate in this quintessential Boulder activity. Volunteers described their
students’ and other immigrants’ outdoor activity as either nonexistent or motivated by cultural values other than environmental ethics.53

These assumptions are drawn in part from early environmentalism’s white racist history and its persistent exclusionary culture. As demonstrated in chapter 1, mainstream environmentalism has persisted as an exclusionary white and middle- or upper-class social institution from its beginning (Cronon, 1996; Di Chiro, 1996; Kosek, 2004). Dorceta Taylor makes the extremely important point that it is not that people of color do not have environmental ethics or engage in environmental actions, but these ethics and actions lie outside the mainstream white environmental norms (Taylor, 1997). She argues that the middle-class white environmental movement put wilderness, wildlife, and waterway protection at the center of its agenda in the 1990s even while alternative environmental movements such as environmental justice emerged to address environmental health, pollution, and toxic waste (ibid). In the late 1990s environmental justice appeared to enter the mainstream American environmental movement, as the Environmental Protection Agency and many major conservation organizations adopted its language, but, as I argue in chapter 1, certain fundamental environmental values linked to beauty, order, purity, etiquette, and proper conduct remain unquestioned and central to the modern environmental movement. Those norms discursively exclude immigrants, particularly from Latin America, as well as other Latinos from environmentalism in Boulder. The major effect of this performative practice is the reaffirmation of white racial subjectivity through environmental discourse that contains assumptions embedded within it about the developing world (as a polluted place) and about class (affluence before environmentalism).

White volunteers are sometimes so sure that immigrants and people of color do not hike in Boulder that when they see them on open space trails, they somehow do not see them or do not count their actions as worthy of note. Margaret volunteers for the city Open Space and Mountain Parks department as an ambassador, which means she “help[s] people when they need help” when she is out on Boulder’s open space. Consequently, she spends a lot of time in many open space areas around Boulder. She can go anywhere she

53 There is some conflation of individual immigrant students with all immigrants, and of immigrants with all people of color in Boulder in white residents’ racial and environmental discourse. This slippage allows a culturally relative judgment about immigrants who do not hike because they come from somewhere it is uncommon to hike with a cultural trait of not hiking, held by all Hispanics and Latinos. It is exactly this slippage between person, place, region, culture, and activity that fuels stereotypes about immigrants and about people of color, more broadly, that hold up even when one does see immigrants or people of color hiking.
wants as an ambassador, but she said that if she really wants “to be helpful I go to Chautauqua” or up on Flagstaff Mountain where there is a nature center with kids’ activities, where volunteers are encouraged to go to answer people’s questions. She said, “That’s actually where you see people from all over the world, at that nature center.” She explained, “They’re the people [who are] not from Boulder who are saying, ‘Oh, what’s going on in here?’” These are tourists from near and far, “even people from Colorado Springs” who come to the nature center.

Margaret distinguishes the people of color and foreigners she sees on the open space as non-residents, “not from Boulder.” I asked her, as an ambassador, whether she notices that there are very many people of color out on the trails. She responded quickly:

M No!
A Hiking or anywhere?
M Well, again, people from Japan and, you know, tourists.
A Tourists.
M That’s where I’ll see people of color more often hiking-
A Up on Flagstaff?
M Up on Flagstaff? Yeah, Flagstaff or outside of Chautauqua, things like that. Um, sometimes I see Middle Eastern students from the Middle East, maybe. Or, I’m assuming that’s who they are. But no not that— [Pause] But you know, I know my student from Nepal, [her family] went on a camping trip somewhere this summer, I think. I’m pretty sure she was telling me about that. But I don’t see them in the– I haven’t seen large groups of people from different cultures just out cruising the trials with their dogs or running, you know, running the trails or mountain biking.

This back-and-forth that Margaret offered between “I don’t see them” and “I see tourists from Japan” or “sometimes I see Middle Eastern students” demonstrates a sense of exceptionalism and performatively reinforces white identity as the norm in Boulder. The exceptionalism is expressed in her contradictions about whether she does or does not see people of color or immigrants on trails in Boulder. She says there are none, except these, and also those. She seems to say that the people of color or immigrants that she sees on trails are the exceptions because she does not see more of them. The small number of them invalidates their presence on the trails.

Margaret’s expression of white identity as the norm in Boulder’s outdoor activities is apparent when she lists specific activities that are iconic Boulder outdoor activities as evidence that the tourists and other people of color she sees on trails are exceptional. They are not out in “large groups” doing the iconic activities characteristic of Boulder residents like “cruising the trails with their dogs or running... the trails or mountain biking.” According to Margaret, those racial-ethnic minorities who do participate in outdoor recreation are
either tourists, and literally not from Boulder, or still exceptional because there are so few of them or because seeing them is so unexpected.

It even does not occur to some people to consider whether immigrants or Latinos engage in environmental activities. Unlike many volunteers who have strong opinions about whether or not their students participate in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle, Bill’s observation of it was pretty vague in reference to his student Andres. Bill said that even though he and Andres “usually focused on what was happening in our families” in their classes and conversations, Andres did occasionally “mention that they had gone camping.” Bill also remembered, “I think he went skiing a few times. I’m not sure. We did talk about it some.” Bill said he does not know for sure whether Andres recycles or thinks about environmentalism, but he thinks “probably to some extent” he does. Bill’s unsure tone and his comment that his conversations with his student usually center on family suggest that he did not expect his student to relate to environmentalism one way or another, by participating in it or resisting it. He had apparently not thought about it at all until I asked him. After I interviewed Bill I met Andres on a hike in Chautauqua. He was there with his girlfriend and his dog, and he seemed comfortably at home in that quintessential Boulder situation. In Margaret’s words, the couple might be typical Boulder residents “cruising the trails with their dog” except that they are immigrants.

This exceptionalism applied by whites to people of color observed hiking or camping who simply do not count performatively enacts the generalization of a “typical” Boulder resident as a white person who frequently uses open space. As they see it, white Boulder residents are the ones who use open space trails to run or hike, sometimes with a dog or on a bicycle. In fact, the people that Margaret sees on trails are “Good old [white] Boulder residents.” After she talked about whom she sees or does not see on trails, I summarized:

A So it’s mostly tourists from almost anywhere or just sort of–
M Good old–
A possibly wealthy white Boulder residents.
M Yeah! Boulder residents. I don’t really know if they’re all wealthy. I see CU [University of Colorado] students up there a lot, but again most of them are white.

Margaret fully reinforces a totalizing statement that most people who use the Boulder trails are white. They are “good old” white Boulder residents. She disputed my tentative assertion that they might be wealthy, but left unquestioned my statement that they are white. She even emphasized “Boulder” after I said white, placing emphasis on “regular” Boulder residents as white, but not necessarily wealthy. This performativ
racial norm is reinforced by her follow-up statement that she often sees university students at Chautauqua: “I see CU students up there a lot, but again most of them are white.”

Whites’ racial categorization of the people they see in open space intersects with evaluation of whether immigrants hike, and allows the practice of seeing people of color on trails as exceptions to the rule that only whites participate in Boulder’s environmental activities. Margaret’s racialized observations are tangled with statements about foreigners, immigrants, people from “different cultures,” foreign students, and tourists. She uses the categories rather interchangeably, but they are not the same, and important ambiguities arise in their modular, interchangeable use. When Margaret sees university students, she observes that “most of them are white,” but would she recognize a white student from Europe as a foreigner or immigrant? Would she see one of Boulder’s many white Swedish residents as out-of-place on a trail? Probably not, because they are people who fall into sites of racial-national ambiguity who “pass” as typical Boulder residents, but who are in fact immigrants. Overlooking the ambiguous populations because they appear white enables the exceptionalization of visible, racialized foreigners and immigrants sometimes seen on trails.

Another form of exceptionalism is expressed in volunteers’ observations that immigrants and people of color use parks and bicycle trails in the city but not open space or trails outside of the city. For example, Hilde said she sees “all kinds of people” on the bicycle trails near her house in the neighboring city of Louisville. Betty, along with many other Boulder residents, observed that “you see a lot of Latinos” at Eben G. Fine park on the weekends. In fact, when I told white Boulder residents that I was researching race and nature in Boulder, they often said, “Have you been to Eben Fine Park on a Saturday? It’s filled with Mexicans! They take it over.” The same white volunteers who cannot imagine immigrants, Latinos, or people of color hiking in open space unproblematically reported immigrants and Latinos’ city park use. They see it as natural that immigrants and Latinos use urban bicycle and pedestrian paths and urban parks but not open space just outside of town. Urban park and recreation spaces are seen as accessible physically and culturally for immigrants and Latinos, but open space, sometimes mere yards away from a park like Eben G. Fine Park, is understood as a recreational space that Latinos would have to cross over a massive cultural divide to access and enjoy. In this assumption, white residents fail to recognize both immigrants’ and Latinos’ visitation of
open space and the possibility that immigrants and Latinos visit urban recreational areas in part to enjoy nature.

Ricky and Becca also make exceptions of their students’ outdoor activities, stating that the students’ recreation in parks is not about environment but about family. In a series of statements about immigrants, including specific statements about each of the students whom they taught, Becca noted, “They definitely did the Saturday or Sunday family gathering and usually in a park, so that was their leisure [activity], but they don’t have time.” After they made a couple of other remarks about immigrants not having time or money for environmentalism, I returned to the topic of parks. I asked, “Your students went to city parks?” Becca replied, “They usually did that on weekends, family picnics. They talk about going to the parks a lot.” Then Ricky interpreted, “The family aspect is pretty tight,” and Becca agreed that it’s “the most important.” Even though Becca said that her students “talk about going to the parks a lot,” Ricky and Becca saw this regular outdoor activity not as an environmental activity but a family one. Ricky and Becca exclude the possibility that Becca’s students went to the park to enjoy nature or the outdoors. They focused on the nature of the students’ activity as a family leisure time because “the family aspect is pretty tight” and “most important.”

Impossible environmentalists

Many volunteers adamantly stated that their students do not hike or recycle. While some of these statements were based in observation and discussion with students, some were based primarily on racial-ethnic, cultural, and class assumptions. These statements about immigrants or Hispanics not hiking, recycling, or participating in other quintessential environmental activities in Boulder performatively separate them from the volunteers, who all said they participate in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle in one way or another and said they feel that they fit in. The remarks also separate immigrants from the norm in Boulder, where the typical Boulder resident participates in several kinds of environmental activities. Descriptions of immigrant residents’ non-participation in these activities sets them apart as a special and particular type of city resident, one who lacks an environmental ethic.

In my interview with Ricky and Becca I asked, “You guys hike a lot, and bike. Do you think that your students ever got out and hiked or biked?” They both responded emphatically, “No.” I continued, “Or do you think that they participated in the environmental lifestyle in other ways?” Ricky kept repeating, “No. No.
No.” and Becca also said no. I asked if their students recycled, and Becca said, “No! We went to Eco-cycle [a recycling-based non-profit] for one of our [English class] field trips, and we talked about that, but no.” Ricky added, “That’s hard because I think across the states, recycling doesn’t exist in a lot of places. Boulder’s pretty unusual.” He implied that because recycling is so unique to Boulder, immigrants might not be able to catch on and participate in that particular aspect of Boulder’s environmental lifestyle. For Ricky, who grew up in Boulder, recycling is different from the U.S. norm, and it might be too unusual from an immigrant perspective to participate in.

Even immigrants who practice some environmental lifestyle characteristics are seen to lack other key qualities of environmental lifestyles. For example, Heather sees many similarities between her student Ramiro from Mexico and herself, as well as many differences. She thinks they live on a similar income not far from each other, and they both use bicycles for transportation. They share a love of the outdoors and the mountains. After Heather visited Beijing and Shanghai, China she and her student discussed how polluted those cities are and how polluted Mexico City is as well. They are both glad to live in a city where the air and water are clean. They often have their classes outside, in a park near Boulder Creek outside of the downtown library. Despite these similarities, Heather is sure that Ramiro does not hike: “I know he doesn’t take advantage of open space to the extent that I do. I don’t think he’s ever hiked up Flagstaff, even things that are really close to where we live.” She has tried to get him to go hiking or running with her, but they have never gone out to Boulder’s open space together.

There is an important distinction made between activities one does in the city, and the same activities engaged in on open space; those on open space are seen as more environmental, and rarely engaged in by Latinos or immigrants. People, particularly immigrants, who walk or run in the city are not seen as doing so in accordance with an environmental ethic. The nature (grass, trees, air, water) in the city is not natural enough, not separate enough, to count as nature, and this ideology reinforces the “dualistic vision in which the human is entirely outside the natural” (Cronon, 1996: 80), because white Boulder residents define the environment in reference to wilderness. Walking in the city is not an escape, not far enough away from city life and modern amenities to experience nature’s sublime (ibid), pure character, and so it does not count as an environmental activity. The sidewalk and trail are not equal.
David and Betty participated in a hike that the Intercambio office in Denver organized, but David is sure his student does not hike, even though he has taken up running. Betty called the hike with Intercambio a “walk,” but David quickly pointed out that it was a long hike, around three hours, and the hike climbed; it was not on flat land. It was no stroll in the city, but a long, strenuous effort on a trail west of town. Betty really enjoyed the hike. She said, “It was wonderful. There weren’t a lot of people that came, but those that did brought their families, students and teachers. It was great.” David’s student was not on the hike, and David said, “I know my student doesn’t hike. He’s never really been on any of the trails…. I don’t think he’s ever gotten into hiking…. He grew up on a farm, living in a farming community in Zacatecas.” David followed this comment with a related thought; though his student does not hike, he has taken up running: “Although, I did get him to start running – he and his wife are walking more than running, but they’re going to run the Bolder Boulder this year. Last year their son, as part of his class group in junior high, the class ran the Bolder Boulder. I ran too, and I talked with him about it, and they were inspired by the son training, they want to run it.” David associated hiking with running and notes that his student has taken up running, crediting himself with the change. The Bolder Boulder is a road race that people can walk or run. Many people in the community participate in the race, either running or walking it or cheering along the course. The race course winds through the city, and stays off the well-worn open space trails. It is, in fact, a quintessential Boulder activity related to health but located squarely within the urban area.

It is not a coincidence that David associated hiking with running, which is itself a typical activity in Boulder, and with the Bolder Boulder. All are central to Boulder’s active and outdoors way of life. Though David’s student does not hike and has not visited trails, he is entering the active Boulder lifestyle in some ways, which David and Betty said they are glad about, like hiking with other Intercambio students. I asked David if his student visits city parks, and he said, “He and his wife take the kids to the parks once in a while to play. He’s talked about it.” I asked if he sees a distinction between visiting open space and visiting city parks, and David said he sees open space as a place for hiking; if his student were going to visit open space, it would be because he hikes, which he does not. He has taken up walking and running (“mostly walking”) in an urban location, an activity that, if it took place in open space, would be seen as “hiking” or “trail running,” which are seen as more central environmental activities than road running or walking through the neighborhood.
This distinction between recreation in open space and outdoor urban recreation, particularly in parks, is a performative expression of environmental values and norms. As I demonstrate in chapter 2, open space is an intensively planned and managed social space, much like the city it surrounds, and its designation as a nearby escape to nature from civilization is an overstatement at best (Cronon, 1996). At worst, this escape solidifies the norm that there is a correct place to find nature and a correct way to enjoy it. The trouble with open space, to follow William Cronon’s critique of wilderness, is that it sets nature outside the everyday experience of urban life and obscures “the wilderness in our own backyards, [and]... the nature that is all around us if only we have eyes to see it” (ibid: 86). In the wilderness view, if nature is accessible in open space, and immigrants cannot access open space because of cultural and class barriers, then immigrants are missing out on a true benefit of living in Boulder, the enjoyment and renewal in nature.

If more people who live in Boulder adopted the environmental justice definition of the environment as “the place you work, the place you live, the place you play” (Di Chiro, 1996: 301), their conception of what activities are environmental would expand to include many environmental activities engaged in by many more people in the city. It is likely, then, that Cronon’s vision that when we stop relegating wilderness to “out there” we will be better able to “live rightly in the world” also includes living better with each other and being open to different “right” ways to practice an environmental ethic (Cronon, 1996: 90).

Anti-environmentalists

Statements that immigrants do not participate in Boulder’s environmentalism performatively reinforce immigrants’ position as other in the city of Boulder where environmental lifestyles are the key to insider status. Yet, they are a relatively mild statement of the impossibility of immigrants or Latinos as environmentalists when compared with some statements that not only suggest or assume that immigrants are not environmentalists but portray immigrants as anti-environmentalists. Like many other volunteers, Beatrice told me that immigrants do not hike, bike, bird, or study wildflowers. But she also offered these musings on the relationship between immigrants and open space:

It would be interesting to think about the ways in which our immigrant population in Boulder is in any way whatsoever connected to our green movement, to our energy consciousness, to our hiking, to our open space. And the answer would be not at all, in my opinion. That they, that those things exclude them. And then it’s interesting to wonder, well why? Is it because their culture, you know, like there’s a lot about the culture blacks don’t lead them to go to national parks, there’s been some
national parks studies like that, so it's interesting to think about the way our environmentalism does not envelop, and it would be interesting to see if Intercambio could do anything to change that, to make them— But I mean if you go on any hike, tell me how many Hispanics you’re gonna run into or how many families hiking with their children, and the answer is kinda none. But then also immigration is a huge environmental issue because it means a huge population because immigrants have lots of kids, and that's one of the main reasons we're such a polluted nation. So then there's that problem too. So that's a big problem.

Beatrice's narrative wanders from immigrants' relationship to Boulder's green movement and “our hiking” and “our open space” to their exclusion by those exact things, then takes a detour through culture as a potential reason that immigrants do not visit open space, comparing immigrants to African Americans, whom studies have found visit National Parks with less frequency than whites.54 The slippage between “culture” and “race” is visible in that comparison. Then Beatrice returns to immigrants, this time wanting them to be included in “our environmentalism” and wonders if Intercambio might be able to “do anything to change that, to make them—" be more environmental. She is struck by the apparent truth that you are not "gonna run into" Hispanics or [Hispanic] families with their children on a hike. This fact leads her to think of another supposed fact that “immigrants have lots of kids” which is “one of the main reasons we’re such a polluted nation.”

Beatrice's narrative is problematic in several ways. First, her belief that immigrants’ large families are the primary cause of pollution in the U.S. is erroneous as well as racist. As Julie points out about statements like these, “There's a certain uneducatedness to it about who uses the most resources... and we, in our, you know, six thousand square foot houses for two people are using quite a lot more [energy and resources] than somebody who lives with seven people in a trailer.”

Second, Beatrice seems to have made a statement out of ignorance, but Beatrice is actually quite educated, both academically and culturally. She is a retired professor in the Humanities, was a Peace Corps volunteer in Central America, and has an adopted daughter who is from Central America. In her words, she has “always been interested in the immigrant community, Hispanics specifically” and has "been pretty hyper-aware [of Hispanic immigrants], and I always go out of my way to speak to Hispanics and to try and help them.” Beatrice clearly identified her daughter with Hispanics when she said, “My daughter's adopted [from Central America]... and I've always been interested in the immigrant community, Hispanics specifically.” It is

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54 Beatrice is probably referring to several popular media articles and academic studies that comment on African Americans' park visitation (e.g. Edmondson, 2006; Floyd, 1999; Johnson et al., 2007; Navarro, 2010; Solop et al., 2003). Carolyn Finney also found in her doctoral study of national parks that some African Americans feel actively excluded from such parks in the U.S. (Finney, 2006).
likely that Beatrice taught her daughter to engage in the environmental activities she so enjoys, including hiking, biking, birding, and collecting wildflowers, so her daughter is present as a silent exception to Beatrice’s own rule that Hispanics do not hike.

Third, when Beatrice considers immigrants’ relationship to open space or environmentalism in Boulder, she does not think of her English student or other Latinos she has met or even of her own daughter. She thinks of the lack of Hispanics on open space, then her train of thought leaps tracks to generalizations about immigrants and Hispanics that performatively position both as anti-environmentalists and even as literal polluting populations.

Beatrice’s suggestion that the presence of immigrants and their many children threatens to pollute the nation echoes the fears of early twentieth century environmentalists who saw immigrants as a threat to national and racial purity. Jake Kosek argues:

> It is no coincidence that in [the] context... [of] obsession over the purity of bloodlines and the nation’s body politic... [that] the wilderness movement was born. It was at the very moment when immigrants were “flooding” the cities, when new epidemics were “infecting” the population, and when the frontier... was believed to be “closing” that the early fathers of environmentalism... began to propagate concerns over degradation of the national integrity of pure wilderness. (Kosek, 2004: 136)

Immigrants’ presence has been seen as a risk to the integrity of the environment before, so Beatrice’s link between immigrants, over-population, and pollution echoes and performatively reiterates century-old fears.

More recently, the idea that immigrants pollute or cause environmental harm emerged in the national media in the form of controversy. In 2004, the Sierra Club, a prominent nature conservation organization, was embroiled in a debate over immigration to the U.S. A small faction within the Sierra Club led by former Colorado governor Richard Lamm led a movement for the organization to advocate for strict restrictions on immigration to the U.S. to reduce environmental damage associated with population growth (Barringer, 2004). Lamm’s group claimed that the U.S. was allowing “unsustainable immigration” (ibid), a claim that echoed fears of polluting populations one hundred years before. Lamm also located the “roots of future environmental crises” in high immigration to the U.S. The debate was waged within the organization, as executive director Carl Pope said that Lamm’s group, which included several board members, was “in bed with racists” (ibid).
Two interviewees besides Beatrice mentioned the Sierra Club but fell on the other side of the issue. Both called the club “racist” and condemned the Lamm faction of the organization. Cathy said, “At one point the Sierra Club said that the biggest threat to our environment is immigrants because they come and they breed! [Laughs hard] Oh my gosh! And they’ve taken that out, but I still think they think that!” Cathy was incredulous that someone could or would attempt to argue that immigration is a major cause of environmental destruction.

Even Cathy’s own word choice points to the uncomfortable history that the early wilderness movement shared with eugenics. During a time of high rates of immigration to the U.S. between 1880 and 1914, prominent figures such as President Theodore Roosevelt discouraged birth control among Anglo-Saxons, to prevent “superior” American bloodlines from being diluted or overwhelmed by immigrants (Kosek, 2004: 133). Meanwhile, eugenics organizations were formed in the U.S. “to guide and implement immigration and population control policies” including the American Eugenic Society and the American Breeders Society (ibid: 135). Early environmentalists’ “impulse to create and protect national wilderness areas flowed directly from the perceived need to differentiate and protect the ‘pure’ from the ‘polluted,’ the ‘natural,’ from the ‘unnatural,’” and they leveraged these racial values and anxieties “to make environmental issues intelligible” to the general public (ibid: 136-7).

Julie condemned those who argue that immigration causes environmental destruction. Unlike Cathy, Julie heard comments directly from fellow Boulder residents. She said, “I hang out in some environmentalist circles, and a lot of those people [say], ‘Well, we don’t want anybody else coming in because they are going to just make it more crowded and use more resources.’ And I mean, there’s a certain meanness to that.” Julie condemns and discredits an environmentalist narrative of exclusion she has heard in Boulder that echoes the anti-immigration side of the Sierra Club debate. She contrasts the “meanness” they exhibit with the kindness that such people might be able to express if they knew more about the lives of people from other cultures who live in Boulder. As quoted above, Julie also discredits the view as “uneducated” because of the denial of how many resources people who live in large houses use, in contrast to immigrants, like her own English student, who live with many other family members in a much smaller space.

The Sierra Club’s very strong narrative that Cathy cannot believe and Julie counters and identifies as “mean” and uneducated is more directly and forcefully exclusionary than the assumption that immigrants do
not hike or recycle. Yet, the arguments are performatively linked through their reliance on the discourse of polluting populations, which is embedded in environmentalism’s history.

*Environmentalism as a luxury: It’s the least of their concerns*

I am at Neta’s house in Boulder conducting a brief assessment of her English class for Intercambio. She is an English student who immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. I ask her if her family recycles, and she says, “Yes. I think we’re helping to recycle everything.” She continues, “It’s a very important thing that we have to do to keep [things] good.” I ask, “The environment?” and she confirms, “Yes, the environment.” Neta lives with her husband and sons in a trailer home in a neighborhood where many immigrants live. Her annual household income is less than thirty thousand dollars, and she works one or two days each week cleaning houses, when there is work. Her English proficiency is low, but she is eager to learn and wants to take the citizenship test and GED.

Many volunteers expressed the view that environmentalism is a way of life possible only through affluence. Despite the fact that most of the characteristic environmental activities of Boulder described by volunteers do not require money, many volunteers saw low income levels as barriers to participation in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle. They see environmentalism as a set of activities and an identity accessible only to middle or upper-income Americans. White volunteers characterize immigrants as too busy working and raising children to participate in environmental recreation or other environmental activities and too poor to participate in environmental consumerism, including buying organic or healthy food. According to volunteers, immigrants’ lack of time and money precludes their adoption of an environmental ethic; they simply do not have the time or energy to have the luxury to think about environmental concerns or take part in environmental protection.

This opinion that wealth is a prerequisite for environmentalism is also debated in academic literature, and it is most often attributed to the “post-materialist” thesis. First put forth by Inglehart (1977, 1990), the post-materialist thesis says that post-materialist values replace materialist values when a country experiences higher levels of affluence. Then there is a shift “from giving top priority to physical sustenance and safety [i.e. materialist values] toward heavier emphasis on belonging, self-expression, and the quality of life [i.e. post-materialist values]” (Inglehart, 1990: 66, quoted in Brechin and Kempton, 1994: 246). The shift
toward post-materialist values also includes “an increasing appreciation for environmental amenities” (Martínez Alier, 1997; see also Cotgrove, 1982; Watts and Wandensforde-Smith, 1981).

Steven Brechin and Willett Kempton take the post-materialist thesis to task for drawing more on stereotypes “of people in developing countries as less fortunate, economically determined, peasants” than empirical data about residents’ environmental values (Brech and Kempton, 1994: 245). In these stereotypes, the developing world is constructed as a disorderly, polluted place that lacks the affluence necessary for the social development of environmentalism. This stereotype is performatively reinforced in Boulder, where assumptions about national origin, class, and environmentalism are interwoven in everyday conversation.

Brechin and Kempton and Joan Martinez-Alier point to several examples of grassroots environmental movements in developing countries that contradict the assumptions of Third World poverty's prevention of environmental values, including the Kenya Green Belt Movement, resistance to development of an oil pipeline in Peten, Guatemala, and the Ogoni and Ijaw efforts at ending oil extraction in Nigeria (Brechin and Kempton, 1994: 247; Martinez-Alier, 2002: 100-108). Similarly, Martinez-Alier (1997) points out that the post-materialist thesis can be disproved using opinion poles conducted in developing countries that have found interest in the environment among Third World populations (c.f. Dunlap and York, 2008; Dunlap et al., 2000). Jennifer Givens and Andrew Jorgenson (2011) even find that countries with increased affluence correlates with lower individual environmental concern than countries in the midst of increasing the economic growth and environmental degradation that accompany economic development. This finding fits with Martinez-Alier’s (2002) argument that environmental livelihood movements can be categorized as the “environmentalism of the poor” in the Third World. He argues that these are most often driven by the expansion of the “frontiers” of resource extraction into new locations, which causes conflicts about control over natural resources and increased pollution in the area (ibid: 11). Martinez-Alier positions the environmentalism of the poor as the third type of environmentalism, after “the cult of wilderness” and the “gospel of eco-efficiency.” He summarizes, “The main thrust of this third current is... a material interest in the environment as a source and a requirement for livelihood; not so much a concern with the rights of other species and of future generations of humans as a concern for today's poor humans. It has not the same ethical (and aesthetic) foundation of the cult of wilderness. Its ethics derive from a demand for contemporary social
justice among humans” (ibid: 11). Thus, Martinez-Alier posits a separate type of environmentalism for the poor, which focuses on livelihoods and social justice, especially in the Third World, though he also includes environmental justice in the U.S.

Anna Tsing warns against this separation of First World or wealthy environmentalism and Third World or poor environmentalism, emphasizing instead the common concern about the variety of nature – expressed in biodiversity – across First and Third World divides and across urban and rural divides (Tsing, 2005: 169). She points out that all knowledge of nature, including farmers’ concerns and scientists’ ventures, is cultural knowledge (ibid: 170). Tsing encourages a “nonimperialist environmentalism” in which environmentalists are able to build coalitions with people “whose knowledge and pleasure comes from other sources” in regards to knowing about, valuing, and managing the environment (ibid).

Yet, despite these multiple critiques that elaborate on environmentalism outside of the First World, Brechin and Kempton remark that the “conventional wisdom – that the citizens of developing countries do not care or cannot care about the environment – has been broadly accepted by Western publics and the diplomatic community” to such an extent and with such political utility that it “has been questioned rarely, if at all” (Brechin and Kempton, 1994: 247). Writing in 1994, they speak to the situation among academics and the public. Today, scholars have contested the commonsense assumption, but it certainly has a strong presence in Boulder among white people I interviewed. They most often assume that a person, particularly a poor person, who has immigrated to the U.S. from the developing world, particularly Latin America, will have no awareness of environmental practices or values. Volunteers’ ideas about poverty and luxury are attached to and drawn from regional geographic imaginaries of Latin Americans as poor and even as environmentally destructive, norms that they performatively reiterate in everyday speech and actions.

Volunteers also draw on their own observations of immigrants in Boulder to reinforce, and sometimes refute or contradict, the assumptions based on regions and regional culture, and sometimes reliance on the stereotype that immigrants are poor and environmentally unaware breaks down. For example, Cathy points out the complex role of the regional geographic imaginary in expectations and observations of environmental practices. Cathy’s statement about the Sierra Club was a response to my question of whether there is any relationship between environmentalism and racism in Boulder. After her Sierra Club remarks, she made a more general observation:
When you ask these questions I’m thinking about very specific people, about Leticia and Catalina [who are immigrants]. And I’m going, “How is their life affected by environmentalism?” and then I’m thinking, well, the EPA is talking about environmental justice, that everyone no matter how poor they are has the right to have clean water, and I’m thinking well that’s not Leticia and Catalina’s issue, that’s more on a global [scale] or other parts of the U.S., not here. Then I’m thinking well Catalina recycles, you know, and she’s careful about what she eats, and things like that. Is that—? I mean, does she feel—? I guess I’m not as global-thinking. I’m much more little, individual-thinking.

Cathy highlights the difficult relationship between universal definitions of environmental issues and specific, individual behavior and beliefs. When I ask her about environmentalism and racism in Boulder, Cathy thinks of the generalized connection between race and environment, lands on environmental justice, then wants to fit that framework to Boulder, but she is not sure how. She first grounds her thoughts in people she knows, asking, “How is their life affected by environmentalism?” Then she leaps to the scale of the national government because she knows that the Environmental Protection Agency has taken on the issue of environmental justice, which in her articulation, is justice for the poor. But she questions whether environmental justice applies because immigrants in Boulder do have access to clean water. Immigrants in Boulder do not face the kinds of issues that are the objects of what Cathy sees as environmental justice for the poor, access to a healthy environment including clean water, that are perceived as prominent problems in developing countries. Her thoughts come back to specific people.

Cathy, attempting to speak about racism and environmentalism, finds that her way is blocked on the one hand by prohibitions on speech against stereotyping about the universal attempts of the EPA, and on the other hand by her observation of the individual needs of her friends that some immigrants are not affected by racism in the same way as others. Cathy’s explanation exposes the flaws in relying on the stereotypes attached to a regional geographic imaginary of the developing world as the location of environmental problems and of immigrants as environmentally unaware. Cathy resolves her own illogic by saying she prioritizes the individual scale of analysis over the global one, but she is in fact making an active division between her observations and the problematic regional assumptions about the developing world. Her friends Leticia and Catalina do not fit the stereotype of a resident of the developing world who lacks clean water, as she says, “that’s not Leticia and Catalina’s issue.” They even recycle and eat healthy foods, and this fact prompts Cathy to give up on any structural analysis or statement of environmentalism and racism and retreats to individual rather than global explanation for her lack of answers. While the individual scale of interaction is extremely important for Intercambio volunteers’ efforts to understand immigrants’ lives and
build real friendships with them (as explored in chapters 3 and 4), limiting one’s analysis to the scale of the individual in the face of broad structures of racism is problematic. Even the incommensurability Cathy encounters between the EPA’s goals and her immigrant friends’ needs speaks to the problems embedded in many attempts to solve the problems of structural racism exhibited in environmental justice claims.

Cathy almost asks herself whether her immigrant friends participate in environmentalism. She remarks that her friend Catalina recycles and eats well, then says, “Is that—? Does she feel—?” Why did Cathy not finish these questions? From the context, it seems that she would have said, “Is that environmental? Does she feel like and environmentalist?” But instead of even asking the questions, she cuts herself off in favor of a more general observation that she wants to think in terms of individuals.

In volunteers’ minds, immigrants’ and Latinos’ association with the developing world positions them as unlikely to hold environmental values. Brechin and Kempton point out that there is also a “domestic analog” of the post-materialist view applied to developed countries, according to which only members of the middle or upper classes show concern for the environment (Brechin and Kempton, 1994: 246). In interviews, whites who assume that immigrants do not participate in environmental activities further justify this assumption using the “evidence” that immigrants are too poor and too busy to adopt environmental ethics. White interviewees assumed that immigrants’ and Latinos’ distance from a prerequisite income level makes it unlikely that they have an environmental ethic or participate in environmental activities. Bob summed up what most volunteers expressed. He said, “I think that the Latinos may be not as aware of environmentalism” as whites are. His wife Eleanor pointed out that class is an important factor in environmental awareness:

To a certain extent I think environmentalism is more the economic situation, more upper-middle-class can be quite environmental, and to the exclusion of social concerns maybe. Thinking of people we’ve [known], more working-class people are less caught up in environmentalism.... I don’t think it should be, but I think it’s sort of a luxury of the middle-class... I think environmental awareness is spreading much more than it used to be. It started among university educated people [who] had the interest, time, and money to think about such things as open space and be concerned about over-congestion. Putting in the greenbelt has economic consequences. But their concerns were what the greenbelt did as far as environmental quality for Boulder. I don’t think it’s a permanent thing, but that’s where it began, it’s certainly now mainstream, all people.

Bob agrees with Eleanor but says environmentalism is only slowly going mainstream. He adds, “I’m thinking about Eco-cycle [doing outreach to Spanish speakers]. I can’t think of a lot of difference between whites and Latinos otherwise. Driving and pollution and things like that, we’re just as negligent.” Then Bob slyly adds a qualifier: “We aren’t. We have a Prius.” Eleanor adds, “And only one car.” Bob equalizes the guilt for carbon
emissions that exacerbate global climate change, but then half-jokingly excuses himself and Eleanor because they had the money and values to purchase a hybrid car.

Bob and Eleanor also doubt that Latinos have much awareness of global warming because they work too hard to have the time to spend on environmental issues. Eleanor expands the observation, “It’s not just the Latino community, but the whole group of them who are just struggling for their lives, working two or three jobs.” Bob interpolates, “They don’t have time to think about that.” Eleanor qualifies her statement, that it’s not a political position but a matter of free time: “I don’t think they’re anti-[environment]. But I just think it’s not something they can fit into their life at this point. But kids bring things home from school. People learn. [They] just have to have the luxury of time. And it really is a luxury for a lot of people.”

Beatrice agrees with Bob and Eleanor about the role of poverty in preventing environmental awareness. She explains why and how immigrants do not subscribe to environmental ethics. She uses Aldo Leopold’s idea of a land ethic (1966 [1949]) to talk about immigrants’ lack of environmental ethics. She makes a direct connection between immigrants adopting environmental ethics and integrating into the Boulder community:

One of the real challenges, I think, of helping immigrants integrating into the community (certainly a community like Boulder) is helping them learn the land ethic that Boulder (and hopefully America, increasingly) embraces and strives for. Many immigrants come from cultures and countries that do not value land preservation, land protection, and conservation. And many immigrants have many children and are very poor, neither of which much fosters a land ethic. So when I mentioned that they are apart from our land enthusiasm (hiking, biking, birding, studying wild flowers), I think I need to add that they also don’t share our sense of conservation – it’s the least of their concerns, no doubt. So indeed I see now more clearly how environmentalism is an important factor in your study and in our relationship to the immigrants we interact with and teach.

She includes in her explanation the assumption, presented as a fact, that having many children and being very poor do not foster environmental ethics or practices. Like other volunteers, she implies that a minimum middle-class status is necessary to foster, or even allow consideration of, environmental ethics. Beatrice’s use of “our” and “their” also sheds light on the way she conceptualizes the great difference between immigrants and whites in Boulder in environmental terms, “they don’t share our sense of conservation – it’s the least of their concerns, no doubt” (emphasis added). In Beatrice’s view, many immigrants are socially positioned as poor, having large families, and concerned with maintaining their basic daily needs, so they do not have time or energy for environmental practices or ethics.
Margaret rather obliquely makes the connection between poverty and lack of environmentalism using the issue she is most passionate about, transportation. She says that “there used to be a bus that went up to Chautauqua and now there isn’t. But I think if there were, I think people who can’t afford but who wanted to get up there could—don’t drive or— I mean, it would be nice if there were still a bus up there.” She sees lack of transportation as an important impediment to poor people’s access to open space.

When I ask Heather whether she thinks her student also participates in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle, like she does, she is dubious that he recycles or participates in Boulder’s curbside compost program. She says, “I know that now he [lives] in Boulder, he is a bike commuter, and I think he lives pretty simply, but even in terms of things like recycling and composting, I’m not sure if he’s knowledgeable about that sort of thing. Maybe he is! I don’t know!” Heather backs off her assertion, qualifying her statement that she does not really know whether Ramiro recycles. She continues, “And I think some of it [that he doesn’t go out in open space] is just because he’s workin’ so much. Like he would want to if he had the time.” Heather knows that her student works long hours at a restaurant in Boulder, and he sometimes meets with her for class over his lunch break. She sees that Ramiro has the potential to engage in Boulder’s environmental activity of hiking, but he is prevented by his demanding work schedule. Unlike other volunteers who see immigrants as lacking the motivation to engage in environmental activities, Heather thinks her student does have the motivation but not the time.

Despite this individualization that Heather’s student would like to visit open space more if he were not “workin’ so much,” Heather does draw a structural connection between socio-economic status and level of environmental participation. I ask her if she sees any connection between environmentalism and racism in Boulder, and she says:

Environmentalism and racism. [Long pause] Not necessarily. [She is speaking slowly and deliberately, with a stop-and-go pace:] Um, I mean, the only thing that, uh, maybe I could see is that people have more awareness of environmental issues, um, when they have— I see the trend with like greater SES [socio-economic status] is greater, um, knowledge of, of environmental initiatives or things like that. [Here she speeds up a little and smooths out her pace of speech:] Or maybe you just have the flexibility to participate in it. You can’t buy a Prius if you can’t even afford to put gas in your tiny little car.... I almost feel like there’s, there’s just not that great of awareness about environmental issues, um, within the Mexican community here. Or, maybe like not the financial ability to participate in those [environmental activities].

Heather’s slow, deliberate pace and frequent interjections of “um” show her initial difficulty in analyzing any connection between environmentalism and racism in Boulder. Then her speech flows more smoothly when
she articulates the role of class in facilitating environmental awareness. Much more comfortable discussing the broader category of “socio-economic status” than race or racism, Heather points to the luxury of the choice to participate in environmentalism. She ends by saying that either Boulder’s Mexican community does not have an awareness of environmental issues or they do not have the financial ability to participate in it.

Ricky and Becca agree with Heather’s assessment that work and poverty keep many immigrants from participating in Boulder’s environmental lifestyle. Becca cuts straight to class when I ask her whether she sees any connection between environmentalism and racism in Boulder. She says, “I think it’s more socio-economic... They didn’t have time. They were working two to three jobs. We have a cush lifestyle. We definitely do.” She points to how hard her students work and contrasts that with Ricky’s and her “cush” lifestyle. Ricky points out that Becca’s and his students have an extra expense on top of the high cost of living in Boulder: “And I think the financial pressure on them has got to be pretty big, to send remittances back to Mexico. [Boulder] is not necessarily a cheap area. That’s why you see Walmart do so well.” Becca expands on Ricky’s point that poverty is a barrier to environmentalism by remarking how expensive environmentally and health-conscious lifestyles are: “But if you think about how eating healthy and organic, how expensive that is. But Walmart is starting [to sell organic food]. We have the luxury of choosing this lifestyle. I have the luxury of choosing a company that gives me an Eco Pass.” Ricky and Becca believe that environmental lifestyles require the luxuries of high income, the choice to purchase healthy food, and the choice of employment by an environmentally conscious company. In contrast, if you are poor and unskilled, you have to take whatever job you can get and buy whatever food you can afford.55

Hilde complicates this narrative by inadvertently pointing out the irony in environmentalism being connected simultaneously with both luxury and simplicity. She first asks me whether other volunteers I have interviewed have said anything about their students recycling. Then she explores the connection between immigrants, necessity, culture, and environmentalism:

Have people even mentioned something about their students doing something like recycling? Is that just a completely foreign concept? Do they recycle? Do they compost? Do they– They probably do on some level, they just never called it that. I know my parents [who immigrated to the U.S. from Russia] have been recycling forever! As far as reusing grocery sacks – that’s part of not having anything growing up during the war. I mean, they save everything and reuse it and reuse it until it falls apart! That could be the same here. That’s a cultural thing. This whole nouveau idea of

55 I address the issue of food and health in relation to environmentalism below (“Exercise and nutrition as gateways to environmentalism”).
recycling – that’s been around for a long time! Just because people haven’t had a whole lot of money and they reuse what they have. I haven’t seen – well and this whole thing of cooking for yourself, of course my students do that. They’re – it’s expensive to go out and eat, it’s expensive for anybody to go out and eat. And they cook from scratch, and traditional foods that they’re accustomed to…. But, our students – my students have been doing that since they were tiny. That’s just what you do. And that’s what I did because my parents are who they are. Yeah we went out to eat every now and then, but we pretty much cook for ourselves at home. It’s cheaper and it’s usually healthier. And now it’s all in the news – Okay! Been doing that for a while. So maybe they have been doing a lot of environmental things for a long time, it’s just never been labeled that. They’ve been living smarter and wiser than we have. [Laughs] And we just figured out a label for it. Or whatever.

Hilde reverses the view that environmentalism is a luxury to view environmental practice as something immigrants participate in out of necessity. She uses her students and her parents as examples of people who recycle and reuse things because they need to, with the culture of frugality as a motivator. She points to the shortages of goods during World War II as well as lack of money to explain why immigrants “have been doing a lot of environmental things” like using fewer resources, reusing items, and cooking at home from scratch. She is struck by the irony of her own statement when she remarks that immigrants have “been living smarter and wiser than we have.” In Hilde’s view immigrants live a simpler life out of necessity, and that simplicity is itself often, though accidentally, environmentally progressive behavior.

Environmentalism, as a movement and a political or activist affiliation is thus often seen as predicated on the choice of joining the movement, and the choice is supposedly only available once one achieves a certain income and social status. Hilde points out how arbitrary the division is between environmental practice out of necessity and environmental practice out of choice. Hilde also says that “we just figured out a label for it,” referring to the emergence of the environmentalism as a moral and ethical set of activities attached to a movement. Comparing environmentalism as a movement with environmental actions practiced out of necessity brings into view the assumption that luxury is a prerequisite for environmental ethics. But, in contrast, Hilde points out that lack of wealth can promote environmental activities based in the values of frugality, utility, and simplicity. The contradiction lies in environmental activities based in necessary frugality as an environmental ethic, which is supposedly possible only with luxury. Can simplicity be linked to environmentalism if it is not a choice?

Does Neta, described at the beginning of the section, have the luxury of choosing an environmental lifestyle or the time to worry about pollution and the destruction of the environment? According to volunteers interviewed, she should not. Yet, she expresses an affiliation for Boulder’s environmental qualities
and lifestyle, and she makes a statement of environmental ethics. Neta’s statement that “we’re helping to recycle everything” is a clear expression of an environmental ethic because her phrasing suggests that she sees her family’s actions as part of a larger effort for environmentalism. In addition to her intentional participation in the quintessential environmental activity of recycling, Neta says she likes the environmental feel of Boulder. When I asked Neta if she thinks Boulder is a city concerned about the conservation of nature she said yes. Then I asked her what she thinks about that, whether she likes it. She said, “Yes, I like it. It’s really good, everything is great. Everything environmental [here] is good... It feels really good. It’s not polluted. It’s really great.” Neta is not reusing her bottles or cardboard out of necessity; she is separating them and throwing them into the recycling bin, and she is participating in the city’s curbside compost program. She is participating in an environmental way of life based in an environmental ethic. Neta feels like she participates in Boulder’s environmentalism and that she belongs in Boulder. If she senses the whiteness and wealth of Boulder’s normative environmental practices, she does not mention them to me. Instead, she seems to embrace the value of a clean environment and the utility of an environmental lifestyle.

Whites assume that Latinos are unaware or ignorant of environmental issues and ethics, but on closer analysis whites themselves seem to be the ignorant ones, not aware of some Latinos’ environmental practices and in active denial of immigrants’ and Latinos’ ethics. Their ignorance is based in assumptions about culture and class. They assume that Latinos are isolated in their communities (as examined in chapter 4), that those communities’ poverty and language difference insulates its members from Boulder’s buzzing, active environmental culture. Whites also assume that immigrants from developing countries do not know anything about environmentalism or environmental activities, that they have no cultural or social foundation on which to build an environmental ethic or environmental practices. These assumptions are performative speech acts that reinforce normative ideas about both racial and environmental subjectivity that articulate through conceptualizations of belonging in Boulder.

Participating in environmental activities is free and fun

I’m sitting in the Starbucks at the corner of Arapahoe Avenue and 30th Street on a Monday afternoon across the table from a young woman from Mexico. We’re sipping coffee and eating pastries, and she is telling me that she really likes living in Boulder. She says she likes it because “it’s a place with a lot of trees, a place –
how do you say? – like, ecological.” She tells me she likes Boulder much better than Orlando and Kansas City and other places she has visited because those places are very industrial. She says, “Here people are very athletic and involved in sports. I like that.” I ask her if she is an athlete herself, and she tells me she is not, but she hikes on the trails and she likes sports. She says she also likes the mountains and the snow and points out the window at the Flatirons and continental divide visible behind saying that these mountains remind her of her home in Michoacán.

Some volunteers did observe their students and other immigrants participating in environmental activities like hiking. White volunteers most often view immigrants’ environmental behavior through an assumption that immigrants are ignorant of environmentalism until they actively learn environmental behavior from Americans, in this case from Boulder residents. This assumption is linked to white Americans’ regional geographic imaginaries of Latin America and of the developing countries. As discussed above, the perception of the developing world as a place where people lack affluence marks people from there as ignorant of environmental ethics, particularly if they are poor. Even immigrants who engage in environmental practices are seen as lacking environmental ethics. Many whites perceive immigrants as non-environmental but potentially open to environmental practices and values, which “they” can learn from “us.” This way of looking at the relationship between immigrants and the environment as necessarily mediated by white residents’ education and outreach reveals the performative assumption of whites’ ownership of the physical environment (open space), environmental values, and the environmental way of life in Boulder.

Understanding or presenting a population as lacking knowledge about environmentalism opens a route for the operation of power through the well-meaning activities of outreach and inclusion. Because Latinos are seen as not understanding or knowing about environmentalism, white residents think they need to enlighten their new neighbors so they can integrate better into Boulder’s environmental lifestyle. As I have shown, many white Boulder residents view immigrants and Latinos through stereotypes based on class and assumptions about the developing world that prevent whites from acknowledging immigrants’ and Latinos’ environmental activities and values. Instead, immigrants’ foreignness, along with the assumptions and stereotypes embedded in it, is the primary channel for whites to welcome immigrants into the city and its environmental way of life. This view positions the white volunteers I interviewed as cultural ambassadors and environmental educators for their students. Their educational enforcement of cultural and
environmental norms confirms whites’ sense of belonging in the city through their American nationality and their environmentalism.

For example, David says that his student does recycle, but he needed a little help to understand how.

He told me:

They gave him new recycle cans the other day, and so he brought in the paper to have me explain what to put into each container, because they brought him a new container. He was confused by the composting because he has no grass, just gravel around the trailer. He said, “What am I supposed to do with this, what do I put in it?” He does have some trees that he gets leaves from, and so I said, “Put that stuff in, and food.” So I had to explain how this works and why they do it… He's alright with doing it. He just didn’t understand it. [Laughs] He's always bringing me something to explain to him that he doesn’t quite understand.

In David’s narrative, he is providing environmental education to his student, a form of cultural education. His student is “alright with” participating in the city’s curbside recycling and compost programs, but he did not understand the programs until David explained them.

David and Betty both made a point of telling me during their interview how excellent the opportunity has been for David to get involved in teaching and building a relationship with his student. Betty teaches group classes and is very comfortable doing that since she taught English classes when they were in the Peace Corps in Central America, but she said that David would never sign up to teach a group class. Instead, he teaches an individual class, and Betty said, “David would never have done this in a class setting, but [in his class] it’s a guy with a guy, and they talk about guy stuff… He comes home [from class] with such great observations, stories about what they’ve done, and he is somebody who would not have benefitted if it weren’t for Intercambio.” David expanded on how much he has learned from the one-on-one class:

It’s been a real eye opener for me. I had no idea how difficult it was [to be an undocumented immigrant], and it’s almost like being a prisoner in our country, I mean, you’ve come here because of the opportunities, and there are opportunities, but they’re not as great as you might think they are, and it brings up a lot of difficulties that I didn’t appreciate before. That understanding of it has been the biggest thing for me.

David compares this personal education with his experience in the Peace Corps, “You go in thinking you’re gonna go help somebody else, help the life of somebody else, but it’s your life that gets enriched. You get more out of it than you put into it. I feel very good about this interaction. My student is now a friend.” David has benefitted from the interaction largely because he feels like he is teaching his student English and culture and how to live in Boulder. He also feels like he is learning more about immigrants’ lives in the U.S., which is information he can use in further outreach and inclusion of his student and other immigrants.
In a form of spatial outreach and inclusion, Julie said her student Iris was afraid to go downtown to the Pearl Street Mall because she did not know whether she was allowed to visit it. Julie felt that Iris did not know enough about the city’s downtown area to feel welcome there, and she wanted Iris to know that the city of Boulder is hers to explore, so she took her to two iconic Boulder locations, downtown to the Pearl Street pedestrian mall and to Chautauqua Park. At Chautauqua they “went for a little hike” and to the historic dining hall. Julie said her student really liked it, and Julie herself was happy to provide her student with more of a sense of belonging and mobility in the city. She wanted her student to feel at home in Boulder and to be able to “feel more comfortable just venturing out... of her neighborhood... [so] she knows that she can live in a bigger place and feel more comfortable with it.”

Volunteers are also enthusiastic about opportunities to include immigrants in environmental activities in Boulder. Hilde points out that Intercambio is an important social venue for this cross-cultural environmental education. Intercambio provides immigrants the initial opportunity to participate in environmental activities, and this participation has the possibility to inspire immigrants to continue to participate, because that is what people in Boulder do, and it is fun:

I haven’t participated in any of Intercambio’s clean-up events or camping events, but I think they’re definitely making strides as far as introducing these activities, these options, to Spanish-speaking immigrants, and as a fun option. It’s free, it’s fun, enjoy it. And I think that’s part of a cultural thing, them not partaking on their own, maybe at first. Do people get out and do outdoorsy stuff a lot in Mexico and Latin America? I think Boulder is really at the top for that, encouraging a lot of outdoor activity. It’s just what you do here. You see a lot of other people doing it, and then you start doing it, and then you discover, “Oh, this is pretty fun!” Some people go overboard and invest thousands of dollars in the perfect shoes and the perfect bike, but you really don’t need all of that, just get out and take a walk! [Laughs] This could be a cultural thing, and Intercambio’s helping introduce that part of American life: Go out and enjoy the outdoors!

Hilde makes a couple of important observations. First, she describes the way people who move to Boulder get involved in outdoor activities: “You see a lot of other people doing it, and then you start doing it, and then you discover, ‘Oh, this is pretty fun!’” This observation is one of the only ones by volunteers that did not express a feeling of white Boulder residents’ ownership over environmental values or express the idea that immigrants would come to environmentalism differently from other people who move to Boulder. Most volunteers I interviewed saw a real cultural impediment for immigrants or people of color, especially Latinos, to “go out and enjoy the outdoors” but assumed that non-immigrants and whites who move to Boulder seamlessly enter the environmental culture.
Second, Hilde jokes about some people in Boulder who “go overboard and invest thousands of dollars in the perfect” equipment, but emphasizes the point that “you don’t really need all of that” to take a walk or enjoy the outdoors. On the Intercambio camping trip, one of the staff of Intercambio made a similar remark to me. As we watched a mother roll a stroller along a rutted dirt road, she said she likes to go camping with immigrants because it reminds her that you don’t need all the expensive equipment to have a good time camping. These remarks directly oppose the assumption that poor people cannot participate in environmentalism, but in opposing it, assume it to be the dominant, commonsense opinion or norm.

In addition to park clean-up and camping outings, Intercambio also organizes an annual hike. In 2011 the hike was at Chautauqua, and a ranger from Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks gave a brief talk before the hike. The ranger gave his talk in both Spanish and clearly spoken English to be understood by the Spanish-speaking immigrants, other immigrants, and English-speaking volunteers in attendance. Talking about a separate but similar event, Margaret mentioned how important it is for the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department to host education walks in Spanish. She said that ranger walks are a great opportunity to learn more about the open space, and she was delighted when she heard they had started offering them in Spanish.

On the Intercambio hike at Chautauqua, the ranger addressed in his talk several topics about open space that he believed immigrants would need to know: accessibility, ownership, and safety. He wanted immigrants to know that the land is free for all residents to use, that the open space is theirs, and that it is a very safe place. He said, “Who gets to use these hiking trails without paying anything? You! You can come here whenever you want, and we will never charge you an entrance fee. Today we’re going to take a walk and I’m going to introduce you to the land where you live.” About one hundred feet up the trail, the ranger stopped to address the group again. He pointed at the Flatirons, which are located directly west of Chautauqua, and said, “These rocks are called the Flatirons, and they are the symbol of Boulder. Now that you live here you need to know about the Flatirons. They’re yours.”

It is the ranger’s job to conduct educational outreach to Boulder residents that encourages them to use open space. It is also his role to educate residents about open space, but his statement that he was “going to introduce you to the land where you live” expresses the assumption that the hikers had never “met,” seen, walked in, or thought about the land before. This is a particularly ridiculous assumption when applied to his
“introduction” to the Flatirons, which are visible from most outdoor locations in Boulder. Every person who lives in or has visited Boulder is familiar with the Flatirons, and multiple restaurants and stores in the city are named after the iconic rocky landscape. It is doubtful that anyone on that hike needed to be introduced to them.

The ranger also made a strong point about safety meant to reassure immigrants that attacks by wildlife on open space are very, very rare. He said, “A lot of times people are afraid to go for a hike because they might see bears, mountain lions, or snakes. But the chance that something will happen to you is very small.” Then he reiterated in a simple statement in Spanish, “Aquí está muy seguro. No es algo de preocuparse. [It is very safe here. It is not anything to worry about.]” Why is the ranger so emphatic about safety? I believe the answer must be one or more of the following three reasons: 1) he talked with Latin American immigrants in the past who expressed fear about wildlife in open space and expanded this discussion to all (or at least most) immigrants; 2) he is making an assumption based on culture that immigrants are afraid of wild animals; or 3) he associates immigrants with wild places in the developing world where nature is not controlled or managed as it is around Boulder. The first reason is not unrelated to the second; hearing something from one person and assuming others who share a culture, nationality, or regional origin share that opinion is a form of cultural stereotyping. The third reason seems rather far-fetched, except that the regional geographic imaginary of Latin America as different and as developing world is clearly part of the ranger’s assumptions, as is some degree of cultural stereotyping.

The ranger’s message was not off-point. All Boulder residents do need to know that they can visit open space any time for no fee (besides taxes they already pay) and that it is a safe place to recreate. The main problem with the ranger’s statements was his assumption that the immigrants had never hiked on open space before and that they were entirely unfamiliar with visiting or even viewing the city’s open space. While it is probably true that most immigrants in Boulder have not hiked in open space, that does not mean that the people on this particular hike had not, and was an application of a stereotype about immigrants not hiking to individual immigrants some of whom in fact hike regularly. This assumption was expressed through his very basic explanation as well as his tone. His earnest and repeated insistence that “there is so much to learn and explore on open space and it’s all yours... The Flatirons are yours” was delivered simplistically, as if to children. While it is understandable and often polite to simplify one’s language when talking to people who
are learning English at a relatively basic level, the way the ranger emphasized and drew out certain words and phrases gave his speech an unintended air of condescension. Even what he said in Spanish was spoken slowly and clearly, and repeated a few times to make sure everyone understood the message of ownership, accessibility, and safety. As a ranger, dressed in his ranger uniform, he is socially positioned as a guardian of the mountains, and he wants immigrants to know the mountains are also theirs. As he put it, "[Slow, marked speech:] They – are – yours. Son – de – *ustedes*. Son – *suyos*." The ranger’s attempt to remedy the ignorance he thought immigrants had in fact worked the other way; it highlighted his own ignorance and denial of what immigrants might already know about open space and the environment. Avoiding the ignorance would be as simple as having asked who had hiked before and what they knew about open space instead of assuming that they had never been there before and knew nothing.

*Exercise and nutrition as gateways to environmentalism*

    At Whole Foods one day I am chatting with Manuel, a young man from Oaxaca, Mexico whose English is very good. He tells me that he learned English from tourists who visited his home city, not in a class, which impresses me. I tell him about my summer research conducting surveys with Latinos about their park use and environmental attitudes. He says he is curious to hear the results because he often wonders what Latinos think about the environment in the U.S. He tells me that he regularly visits a park north of town to go for runs and do exercises on the equipment there. He says people are friendly and will say hello, but he feels like they do not want to talk with him for very long, that they are trying to hurry away. He says it is a little difficult to make good friends in Boulder.

    In this section I explore the ways that Latinos, including immigrants, are portrayed as unhealthy and in need of health education, particularly on the topics of exercise and diet. I show that these are, like environmental education, a form of outreach and inclusion designed to include always already foreigners in a healthy, environmental, American, and Boulder way of life, and that they performatively reinforce Boulder whites as the healthy, environmental norm.

    In the same way that many whites in Boulder assume that Latinos and immigrants do not understand or participate in environmental activities or hold environmental values, they also assume that immigrants, particularly from Latin America, and other Latinos live unhealthy lifestyles with no exercise and inexpensive,
unhealthy food. White Boulder residents want to encourage immigrants, particularly Latinos, to adopt healthier lifestyles. Thus, several volunteers offered information about health, including information about exercise and nutrition, as important transitional lifestyle opportunities for immigrants. It is important to note that the volunteers brought up issues of health, nutrition, and exercise on their own in relation to environmentalism. I did not introduce these topics into the interviews.

When discussing immigrants' and Latinos’ relationship to environmentalism, many interviewees thought in terms of outreach and reform of the unhealthy behaviors. Many Boulder residents assume that if immigrants participate in environmental activities, even including exercise and healthy diets, they might also adopt environmental ethics. For whites, Latinos’ otherness is visible in their lifestyles, a lifestyle so unhealthy it is harmful, so outreach and education must be practiced to reform Latinos, and help them live healthier lives. This transition from unhealthy lifestyle to healthy lifestyle is also seen as a transition to a more environmental way of life; immigrants can possibly access Boulder’s quality of life through quality food and diligent exercise. These views target Latinos as members of a population that needs more intensive management and reform of their health and behavior because of their shared cultural preferences. Unhealthy lifestyles and behaviors are seen as cultural characteristics, and these cultural attributes are often labeled naïve.

Both at a local and national scale, Latinos are portrayed as members of a population that does not exercise for fitness or health and thus is in need of outreach activities that will modify and improve their health-related behavior. In 2009 the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Office of Health Disparities published a report on racial and ethnic health disparities in the state (Colorado Office of Health Disparities, 2009). The percentage of each of four communities of color in the state is given, along with the fact that Latinos are the largest minority group by far, at twenty percent of the state population (ibid: 1). The report states that fifteen percent of people in Colorado speak a language other than English at home (ibid: 1). In the “Summary of Findings” section of the report, the Latino community is described as “rapidly growing” and “burdened by disparities of concern affecting children, youth, and adults” (ibid: 3). These statistics discursively position Latinos as the largest minority population in the state as well as the most
rapidly increasing in number, and identifies health disparities in the areas of childhood and adult obesity, child oral health, teen fertility, diabetes, liver disease, and mortality from motor vehicle accidents and from homicide and legal intervention (ibid: 3). These findings fit squarely within a discourse of Latinos eating poorly (obesity, diabetes, child oral health), not exercising enough (obesity, diabetes), drinking too much alcohol (liver disease and motor vehicle mortality), being sexually over-active at a young age (teen pregnancy), and tending towards criminality (homicide and legal intervention). Reports such as this one are used directly to justify the urgency of outreach and education programs in the areas of exercise and health, and, implicitly to encourage proper social and environmental conduct. They are used to develop interventions that effect changes in Latinos’ lifestyles, making them healthier and happier.

The issue of health, particularly in terms of exercise, also performatively separates Latinos from the norm in Boulder in whites’ characterizations of the city. Boulder is a city filled with elite athletes and residents who exercise frequently, many of whom are extremely attentive to personal fitness and health. Further, many white Boulder residents assume that Latinos do not exercise for fitness, know about fitness, or care about fitness. This difference between descriptions of Latino and white Boulder residents is visible in an article in Boulder’s daily newspaper. Each week, the paper includes a section about exercise in which it features a “Workout of the Week” and other news stories about fitness in Boulder. In May of 2011, the newspaper published an article in this fitness section titled “The Fit Latino: Local Groups Work To Get Colorado’s Least Active Demographic on Its Feet” that describes a Baile Aerobico (Dance Aerobics) class. The article begins:

Loud, treble-heavy music pours from the packed gymnasium at the YMCA on the east side of Longmont. One woman dances in front of a baby carriage. Several women huddle near a corner, excitedly talking while absent-mindedly following the instructor’s dance moves. The instructor isn’t a trained dancer or a personal trainer. But he loves Latino music and he loves moving…. He waves and nods at participants as they come and go, which they do, throughout the 90-minute class. This aerobics class is nothing like traditional American aerobics in one of the fittest counties in the nation. (Heckel, 2011a)

In its opening sentences the article explicitly differentiates the class for the “fit Latino” from a “traditional American aerobics” class in “one of the fittest counties in the nation” (ibid). In addition to loud music and a packed gym, the article references a woman dancing in front of her stroller, women half-listening to the

56 The statement that the Latino is the most rapidly growing paired with its dire health disparities not only justifies population management programs through health outreach initiatives, it also echoes eugenic fears of rapid growth of foreign, minority, and unhealthy populations, as discussed above (cf. Hartigan, 2005; Kosek, 2004, 2006).
instructions, and people arriving well after the class begins and leaving before it ends. This is an explicit scene of disorder in the arena of exercise. Implied is the idea that it is necessary to create a disorderly, flexible, family-friendly, social space for Latinos, and particularly Latinas, to participate in a fitness class.

The article echoes the Colorado Office of Health Disparities Report (2009), asserting that “the Latino community ... is the least physically active ethnic or racial group in the state” (Heckel, 2011a), thus describing Latinos as in need of health outreach and education. It points out that Latino children have the highest rates of obesity of any ethnic group, at nearly one-quarter, and Latinos "have the highest mortality rates from diabetes, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis" (ibid), again laying the groundwork to explain why Latinos need special outreach to get fit.

The article quotes the YMCA's director who makes a claim that when Latinos arrive in the U.S. they are healthy, but stress and poverty corrupt the "healthy habits" with which they arrive and prompt them to choose the "dollar menu at a fast-food restaurant" over the more expensive fresh produce (ibid). If the stresses our society puts on immigrants and their children forces them into unhealthy habits, the society is even more justified in attempting to manage their health, or even obligated to reach out to its Latino population to reform their habits to their former, simpler healthy state.

This news article is best seen as a portrayal of Latinos as unfit and in need of health outreach when compared to an article on the same page of the newspaper by the same author titled “Workout of the Week: Balletone” (Heckel, 2011b). In contrast to “The Fit Latino,” this class is described using specific, focused fitness language, and though the instructor says she does not ask for perfection, the article makes clear that the class requires awareness, reflection, and focus to participate. This article describes a ballet fitness class, featuring the class's renowned instructor, described as "one of those instructors who puts Boulder on the fitness map" (ibid). The class is a "dance-inspired, full-body conditioning workout designed to improve foundational cardio, strength, coordination and core... 'like vertical Pilates'" (ibid). The instructor makes a point that "your workouts shouldn't be perfect [because] unless you are messing up, you are holding back," so there are “no judgments; just awareness” that fosters the development of “reflexive core control” (ibid).

Despite the classes' similarities, the author describes the two classes with a completely different tone. Like the Baile Aerobico class, the Balletone class is intended for “the non-dancer ... and is not about doing proper dance techniques” (ibid). The instructor even describes it as "a total diversion from the typical
Boulder, type A-personality class” (ibid). That is where the similarities end. “The Fit Latino” is a news story, informing the public of a significant event in the community, an outreach effort to “get Colorado's least active demographic on its feet” (Heckel, 2011a). The Balletone article is written to invite the reader to join the class; it informs readers about a potential opportunity. The author observes the Baile Aerobico class from an outsider’s perspective and consults experts on Latino health and outreach, not class participants or even the instructor. In the Balletone, the author participates in the class, describes it in the first person, and has a biography of and extensive quotes from the famous class instructor. When the author describes the people in the class at the Baile Aerobico she describes women and mothers who are clearly Latina and who have no other significant characteristics, besides their social nature. In the Balletone class, the author describes those in attendance to include “moms, a woman who is dyslexic, people recovering from hip and foot injuries, children, pregnant women, dancers and seniors” (Heckel, 2011b). Though this list is also distinct from the “type A-personality” Boulder fitness enthusiasts, their race or ethnicity is not included, and the emphasis is placed on “awareness” instead of “health.” These are people in all types of situations in life; the Latinas in the Baile Aerobico also might be dyslexic or recovering from injuries, but the author reported only their ethnicity instead. The author even notes that one thing she really enjoyed about the Balletone class is that she “loved the class’s instrumental, Indian-inspired music [because] it's a nice relief to work out and not have to listen to Britney squawking in the background” or, presumably, to have to listen to “loud treble-heavy music” either.

The portrayal of Latinos as people in need of health management discursively positions members of the population as “special” residents of the city. The contrast between the portrayal of Latinos as unhealthy residents in need of health outreach programs like social dance aerobics classes that play Latin music and the “regular” newspaper readers who might like to join a fitness class designed to give a great workout to anyone articulates whites’ status as normal residents, and Latinos as special residents of Boulder and members of an unhealthy population. The Balletone attendees were portrayed as having individual physical situations and struggles, but Latinos were all grouped together as a singularly unhealthy population who need any kind of physical activity they can be enticed into, even if it is unstructured and social. In this portrayal it is the work of the state, county, and city to study the ethnic health disparities and their work, along with non-profit organizations like the YMCA and others mentioned in “The Fit Latino” to reach out to Latinos and include them in health education and activity.
Whites’ disbelief that Latinos exercise for fitness shapes outreach programs. As members of the Latino population, individual Latinos are seen by many white research participants as unhealthy and uninterested in physical activity for fitness. In 2008 I conducted a survey of Hispanic park use and environmental perceptions in Boulder County. Upon reporting the findings to white employees of one parks department in the county, I was faced with disbelief. I reported that about two-thirds of Hispanics and Latinos surveyed said they visit parks and open space to relax, socialize with family and friends, participate in children’s activities, and picnic and grill, about half said they visit parks and open space to hike, play sports, and view wildlife, and one-third of those surveyed said they visit parks and open space for mountain biking and running.⁵⁷ One person asked me, “When you say ‘run’ do you mean after children or in a soccer game?”

He did not believe that Latinos would run for the sake of exercise, and his disbelief performatively reinforces the assumption that Latinos are unhealthy, unfit, and uninterested in physical activity for fitness.

Like fitness and exercise for health, food and diet are important topics for the regulation of Latinos’ health. Heather factored quality of food and healthy diets into environmentalism and inequality in Boulder. She said:

> Even working in Boulder Valley Public Schools, a lot of the Mexican students that I’m working with are getting really heavily processed foods in their lunch, whereas like a typical Boulder child is gonna be having organic kale in their lunch, and that’s a huge divide. And you know, food sourcing is a huge part of environmentalism.

In Heather’s view, Latinos’ diets and the foods their children eat separate them from the norm in Boulder, in which a typical Boulder child eats organic kale in his or her lunch.

Many white residents see Latinos as eating cheap unhealthy food, which contributes to their unhealthy and non-environmental lifestyles. When I asked Ricky and Becca if their students participate in environmentalism, Ricky said, “For the betterment of their life they weren’t necessarily eating healthy,” and Becca agreed, “Oh gosh, no.” Ricky continued, “They weren’t going to Whole Paycheck [Whole Foods] to buy their stuff anyways, but, they were partaking in the Frito-Lays and all this other stuff.” Ricky said that not only were the students not buying expensive groceries from a natural foods store, they were eating processed

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⁵⁷ Most surveys were conducted in city parks or at recreation centers in urban areas of Boulder County including Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette. Those surveyed do not represent all Hispanics in the county, but do give an accurate assessment of reported behavior of many Hispanics who visit parks or recreation centers. To clarify further, when I say “two-thirds of Hispanics and Latinos surveyed said they visit parks and open space to relax” I do not mean that two-thirds of Hispanic Boulder County residents visit parks to relax. The population surveyed was a population that visits parks.
food, which is not healthy, and will not contribute to the “betterment their life.” Implied in Ricky’s observation is the idea that if Latinos would eat healthy foods, even inexpensive healthy foods, they might have more of a chance to achieve a better, healthier, and more environmental lifestyle.

Outreach and inclusion for the Latino residents of the county through health programs are seen as natural and easily justified social and governmental activities because 1) Latinos are seen as a monolithic, special, often excluded population and 2) Latinos are seen as an unhealthy population. Eleanor commented on the change undertaken by the YMCA in Longmont, part of which was described in “The Fit Latino” (Heckel, 2011a). She said, “Integration at the Y is light years from what it had been. All the classes have Latinos. It’s really been amazing... The leader [of the YMCA] said, ‘The Y is in a Latino neighborhood; they should be in here.’” Unlike the news article, Eleanor observes that Latinos participate in all of the YMCA’s classes, not only the ones with Latin music and easy-to-follow instructions. Her perception of the inclusion is centered on Latinos’ usual exclusion from institutions like the YMCA, even when it is located in a neighborhood where many Latinos live.

When I asked Eleanor whether she has observed an environmental ethic among Latinos in the community she remarked on outreach to Latinos on the topic of nutrition. She qualified her comment about nutrition as “not environmental” but related to environmentalism. She described her three students from El Salvador as “really wonderful” then said:

The other day we were talking about the word “amount” and [one student] said, “I read on the cereal boxes the amount of calories and of fat.” I was just dumbfounded. She said that the El Comite [a local Latino organization] has partnered with the YMCA, which has done a tremendous job with outreach to the Latino community. And they teach a health course on nutrition, and I just thought that was so great, because when I first started teaching I remember my [other] student got stuff from Public Health in Spanish to take, and she said, “Oh that’s what those little furry things are on the strawberries.” She didn’t know about mold. I was so impressed with that [comment about calories and fat]. She’s only been here a matter of months, and she knows that.

Eleanor is impressed with how fast her student from El Salvador gained the knowledge of nutrition available to her in the U.S. through health and nutrition outreach efforts. In addition to El Comite and the YMCA, “The Fit Latino” article lists eight different organizations that reach out to Latino populations in the areas of health, health literacy, health care, “health and well-being of low income and underserved Latinos,” and health classes (Heckell, 2011a). The article even tells of a local runner who “adopted” a Latina group organized by a local social services organization that deals especially with domestic violence. The runner created a running
club with the Latina group, and, after the group trained together for months, they ran the Bolder Boulder together (ibid). This anecdote summarizes a perfect story of outreach and inclusion: A local runner (of which there are thousands) reached out to a disadvantaged group of Latinas, shared a knowledge of running and passion for health with them, and together the group participated in the quintessentially Boulder road race. It is not that the experience was not a positive one, nor that it did not help the women “take control of their lives” as an employee of the social service organization claims. Rather, the way that Latinos and particularly Latinas are constructed as a population always already in need and underserved through these stories and the way the “normal” Boulder resident intervenes performatively reinforce cultural and class stereotypes on both sides of the divide. In this view, Latinos need help, at least at first, to adopt healthy habits and “make a change,” and healthy, wealthy people, most often white, are in a position to step in and lend a hand.

Inclusion and outreach are established ways of thinking about Latinos and the Latino population on which many white people trying to understand complex issues of environmentalism, health, and racism in an increasingly diverse city like Boulder often draw. For example, when discussing environmentalism in Boulder, Lou made a connection between the twice-weekly farmer’s market downtown, an important environmental event in Boulder, and the cost of food, which he says is “outrageously priced” there. It occurred to him, having made the remark about the price of food in the context of our conversation about immigrants, that

it would be awesome, especially for people who live here who want to eat local and eat healthy and eat organic, to have some sort of like food stamp program specifically for that [the farmer’s market]. [It would be] for people that qualify for it. That would be cool. Right? And that would help in all kinds of aspects: it would bring more people of different cultures to that location, it would make people healthier, it would encourage the local economy, it would be better for the environment because you’re eating local.

Lou observed that the farmer’s market is expensive and assumed that “people of different cultures” are being priced out of the healthy, local, environmental experience. He assumed that non-whites are outside the norm and poor. He told me that he had never thought about this before but came up with this idea “on-the-fly” in his interview. When thinking about environmentalism, food, and nutrition in Boulder, it occurred to him that it “would be cool” to have a food stamp program to reach out to “more people of different cultures” and include poor people in a healthier lifestyle and in a local, environmental, iconic Boulder activity. This well meaning effort at inclusion that Lou came up with on the fly draws on and reinforces sedimented conceptions
of norms and belonging both in Boulder, and in the environmental and healthy food movement, more generally.

Julie Guthman examines exactly this issue in her work on alternative food movements and the racialization of farmers’ markets as “white space” (Guthman, 2008: 389). This whitening of the space occurs “not only through the bodies that tend to inhabit them, but also the discourses that circulate through them” (ibid: 389-390). In surveys conducted with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) managers, many characterized "healthy, local, sustainable eating" as a “lifestyle choice’... to which people of color apparently do not adhere” (ibid: 389). Unlike Lou, they went on to attribute people of color’s personal or cultural characteristics and choices with lack of participation rather than structural issues of access and affordability (ibid). Yet, Lou’s appreciation of the structural tendency for “different cultures” to be more likely to be impoverished performatively reinforces the idea of an “undifferentiated other” (Hubbard, 2005) in need of outreach, rather than the structure of the oppression or its dismantling.

Becca sees Boulder schools as a location of environmental outreach. She said, “I think [immigrants’] kids will bring some of that [environmental information] home from schools; it’s so much in the schools now. I hear people at work, my manager, talk about how their kids are forcing the whole environmentalism in schools – trashbags and water conservation. That will come to the homes from through the kids, from school.” Schools are a well-established social space and institution for the establishment of community and national norms, ethics and behaviors, and Becca’s observation that immigrants’ children will pass those norms on to their parents for increased inclusion in environmental activities is a logical prediction.

All of these forms of health outreach in the areas of exercise, physical activity, and nutrition to encourage Latinos to live healthier lives are also invitations into the realm of healthy lifestyles associated with Boulder’s performative environmental norm. Health, exercise, and nutrition are viewed as practices that contribute to better living, but they are slightly separate from environmental activities like hiking and recycling that are seen to be motivated by environmental ethics. It is possible for white Boulder residents to imagine a person who is not an environmentalist but who wants to eat well and exercise to be healthy and live a long life. Nevertheless, topics corollary to exercise and nutrition include outdoor activity, fresh air, enjoyment of nature, sunshine (for vitamin D), organic food, locally grown food, and natural, unprocessed, fresh food. These topics connect health to environmentalism, and the way they are articulated in Boulder
forms a discourse of the possibility of immigrants’ and Latinos’ inclusion in environmental activities through health and exercise. This discursive possibility ought to be a potential disruption of Boulder’s green and white environmental and racial norms, but it is very often couched in racial-ethnic and geographic stereotypes that the transformative possibility is often occluded and the norms are performatively reinforced instead.

Health thus becomes seen as a type of gateway to environmentalism for members of Latino and immigrant populations who are seen as a priori non-environmental. The distinction between environmental activities and environmental ethics is important in this bridge because environmental ethics are seen as culturally American and very different or unknowable to foreigners or even cultural minorities. In contrast, health is seen as a universal motivator; who does not want to be healthy, feel better, and live longer? No one. Compared to the ecocentric or eco-spiritual ideas that going out into nature renews you, that nature is sublime, and that protecting nature is important, working out and eating well seem like grounded concepts that have immediate effects in people’s lives (e.g. losing weight, feeling better). In this view, you don’t need to adopt an environmental ethic before engaging in the activities of exercise and healthy eating. They are activities that are easy to understand and directly applicable to life and health. Consequently, white Boulder residents expect Latinos and immigrants to adopt values of health and their associate activities of exercising and eating well. The fact that these activities are deployed through inclusion and outreach programs gives them an educational quality that easily lends itself to environmental education as well.

Guthman (2008a) also shows that well-meaning outreach programs undertaken by whites and rooted in environmental values can in fact alienate non-whites through assumptions that environmental values such as those central to alternative food practice are universal. Guthman shows that this tendency towards universalism and color-blindness is often associated with whiteness, which can mark alternative food spaces as white and have a “chilling” and exclusionary effect on people of color (ibid: 388). She outlines exclusionary practices within the alternative food movement that are enacted through “a pervasive set of idioms... that are insensitive to or ignorant of the ways in which they reflect whitened cultural histories and practices” (ibid: 394). The idioms include “getting your hands dirty in the soil,” “if they only knew,” and “looking the farmer in the eye,” and they invoke America’s agrarian past in a manner easily romanticized by whites but which looks less lovely from other racial vantage points (ibid: 394, see also Guthman, 2004).
discourse fits squarely with the idea that people of color, including immigrants and Latinos, need outreach, suggesting whites participate more because of “better education,” ‘more concern about food quality,’ ‘more health consciousness,’ and even ‘more time’” (ibid). Thus, according to whites Guthman surveyed, to participate in alternative food movements, people of color need to be exposed to better health and environmental information. Guthman summarizes that the whites involved in the alternative food movement see non-whites’ “lack of knowledge or the ‘right’ values... as the barrier to broader participation in alternative food institutions” (ibid).

Similarly, positioning Latinos and immigrants as populations who lack knowledge and need outreach and education for inclusion in Boulder’s high quality lifestyle justifies outreach and educational programs shaped by white American cultural values, including health and environmentalism. Guthman (2008b) points out that the “great desire to educate others” she examines in the alternative food movement has similarities to national nutrition and food programs of the past. Past projects “were directed at newly arrived immigrants and had traces of eugenic motivations,” and past and current projects can be better understood as part of a colonial project that “seeks to improve the other while eliding the historical developments that produced these material and cultural distinctions in the first place” (ibid: 436).58 Thus whites’ desire to reach out to immigrants and Latinos and include them in environmental initiatives such as the alternative food movement, as Guthman describes, or the broader problematic of environmentalism through health and environmental education is not innocent of racial histories or racialized operations of power. In fact, both whites’ desire for outreach and the project of environmental education for immigrants are very often performative of racial norms through the discourse of environmentalism.

Outreach and education are designed to include immigrants and Latinos in the Boulder way of life through fostering environmental and health practices that are in line with the normative environmental values in Boulder. This practice that Guthman characterizes as “messianic” (2008a: 388, 2008b: 436) is designed to educate Latinos and immigrants to participate in environmentalism the proper way for the proper reasons. This judgment can be seen in white residents’ off-hand remarks about Mexicans who “take over” city or community parks on weekends, Latinos who bring grills and radios camping and play loud music in the wilderness, and the general disbelief that immigrants or Latinos hike at all, much less in the right place

58 See also DuPuis (2002), Levenstien (2003), and Sackman (2005) on the eugenic aspects of historical food movements.
It is even visible in Ina’s remark that “my girl [daughter] will say, ‘The Spanish speakers are dropping– they’re the ones that litter!’” at her bilingual elementary school in Boulder.

Conclusion

This judgment lends itself easily to education that can best be characterized as education in proper environmental conduct or “etiquette” (Hartigan, 2005: 89) for immigrants and Latinos. Hartigan (2005) shows that the portrayal of eugenic images and ideologies of poor whites in popular magazines was pivotal in shaping white racial thinking in the early twentieth century. Central to this thinking were the importance of conduct and etiquette among middle and upper-class whites because their conduct and etiquette distinguished them poor whites (ibid: 90). In the midst of wide circulation of eugenic discourses, these issues of conduct and etiquette that were formerly seen as class differences were explicitly recast along racial lines, even without “active invocation of racial Otherness” (ibid: 93). Thus, white racial thinking and white racial formation became infused with ideas about proper conduct and etiquette in relation to parenting, dating, and marriage, and the concepts of conduct and etiquette became embedded in and expressed through middle-class white racial anxiety and manifested in “examinations of middle-class whites’ selfconstitution in relation to race” (ibid: 93; see also Stoler, 1995: 32, 127).

White Boulder residents’ comments about immigrants’ and especially Latinos’ unusual behavior when camping, hiking, or picnicking must be analyzed in the context of proper etiquette as a central component of white racial formation. In this case, it is environmental etiquette grounded in environmental values such as leave-no-trace and respect for the quiet and solitude of nature that is violated by polluting populations. As Cronon (1996) points out, humans see themselves as alien and threatening to wilderness. This view supports the norm that people only have a right to enter the wilderness when they behave in a prescribed, proper way. Going out into the wilderness or even open space performatively reinforces a particular environmental subjectivity shaped by proper environmental conduct, itself a racialized discourse.

Whites express their racial anxiety through normative environmental discourses and values, and in doing so they police the racial nature of environmentalism. Like Hartigan’s early twentieth century whites, they censure the other, who is behaving improperly, invite the other to become educated and behave properly, and all the while look into themselves for traces of racism or other types of misconduct in an
ongoing iterative process of racial subject formation. The policing of racial identities through environmentalism is part and parcel of whites’ performative characterizations of who does and does not belong in Boulder. Their disbelief that immigrants and Latinos participate in key aspects of Boulder’s environmental lifestyle serve to justify understandings of immigrant and Latino populations as uniformly unhealthy and un-environmental, which, in turn, justify outreach in the form of health and environmental education and reconfirm white racial identity as proper, healthy, and even pure.
Conclusion: What can Boulder learn, and what can we learn from Boulder?

[T]he manifestations of racism remain complexly articulated, deeply embedded, and subtly intertwined with seemingly neutral or innocent social phenomena. Even contemporary calls for colorblindness, race neutrality, and tolerance towards those different from oneself often cover over hidden, invisible, forms of racist expression and well-established patterns of racist exclusion that remain, unaddressed and uncompensated, structurally marking opportunities and access, patterns of income and wealth, privilege and relative power.

—Philomena Essed and David Goldberg, *Race Critical Theories*

Refusing to accept that race or nature are matters of common sense, we insist that neither keyword is natural. Neither can be taken as a foundational ground beyond the bounds of history and social struggle. We follow instead the means by which such essences of race and nature are fashioned, and we track their echoes and movements through time and space. By attending to the struggles through which races and natures are made and unmade, bound together and pried apart, we actively encourage new ways of imagining these tenacious terms.


At this point, one might ask, "What should Boulder residents do?" How are people who live in Boulder, and liberal-progressives who live elsewhere, to pry apart the green and white truths of their city and imagine them in a new way? Indeed, as a researcher living in the city where I conduct my research, I face this very question in my everyday life. Further, many of my interviewees can access this dissertation and read my critique of their words and practices. I genuinely liked and respected my interviewees, and while I do not want to insult them, neither can I cover up or shy away from their racist assumptions and stereotypes. I respect their efforts at social inclusion and their belief in the project of “racial diversity” as a part of positive social change. I also respect their commitment to environmental lifestyles and environmental sustainability, and the city's historical and contemporary commitment to those goals. The people I interviewed believed that I also am participating in these projects of racial diversity and environmentalism, and to a great extent, I am. Yet, my research shows that the project of “racial diversity” does not result in the society of racial harmony that it claims to work towards and that the project of environmentalism is not innocent of racial injustices nor separate from performative processes of racialization. Should I tell my interviewees that their work is all for naught? That their well-intentioned efforts are practices of the (supposedly) unknowing white supremacist who always finds a way to keep his power at the expense of racial others? Even removing the reference to white supremacy, this suggestion would hardly be accepted by my interviewees. They would tell me that I got it wrong, dismiss my work, and regret their participation in my research. And they are correct to dismiss such extreme statements on their own as truth claims. Instead, I see these processes as nuanced,
in which some practices secure white hegemony, privilege, and inclusion, and in which others – or even some of the same – can and do disrupt the racial “truths” that maintain a static order in our socio-spatial world, opening small spaces for re-imagined and reconfigured socio-spatial relations in which nature and race, environmentalism and racism are articulated in new ways not confined to old stereotypes. These opportunities for re-imagining and reconfiguring socio-spatial relations are the performative slippages and unfaithful replications of discursive norms. It is through these openings that discourses are transformed, instead of only reinforced, performatively. Anti-racist scholars and activists must find an analytical space between absolute white supremacy and the great liberal-progressive (and liberal-democratic) project of social transformation. We must recognize the ways both liberalism and liberal-progressivism hide white supremacy and white hegemonic practices and also see the performative interruptions in white supremacy and hegemony that allow transformation.

As a feminist scholar, it is my practice to understand, analyze, and deconstruct the world in which I live. As an anti-racist academic, it is my responsibility to investigate the racial and especially the racist practices of people, especially where I live. Through deconstructing the commonsense divide between the discourse of environmentalism and that of race, racism, and anti-racism, I have shown how the two discourses overlap historically and today in white people’s everyday lives and that the very overlap plays an important role in shaping who they are, that is, their racial and environmental subjectivities. It has not been my intention to explicate nor to elide nor to take for granted the experiences, opinions, values, or processes of subjectivation of non-whites in Boulder in this study. Rather, it has been my intention to locate the processes of racialization in the experiences, opinions, values, and processes of subjectivation of whites, to understand the racial character of white people’s lives and the discursive and performative maintenance of white racial subjectivity. Much of the whites’ I interviewed conceptualization of self and of difference took place through the reiteration, and occasional interruption, of the idea of a set of uniform “others.” In everyday practice, the “others” encountered by whites were often immigrants and often from Latin America, but the racial-ethnic discourses employed also referenced African Americans. Both racial-ethnic “other” groups were often referred to monolithically, and I explicitly criticize this view, as it relies on stereotypes, often reinforces racist ideology, and elides the performative nature of racialization as an ongoing, dynamic, and unstable process.
At a practical level, then, grounding the conversation in the place where my research participants and I all live, I would like to use the space of this conclusion to consider honestly the question of what well-intentioned white people in Boulder ought to do. Can they disrupt the performative norms of racial etiquette? Can they recast the practice of hiking as less masculinist or less colonial and detach it from white privilege?

These questions bring us back to the difficulty of talking about race and racism and the need to understand racialization as an ongoing, everyday practice, and therefore a process that can be both disrupted and transformed. The topic of this dissertation has been the exclusionary and inclusionary discourses of environmentalism and racism that work performatively through narratives, norms, and practices of beauty, order, purity, health, and etiquette. These discourses have specific, though complex, effects, among them the confirmation and reassurance of the white racial subject and the solidification of white privilege. Thus, interruption of these discourses of exclusion and inclusion, of who does and does not belong in Boulder, by whites themselves in their daily lives has the possibility of interrupting the processes of exclusion and transforming the very practices of racialization, at least in a small way.

From the point of view of many whites, it can seem like white Boulder residents are caught in a trap, unable to escape the dynamics of racism that pervade society, despite their best efforts and intentions. There is much truth to the metaphor of the trap. Racial discourses are complex, tangled, tricky things that can apparently reverse direction, twisting words from a progressive politics into statements of white privilege and stereotypes. While one purpose of this dissertation is to reveal the connections between progressive politics and white hegemony, it is still important to recognize that the division and distinction between the two remains commonsense. For many whites, the field of racial discussion often also feels like it is filled with old landmines, buried at a time when the country was embroiled in slavery, Jim Crow, and the long, arduous struggle for civil rights and racial justice. It is a mistake, however, to think that all of the mines were laid in past battles and that a peace has been reached. Racism is constantly rearticulated through old tropes and new social realms. It is expressed through biology, beauty, etiquette, and rights, but also through culture, class, purity, belonging, criminality, quality, and environmentalism. It is not that race and racism used to be simpler, a straightforward correlation of bodies and categories. Rather, racism has always worked through the somatic and moral, the seen and unseen (Stoler, 2000 [1997]). Racial discourse continues to change, to
take on new meanings, and release parts of older ones. Races and natures continue to be made and unmade, bound together and pried apart, through processes of racialization and discursive construction of nature.

If attempting to address racism is the pursuit of a moving target, again, what should Boulder residents do? Part of the problem of addressing race and racism in Boulder is that white residents (and many non-white ones) believe that they already know the sum total of what racism looks like. It is racist statements, racist jokes, and racial stereotypes, like the ones assumed by the Sierra Club controversy over immigration. Opposing those overt racist statements and assumptions is seen as a positive, progressive action that many Boulder residents, particularly those who volunteer with Intercambio, are committed to. Yet, confining racism to those statements is dangerous, for it refuses to recognize the ongoing processes of racialization, the continual maintenance of hegemony, and the possibility of racialization occurring through environmental discourses (Moore et al., 2000). Here, Boulder residents are ambivalently positioned in their opposition to racism. They know that structural inequalities oppress racial minorities (for this is a tenet of standard liberal-progressive knowledge in the post-civil rights and post-1980s and 1990s culture wars era), so they often avoid the pitfalls of “blaming the victim” of structural racism (e.g. cultural racism’s “blacks are still impoverished because they are incapable of success”) that much political right rhetoric embraces. Yet, there is also something very suspicious in the way people in Boulder expect the effects of structural racism to manifest. They persistently attach the effects of racism, poverty, and disadvantage to brown bodies. They always expect to find it in English classes with immigrants. The commonsense knowledge of the social inequalities built around race has the effect of casting all minorities as always already poor, disadvantaged, and oppressed, and conversely, of all whites as always already privileged. Contradictions to these expectations are then seen as exceptions rather than interruptions to the racial-spatial order, as argued in chapters 4 and 5.

The purpose of my criticism of this commonsense knowledge is not to deny that structural racism and inequality exist. Quite the opposite; a commitment to anti-racism requires acknowledgment of the persistence of racism in the structures of politics, economics, and society in the United States. But, we need to not foreclose the possibility of gaps, fissures, and imperfections in the racism embedded in the structures. We need to recognize the complexity of the whole picture: many racial minorities face huge structural disadvantages, and many whites reap the benefits of centuries of racial privilege; meanwhile, many racial
minorities avoid certain structural challenges that others face (sometimes class privilege can overcome racial exclusion), and many whites face structural disadvantages themselves (and cannot rely on racial privilege that other whites take for granted). Seeing racialization as a process brings to light the instabilities in the racial discourses themselves, destabilizing racial ideologies. These varied racial realities intersect with the lived experiences of class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status in numerous ways in people’s lives, further illuminating the discursive instabilities and multiple forms of subjectivity. Assuming that one understands another’s life experiences based on racial identity or class position is a form of stereotyping. Being aware of the challenges often faced by many people of color and poor people is not the same as knowing what a person’s life is like.

Further, and more importantly, in liberal whites’ narratives these disadvantages very often get detached from understandings of power, as I explored in chapter 3, when cultural difference, and even class status, are seen as individual traits and characteristics that a person acquires from a place. A Mexican immigrant adheres to Mexican culture, the logic goes, which means he or she is probably very social, comes late to events, responds affirmatively to an invitation but doesn’t show up, eats delicious but unhealthy food, and values family over all else. Reduced to such cultural stereotypes and viewed through a lens of relativism, this understanding of difference deflects attention away from inequalities that are actually linked to the racist structure of society, including a long history of many kinds of social exclusion and disadvantage for both documented and undocumented immigrants. Volunteers’ understanding of immigrants’ lives combines abstract or stereotyped ideas about social disadvantage with racialized, gendered, and class-based observations of their students’ lives. The combination reinforces a hegemonic portrayal of immigrants as disadvantaged and of individual immigrants who overcome adversity, but does not challenge specific operations of power through racial, class, and even environmental discourses of belonging and exclusion, much less the policies that reinforce fear in undocumented immigrants or structure of the local economy that pays low wages to service workers in a city with a high cost of living.

Boulder’s self-referential green and white hues feed its reputation as an environmental city. Its claims to be the “people’s republic of Boulder” and a “bubble” isolated from the rest of the (largely Republican) state reinforce its character as a bastion of liberal-progressive politics. These characterizations are most often passed off as innocent commentaries or jovial observations of a town, but they in fact carry
important values and norms embedded in them. Jokes like “Boulder is diverse; it has every kind of white person you can imagine” play uncomfortably when juxtaposed with rumors of a Klan member’s visit in the 1990s in which he proclaimed something like, “You have achieved here what we all want – a pure white town.” Reference by a Klansman to a pure white town solidly trips the alarm of racism. In contrast, the joke’s elision of actual non-white residents – with “diversity” ironically embodied by whites rather than people of color – slides unnoticed under the liberal racism radar and stops far, far short of recognizing the spectrum of identities and different processes of racialization within the category non-white, much less within an apparently singular identity like “Hispanic.” Calling a town white just does not seem racist enough to notice.

It sounds to many like a progressive statement recognizing a deficit in the city, namely a lack of racial and ethnic diversity, often expressed in numbers (“What is the minority population in Boulder?”59), but based more on the feeling of white racialized space. It is not funny if you say, “...every kind of white person you can imagine... and nearly a tenth of its population is comprised of immigrants.” When we focus on the unintentional racism of the white liberal-progressive, we have to ask: Is it wrong to point out what seems so obvious, that Boulder is chock full of white people? The problem with the observation is that it is usually the end of the road of inquiry. The whiteness of the town has become a commonsense truth, an attachment of the white race with the mountainous natural landscape, that is not seen as coming from anywhere, except the landscape itself, as discussed in chapter 2. The continual maintenance and re-attachment of races to natures in this case is not visible to white residents, nor is the possibility of a new way of imagining the green and white city, the quality city. These tropes rule in the discussion of race and nature in Boulder, even as its white residents interrupt racial jokes, vote for a black president, and draw attention to the lack of diversity they see.

The obviousness of Boulder’s whiteness needs to be examined because it is actually predicated on a certain kind of whiteness, one that is politically liberal, wealthy, consumerist, and environmental. Not all whites in Boulder match this description, but the normative whiteness of the town does. Unpacking the white liberal environmental norm means, as I have done here, looking into the ways people understand themselves and each other in relation to the place, both in policy and in everyday speech and action. The fact that the Mexican woman with whom I shared coffee at the Starbucks looked at the mountains and said they reminded

59 I was often asked this question when I told white city residents about my dissertation research. I would respond that the total minority population of the city, including Hispanics, is around twelve percent. Most who posed the question would shake their heads in dismay at the failure of the town to achieve a significant level of diversity.
her of home needs a space within city’s imaginary of the attachments to place, the characterizations of Boulder as home, which today is hegemonically white. A recent college graduate from Wisconsin who moves to Boulder for the excellent environment for rock climbing cannot say the same of the mountains, even as he scales them, with the same meaning; yet, if he is white, he easily slides into the liberal white environmental norm and “belongs” in the city within weeks of arrival. *Even in Boulder*, to paraphrase Allan Pred on Sweden, the processes through which culture and race are tied up together, through which ongoing racialization shifts the feel of urban spaces, and through which the popular imagination of those spaces and their inhabitants “continue to emerge out of one another” (Pred, 2000: 269).

The tension between the individual and universal experiences and explanations of difference manifested throughout many of the chapters in this dissertation. From Beatrice’s racial stereotype that Hispanics have large families and the Understanding Other Cultures workshop leader’s generalization about types of cultures to Cathy’s retreat to the individual scale of inquiry and Mary Jo’s relieved expression that “We’re all just okay,” research participants articulated the tension between understanding structural racism and understanding individual freedom in relation to race. Problems arose when interviewees reduced an individual’s experience to the universal, as a stereotype or as an effect of oppression, and when they divorced the individual’s experience from social processes of exclusion, racialization, and oppression. I want to emphasize the depth of structural racism in its incorporation into history, language, and patterns of thought in the U.S., but I insist that this structural racism does not exist on an abstract, higher plane of existence that projects its effects onto people. Rather, racism is the cause and result of racial discourses enacted repeatedly in everyday lives, in both mundane and profound instances. We must attend to how and where these repetitions occur, whom they incorporate and act through, and through what other, mutually constituting discourses they adhere. The *uneven terrain* of the effects of racism and the process of racialization is the focus of this dissertation, and it is impossible to see the contours of racial practice and of the effects of racist norms unless one looks at the performative practices of racialization in the daily lives of racialized subjects (that is, all subjects). Recognizing the ambivalent nature of racial discourse, in whites’ desire to conform to the moral norms of anti-racism that so often relies on the stereotypes and assumptions embedded in racism, highlights the complexity of that uneven terrain.
The challenge of talking about race, racism, and difference without merely reinforcing the unequal power relations through which they so often operate comes down, it seems, to being able to think about race without resorting to racial determinism. Can white Boulder residents recognize the difficulties faced by so many people of color without assuming that all people of color are constant victims of racism? Can they find a middle ground between thinking race is the only primary identity for minorities and being color-blind? Can they find a balance between seeing race as a universally oppressive force and believing in the power of an individual to make his or her own way? The challenge is understanding racialized lives in a way that recognizes the power that works through racialization, separate from racial determinism. This can be done, in part through making space in our understanding of our world for graduated and uneven experiences of race, racism, and racial oppression. Likewise, we also need a graduated understanding of racial privilege as an uneven terrain. To see race, racism, racial oppression, and racial privilege as partial, contingent, and changing instead of absolute and all-or-nothing allows us to begin to find a balance between the denial of racism and the inescapability of racism, between racial determinism and color-blindness, and between universalism and individualism.

What would this graduated view of the uneven geographies of racial privilege and exclusion entail? Instead of seeing Boulder as always already green and white, residents can understand the city as a place where many of a certain type of white person live and many other people also, both white and non-white, who do not fit the certain green-white mold. More importantly, it would entail the recognition not only that the people who live in Boulder are not all white, but that those who are not white (or not liberal-progressive environmental white) also belong in the city and make it their own. And, that the process of making the city their own might also include adopting environmental ethics and practices, or adopting them and modifying them, and it might not. All of this needs to be seen as what happens in Boulder, what belongs in Boulder, and what makes Boulder the place it is. This more genuinely inclusive imaginary must replace the tropes of the green and white city that often manifest as a self-fulfilling prophesy, or at least a self-descriptive exclusionary process.

The rearticulation of the city’s environmental history as a relational one must accompany the process of dispelling the myth of absoluteness that bolsters tropes of the city as green and white. In a relational view of history and the production of space like that put forth in chapters 2 and 4, city residents did not protect a
pristine environment through establishment of open space but rather managed and molded the landscape in certain ways to fit a social expectation and norm of an aesthetic and recreational landscape. In practice, this rearticulation would mean telling the history of Boulder’s open space in a less self-congratulatory and more careful manner and recognizing the specific cultural and social values that shaped and continues to shape the acquisition and management of the natural landscape. Thus, the landscape itself must be seen as one molded, managed, and nurtured by city government and residents in different ways over time in accordance with different values.

Understanding the city’s open space history in relation to its residents’ values, choices, visions, desires, and processes of identification will also make it possible to see the city in a less exclusionary light. If the people who live in the city make the landscape what it is, and non-white residents are an integral part of the city’s population, then their relationship with open space matters. This does not mean that they should all be convinced to visit open space through environmental education and outreach programs, but rather that their social, environmental, aesthetic, and recreational values also matter in open space management. And actual people’s actual values must be considered, not stereotypes of what Mexicans, Latinos, immigrants, or African Americans think about nature or assumptions about what they like to do in the outdoors.

Environmental outreach and education aimed at racial and cultural minority city residents must be paired with concerted efforts to find out what residents value about open space and parks, how they want to use them, and how they want to see them improved. I think this would not be terribly difficult, as when I was conducting surveys with Hispanic county residents about parks and open space, many remarked how excited they were that the county wanted to know what they think and what they value. They were very pleased to be asked their opinion about managing the natural environment, pleased that Hispanics were invited to contribute. This type of inclusion is the kind advocated by environmental justice. It is not only inclusion in the experience of the natural landscape, but also inclusion in the decision-making processes that establish the values and priorities in managing the landscape for the people. Further, recognizing the graduated, contingent nature of racialization, racial privilege, and racial exclusion expands a conceptual space for people to expect to be surprised about others’ (and their own) racial experiences, particularly as articulated through environmentalism. This conceptual space has the potential to grow and perhaps ultimately displace the power of racial discourse to identify, divide, and differentiate categorically.
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Appendix A: List of Archival Documents

Archives, City of Boulder Carnegie Branch Library for Local History (Boulder, Colorado)

Colorado Chautauqua Association Documents
Box 1 (BHS 282):
- Ricketts, Crockett. 1926. Early History of the Colorado Chautauqua Association (Folder 1: Colorado Chautauqua Association Records)
- Minutes of the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association. June 14, 1900 (Folder 2)
- Minutes of the Texas-Colorado Chautauqua Association. June 26, 1900 (Folder 2)
- Budget pages of the Colorado Chautauqua Association (Folder 3: Budget pages, 1919, 1922)

Archives, University of Colorado (Boulder, Colorado)

Boulder Eco-Center: Growth Study Collection
Box 1:
- Anonymous. 1969. Goals of a Boulder Citizen. January 17. (Folder: Goals of Committee 100 #63.1)
- City of Boulder City Manager’s Office. 1969. Goals for Boulder. Ed. Bill Lamont. City of Boulder. August 22. (Folder: Goals of Committee 100 #63.1)
- Committee of 100. n.d. [1968-1969]. Boulder Growth Study: Basic Goals and Objectives. (Folder: Goals of Committee 100 #63.1)
- Tedesco, Ted. 1968. Report from City Manager. City of Boulder. June 12. (Folder: Goals of Committee 100 #63.1)

Box 2:

Boulder Eco-Center Collection
Box 18, Boulder Goals Committee Folder:

Box 18, Greenbelt Committee Folder:
- City of Boulder Assistant City Manager. 1969. Proposed to CMACOS by the Assistant City Manager: Detailed Greenbelt Planning - Phase I. CMACOS. October 9.


CMACOS. 1968. Minutes. City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space. April 15.


CMACOS and Robert McKelvey. n.d. [1968]. Description of Greenbelt Lands. City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space.


CMACOS. 1968. Minutes. City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space. October 16.


CMACOS. 1971. Minutes. City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space. April 5.


CMACOS. n.d. Factors for Rating Greenbelt Lands for Priorities. City Manager's Advisory Committee on Open Space.


Box 20, Boulder Greenbelt - Open Space, Parks & Recreation Folder:


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Colorado Chautauqua Association Collection
Box 1:
The Texas-COLORADO CHAUTAUQUA 1898. JOURNAL. 1(1) April.
The Texas-COLORADO CHAUTAUQUA 1898. JOURNAL. 1(3) June.
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James F. Willard Papers Collection
Box 1, Colorado Promotional Materials
University of Colorado. 1929. Welcome to Boulder and the University of Colorado.

Files Independent of Collections


Special Collections, University of Colorado (Boulder, Colorado)
Bilon Collection
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Intercambio Volunteers

**General Info**
Race and/or Ethnicity ________________  Age _____  Gender _____
Annual Household Income __under $30K  __$30-100K  __over $100K  Home owner? __

**Intercambio & cultural exchange**
How long have you been working with Intercambio? Do you teach English? Volunteer in other capacities?
What motivated you to get involved with Intercambio?
What have you gotten out of working with Intercambio? How have you benefitted most from working with Intercambio?
What has been the most difficult part of working with Intercambio? (e.g. communication with your student, time commitment, lesson design)
Have you had any conflicts or problems with your student since you started classes?
Has your work with Intercambio changed your experience living in Boulder? How?
Do you think it’s important that Boulder has an organization like Intercambio? Why (not)?
What role do you think Intercambio plays in the Boulder community (how is it unique, special, or important in Boulder)?
Do you think it is important to have organizations in Boulder that foster cultural exchange? Why (not)?
What has been your experience of cultural exchange since you started working with Intercambio? Can you think of any specific times when you took part in cultural exchange?
When we talk about cultural difference, do you think it’s related at all to ethnicity? – Why? Why not?
Do you think cultural difference is related to racism? What about race? Why, why not? How?

**Boulder**
Have you lived in Boulder your whole life?
   If not, where did you grow up? Where did you live before you moved to Boulder?
   When did you move to Boulder? Why? (Have you thought about moving away?)
   Has Boulder changed since you moved here? How?
Do you think Boulder is a nice and friendly place to live?
In what ways do you think Boulder is different from other cities (of its size, in the Front Range, others you have lived in or visited, etc)?
In what ways is it the same?
What do you like best about living in Boulder? What do you like least about living in Boulder?
If there is a “typical Boulder resident”, how would she or he be described?
What do you think of this idea of a typical Boulder resident?
Do you think that the person you described represents a majority of people in the city?
How similar are you to that typical person? In what ways are you different / the same?
Do you feel like you fit in here (in Boulder)? Do you think that there are some people who fit in here better than others? Who? Why?
Have you ever witnessed or heard about an instance of racism in Boulder? What about exclusion based on ethnicity, language, or economic class?

**Environment**
I often hear people talk about Boulder as a city concerned with the conservation of nature and environmentalism. Do you agree with this view? Why or why not – what aspects of life in Boulder are (not) environmental?
Do you feel like you participate in Boulder’s environmentalist lifestyle? Why or why not? How / what activities?
Has your view of the environment changed since you moved to Boulder?
How much do you feel like you know about Boulder’s preservation of parks and open space?
   Nothing / a little: Do you go to parks or open space areas? What do you do there? What do you like about them? What do you dislike about them?
The basics / a lot: What do you think about it? Is it a good idea? What benefits does it provide? What problems does it cause? Do you have any first hand experience with these benefits or problems?

Do you think your student goes to open space? Hikes? Do you think your student visits city parks?
Do you think your student recycles? What about other "environmental" activities? How "environmental" do you think your student’s lifestyle is?

Do you see any connection between environmentalism and racism in Boulder?
What other things (besides environmentalism) do you think characterize Boulder?
It should also be noted that Lou told me he purchased his first and second home in Boulder or elsewhere (e.g. nearby Longmont and Louisville) indicates a certain amount of wealth. There is some variation in this, as homes were not as expensive in the 1980s and early 1990s as they became in the last ten to fifteen years. Six of the interviewees purchased their homes in Boulder prior to 1996 (Cathy, Ina, Julie, Margaret, MaryJo, Nelda, and Ricky, who bought the home before he met Becca). Louisville is also a relatively expensive place to purchase a home, though not as expensive as Boulder. Longmont is relatively inexpensive compared to Boulder and Louisville. It is interesting to note that Bob and Eleanor, a retired psychiatrist and retired professor who make over $100,000 annually told me that they chose to move to Longmont when they retired (from Arizona) because they could not afford the kind of home they wanted (i.e. with a yard) in Boulder. It should also be noted that Lou told me he purchased his first and second homes in Boulder through the affordable housing program after the year 2000.

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60 Names of interviewees and students are pseudonyms.

61 I asked each interviewee “How do you identify in terms of race or ethnicity?” I use their answers here.

62 I broke annual household income into three categories, centered on the median income of $65,000 per year in Boulder. Each interviewee told me the category in which their income is. I did not ask exact income data from any participants. The same goes with age.

63 I asked interviewees whether they own a home in Boulder because real estate is very expensive, and ownership of a home in Boulder or elsewhere (e.g. nearby Longmont and Louisville) indicates a certain amount of wealth. There is some variation in this, as homes were not as expensive in the 1980s and early 1990s as they became in the last ten to fifteen years. Six of the interviewees purchased their homes in Boulder prior to 1996 (Cathy, Ina, Julie, Margaret, MaryJo, Nelda, and Ricky, who bought the home before he met Becca). Louisville is also a relatively expensive place to purchase a home, though not as expensive as Boulder. Longmont is relatively inexpensive compared to Boulder and Louisville. It is interesting to note that Bob and Eleanor, a retired psychiatrist and retired professor who make over $100,000 annually told me that they chose to move to Longmont when they retired (from Arizona) because they could not afford the kind of home they wanted (i.e. with a yard) in Boulder. It should also be noted that Lou told me he purchased his first and second homes in Boulder through the affordable housing program after the year 2000.