

CHAPTER 1

SKETCHING THE LANDSCAPE

Prelude

Summer has come early to Mt. Pleasant. It's Saturday morning, and I go out to run some errands. Although it's only the middle of May, the heat has everyone acting like it's July. I walk into the street around the cherry picker next to my building, where two men from the Parks Department are leaning out from the basket, putting wax on the statue of the first Methodist priest on horseback, to protect him and his horse from the tarnishing rays of the sun. Below them the mulberry trees are in bloom, and the heavy berries fall to the sidewalk, blackening the red bricks with their sticky juice and squashed pulp. The teenage bucket drummers have drifted up from Dupont Circle, their go-go rhythms bouncing off the cement, forming a background beat to the merengue from the street-side table where Frank the cassette tape vendor is selling his wares. Groups of young men are hanging out with their friends in front of the groceries and apartment buildings. Everyone is out with their literature. I'm told about a protest rally against recent INS¹ raids in Maryland; about worker exploitation under Clinton's neoliberal government; about a cheap monthly dental plan; that Jesus loves me. Everyone is out, and everyone's in a good mood. Even the tiny old woman who sits on a bench in Pigeon Park, fond of yelling at passersby for jaywalking, is in a good mood. Today she merely tells me to be careful crossing the street, and calls me "dearie." The flower man is also cheerful and smiling; he gives my neighbor Grace a good price for the bunch of red and yellow gladiolas she wants to buy.

There's a big crowd in the bakery – punk rockers in their low-slung thriftstore corduroys getting up to buy donuts for their group house breakfast, security guards in slightly rumpled uniforms on their way home after the night shift, fathers talking on cell phones as their kids pull at their shirt hems, begging them for gingerbread cookies. Young couples are talking to each other in varieties of Amharic, English, Haitian Creole, Spanish. The woman in front of me orders two conchas (Salvadoran sweet rolls), a loaf of rye bread, and, giving in to her kids' whining, three cupcakes.

At the back counter, bakery clerks are bringing cakes to customers. One man picks up a two-tiered cake, frosted in a white basketweave design on the sides, with pink roses on the top. Along the cake sides and down the columns between the two tiers, minute pink roses and thin white lines form a trellis pattern, like a climbing rose bush. Written in red gel script on the top tier of the cake, is "Feliz Quinceañera Jacqui" ("Happy Sweet 15th Jacqui").

Beside the man paying for this cake is a woman inspecting a large rectangular sheet cake, also decorated in white frosting. One of the bottom corners sports a frosting-painted scene of a woman and two children playing a circle game, while the other corner is decorated with the scene of a lake and mountains. Across the top of the cake is a skyline of the DC monuments, and in the middle, in the same script as the quinceañera cake but this time in brown frosting, is written, "Welcome to the Evvans family reunion."

Outside the store, two women tie their dog's leash to the post of a no-parking sign, walk in and to the back of the shop to pick up a strawberry shortcake. This cake is also frosted in white, but the frosting is whipped cream. As they inspect the message, "Happy B-day Netta," the bakery clerk places four plastic figures around the edges of the cake. The figures have fifties hairstyles and clothing, and they are in rock 'n roll dancing poses. Between two of the figures, the clerk anchors a miniature fifties portable style record player into the frosting.

Back out on Mt. Pleasant St., Mt. Pleasant's main shopping street, the morning sun heats the late spring air. The smell of honeysuckle from the rowhouse gardens is undercut by urine fumes from the alleys, and stray tangles of hair from the Beauty and Braiding Shop waft by in the warm breeze. Dr. Roman is in front of his office pulling a gum wrapper out from the pansies in the flower box and chatting with Mrs. Lee, the owner of the dry cleaner's next door. A woman

across the street parades by in her underwear, yelling at some drunk guys on the next block, and Dr. Roman leans over to Mrs. Lee and says, “I wish I had my video camera”; sighs, and whistles through his teeth, “just another day in Mt. Pleasant.”

Later, as I walk in the heat of the afternoon back to Mt. Pleasant St. from the supermarket in the neighborhood next door, my naturally quick gait elicits catcalls. I walk more slowly, adapt my rhythm so that it fits with the pace on the street, and the catcalls fade out. Downtown the gears of international bureaucracy churn away, but here the pace of life slows as the heat rises.

Mt. Pleasant is a neighborhood alive with activity of all kinds, with a main street that makes some feel unsafe, while it makes others feel at home.

I’m walking down Mt. Pleasant St. one day with a friend visiting from out of town. She stops and touches my cheek to fix a makeup smudge, and says, “I feel like I can do anything on your street.”

I moved to Mt. Pleasant in the summer of 1992, after having lived for a year in the adjoining neighborhood of Adams Morgan. I was drawn to Mt. Pleasant because, in the early 1990s, it was affordable, reasonably safe, shopping and public transportation were varied and convenient, I had a lot of friends who lived in the area, and I found an apartment I really liked.

My building was towards the edge of the neighborhood, sandwiched between 16th St. – a main city thoroughfare that runs between the Maryland suburbs and the White House – and Mt. Pleasant St. A small balcony off my bedroom window overlooked this street, and here I spent many hours sitting in the sun and reading, socializing with friends, watching the world go by, and, later on, tape-recording the sounds of city life and my neighbors’ treatises – some spontaneous and others prodded by interview questions – about the state of US society as evidenced by the goings-on on Mt. Pleasant St.

One evening on this balcony, I sat watching some teenagers kidding around with each other outside the variety store across the street and some drunk guys arguing at the bus stop underneath my window. On this particular day it struck me that the interactions on this street and, more generally, in the neighborhood, told an important story about the way that people define, negotiate, and redefine the places they live as particular kinds of communities populated by particular kinds of people.

In the late 1990s, as gentrification² in Mt. Pleasant and the city at-large picked up with relentless speed, these negotiations over claims to neighborhood identity and neighborhood space began to have serious material implications for what kind of place Mt. Pleasant was to become. Would it stay a mixed-income, multi-ethnic neighborhood? Would it retain its community-minded interactive spirit? Would its cosmopolitanism up its hipness quotient and its real estate prices to the point of no return?

What I want to capture in these pages is the importance of the way that people shape the terrains they live in as they talk with their friends and neighbors in public and private settings. Through discourse, community members struggle over what kind of place Mt. Pleasant is, what constitutes a real Mt. Pleasant person, and who gets to decide these issues. What I hope to show here is why this matters.

Turf Wars

This is a book about the politics of place. It examines how community members in Mt. Pleasant create and contest visions of their neighborhood through discourses of identity, both sociogeographic and personal. By discourse I mean ways of talking, writing, and signing; patterns of recurring themes, linguistic forms, and modes of conversational interaction. As the sociolinguist Deborah Schiffrin³ describes it, discourse is a set of utterances that are part of a linguistic and social context. This means that any given utterance both gains its meaning from other utterances and from the social context, and it also shapes the meaning of other utterances and of the social context.

The upcoming chapters will analyze email messages on the neighborhood listserv, casual conversations, a grant proposal for public toilets, a performance piece about living in the neighborhood, and ethnographic interviews to see how Latinos, African Americans, Whites, Vietnamese, and community members of various other ethnic⁴ and national backgrounds use language to negotiate conflicting ethnic and gender perspectives, class alignments, and hopes and fears for their neighborhood. Discourses about what kind of place Mt. Pleasant is or should be, and about who counts or doesn't count as an authentic Mt. Pleasant person, circulate through a wide variety

of social contexts and linguistic genres. Residents draw on these discourses as resources – and reinforce or contest them – in their interactions with each other, with neighborhood institutions, and with more broad-based audiences like government offices or philanthropic organizations.

In analyzing specific examples of Mt. Pleasant discourses of place, I want to illuminate the relationship between three kinds of local identities: 1) various identities for the neighborhood itself, 2) identities that speakers create for themselves as core community members, which we can call *centralized identities*, and 3) identities that speakers create for others as lesser community members, which we can refer to as *marginalized identities*. These identities are mutually constitutive, meaning that the construction of each both relies on, and works in the interests of, the others. In other words, the construction of a legitimate identity as a neighborhood person relies on an alignment with a particular kind of identity created for the neighborhood itself: talking about the neighborhood as a safe place doesn't help one to create an image of a tough, streetsmart urbanite, just as portraying the neighborhood as homogeneous would not help you to come across as a sophisticated cosmopolitan.

Constructions of neighborhood and personal identity are key components in neighbors' struggles over rights to spatial resources and authority to determine what kinds of activities are appropriate or allowable in the public spaces of parks and streets. This means that the way we talk about the places we live has material implications for how those places develop and change. When people in Mt. Pleasant create identities for their neighborhood, they do so in order to stake a claim to community membership and the rights that community membership confers to have a say in the direction of the community's future.

Mt. Pleasant

In the 1990s, Mt. Pleasant was one of Washington DC's most economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. (As gentrification continues in Mt. Pleasant and the real estate market in the city as a whole has become increasingly expensive, the economic and ethnic diversity of the neighborhood has lessened. A house that could have

been bought for under \$200,000 in the mid-1990s now is likely to sell for upwards of \$700,000.) It's been home to Latinos – mostly Salvadoran – African Americans, Whites, and fairly newly-arrived Vietnamese, to name just a few of the ethnic groups represented. There are also residents who don't fit so neatly or canonically into any of these groups: Palestinians, Kurds, Trinidadians, Somalis, Bosnians, Indians. At the time I was doing fieldwork, Mt. Pleasant was also home to groups like DC's hardcore music scene and the DC Mennonite community. Economically, residents' incomes vary from the six-figure range to below the poverty line. This span in income is very clearly reflected in the variety of housing stock in the neighborhood, which includes apartment buildings ranging from fancy condos to overcrowded and unsafe tenements, stately detached houses on the National Historic Register, and rowhouses set up as single-family dwellings, split into apartments, or used as group houses.

Mt. Pleasant community members construct the neighborhood's identity in a variety of ways. While some talk about it as a cozy, civic-minded community of tree-lined streets with neat gardens in front of Victorian rowhouses, others portray it as a dangerous inner-city neighborhood, a place of drunks passed out on the street, still living in the shadow of the city's most recent riots in 1990.

In the first half of the 20th century, Mt. Pleasant was a middle-class, majority-White neighborhood. It became a middle-class, majority African American neighborhood in the early-to-mid fifties, as school and housing desegregation enabled African Americans to move to the neighborhood and many Whites consequently decided to leave.

In her 1988 book *Upscaling Downtown*, urban anthropologist Brett Williams documents how Mt. Pleasant became both more gentrified and more culturally diverse, beginning in the late 1970s when young, educated professionals – who were more often than not White – bought houses that had been vacated by middle-class residents who left the neighborhood after the 1968 riots. They were joined by people immigrating mainly from the Caribbean, Central America, and East Africa. As Williams explains, in the 1970s and 80s,

rising interest rates and a faltering housing market delayed what otherwise would have been rapid and dramatic displacement. These years of stalled gentrification framed an anomalous time when the most unlikely groups of people tried to live together as neighbors.⁵

The mid-to-late 1990s was a turning point in the process of gentrification, and in particular, a kind of gentrification that *commodified* the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood, turning ethnic diversity into a feature that brought added symbolic value to living there and added economic value to real estate prices. At this critical juncture, when neighborhood change was palpable, gentrification and diversity became overriding themes in public and private discourse in various settings throughout the neighborhood and across a variety of speakers. It was through discourse that community members hammered out their visions for the kind of place that Mt. Pleasant was and should be, through talk and writing that they contested various players' claims to public space, and, ultimately, that they laid the groundwork for what kind of place Mt. Pleasant has become at the beginning of the 21st century.

Ethnographic Research in Mt. Pleasant

I began research on the present project after I had already been living in Mt. Pleasant for five years. From spring 1996 to the end of 1998, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Mt. Pleasant, investigating how residents talked about their community in various speech situations. A key element in ethnographic research is the participant-observer model. As participant-observers, researchers actively partake in a wide spectrum of community activities, at the same time as they make detailed observations of the patterns of interaction in various activities, and how such patterns relate to community values and norms. The logic of the participant-observation model is twofold; first, it is easier to gain acceptance in a community if one is willing to participate in community life, including in ways that benefit the community, such as helping to weed a field or clean up a park. There is also an ethical component here: since researchers derive benefit from community members' openness to them, researchers should also give something back to the community. This is what William Labov refers to as "the principle of debt incurred."⁶ Second, as norms of social interaction vary in different settings, so too does linguistic behavior. Therefore, it is only through observing and interacting with community members in a wide variety of settings that a researcher

can gain a full picture of members' complete discursive repertoire (the full range of linguistic styles, registers, and strategies that a person uses). Because speakers often consider certain topics or conversational styles unsuitable or irrelevant in specific speech situations such as interviews,⁷ an ethnographic, participant-observer approach can get at research topics that may be missed by survey or quantitative approaches to data gathering and analysis.

Furthermore, an ethnographic approach allows us to see the ways in which similar discourses circulate through disparate settings and among speakers who may have little interaction with each other. As sociolinguist Heidi Hamilton notes, identity is intertextual, meaning that interlocutors (people talking to each other) draw on "previous interactions in which language was used to construct particular identities for these individuals (or ones like them) in some relevant ways."⁸ Although sometimes speakers make the references to previous interactions explicit, at other times the relationship between two texts can be quite subtle. It's only through familiarity with a wide range of types of interactions and discourse genres, then, that it is possible to gain a holistic understanding of a community's social structure and the complex relations of discourse and ideologies to that structure.

My status as both a researcher and community resident not only influenced my own subjective view of Mt. Pleasant, but it also impacted the ways in which other community residents related to me. These identities and other social features worked to position me in ways that both constrained and helped me in conducting ethnographic research. Many aspects of my identity were relevant at different points in the data collection: to name a few, age (early 30s), place and type of residence within the neighborhood (renter on the neighborhood's main street), phenotype (light skin and light, curly hair), gender, class, ethnicity, accent, geographical ties. However, a few of these categories were consistently brought up explicitly by community members. These categories – particularly urban/suburban/rural background, local connections, and ethnicity – were therefore important indicators of prevalent ways of constructing identity in the community. My own positioning, then, was an important component in shaping my decisions about what kind of themes to focus on in my analysis of Mt. Pleasant discourse. At the same time, however, my background shaped the kinds of questions that I was interested in, and what I was

interested in also influenced how people perceived and interacted with me, which in turn influenced the kind of data that I was able to collect, in terms of both style and content. My background also influenced what caught my attention in the data at the point that I started to analyze it. This is the nature of ethnographic research; as a researcher, what you discover is necessarily refracted through the lens of who you are.

Researching in your own backyard

Geographical background, ethnicity, and place of residence and housing tenure all were important features that interlocutors drew on when positioning me within the landscape of the neighborhood. Because of community members' strong neighborhood allegiances and pro-neighborhood ideology, residence in the neighborhood – and particularly a residence which began before I started this research project – was the most important of these factors. Residence in the neighborhood confers a status of legitimacy, whether for a dinner guest, a local merchant, or a drug dealer. The same holds true for researchers.

Mt. Pleasant has a number of social scientists as members of its community, many of whom at one point or another have conducted research on or in the neighborhood. (See, for example, the work of the Youth Action Research Group 2003, Olivia Cadaval 1998, and Brett Williams 1988.) Many resident researchers have had good relationships with individuals and with organizations working in the neighborhood, and have contributed their time and expertise on an ongoing and lasting basis to projects conducted by neighborhood institutions.

While non-resident researchers have sometimes been seen as outside forces coming into the neighborhood to “get” something from the neighborhood and leaving when they get whatever it is, resident researchers have tended to be looked upon more beneficently. This is especially the case when researchers are involved in the life of the neighborhood – when they have neighborhood networks which have been formed outside of, or in addition to, their research (although such networks inevitably have played a role in their research). Researchers who are positively regarded are seen to have a connection

to the neighborhood which is independent of their research. While those who are not *a priori* members of the community are seen primarily as researchers, it seems that the primary identity of researchers who are Mt. Pleasantites is as community members, who secondarily do something else. Thus, although not everyone may agree with the research findings *per se*, these researchers tend to be described as neighborhood chroniclers, much in the same way that some people are referred to as the neighborhood philosopher, neighborhood poet, or neighborhood curmudgeon.

Mt. Pleasant's diverse demographic makeup has also made it a popular research site among area universities. In the past ten years, departments from at least five universities have conducted research projects on such topics as conflict resolution, youth leadership, institutional capacity-building, intercultural communication, and architectural planning.

Although the foci of these projects have varied with the disciplinary background of the researchers, the projects have shared a common aim to "give something back" to a community experiencing ethnic and economic tensions, where many people have limited access to jobs, education, and healthcare. Many students working on these projects have made friendships and contributed richly to the lives of individual Mt. Pleasant residents, and Mt. Pleasant has served as an effective training ground for budding conflict mediators, linguists, anthropologists, public policy analysts, and architects. However, despite the contributions that members of such projects may have made on an individual basis (not an invaluable outcome), ultimately most in the community have not noticed any broad-based impact on social or economic conditions of the neighborhood at large; today, with no concrete reminders of these projects (such as new structures for solving community conflicts, or increased economic opportunities), their contributions have by and large vanished from Mt. Pleasant's collective memory. The failure of university research to make lasting contributions to the neighborhood as a whole has made many residents of Mt. Pleasant suspicious of researchers from local universities, and of academics in general.

For me, being a community member before I started this project brought both benefits and difficulties. By presenting myself primarily as a resident of the neighborhood, who *also* happened to be conducting research, I was usually (but not always) able to allay a fair amount

of my neighbors' suspicion of researchers, and to build my legitimacy as a researcher around my status as a neighborhood resident, one who had been somewhat active in community issues, whose interest in doing research developed out of personal experiences and interactions in and with Mt. Pleasant.

But doing research in the community where I had lived for a number of years also posed challenges, because it meant that people knew me as something other than a researcher. Having pre-established networks helped enormously in collecting data, because many people with whom I interacted through fieldwork already knew me from other contexts and felt at ease with me. Consequently they were more open with me than were people who didn't know me at the outset. On the other hand, being a community member also meant that my non-research relationships with people and connections in the neighborhood sometimes got in the way of finding out information. For example, I had been involved in a (now defunct) neighborhood organization that had taken somewhat polarized stances on a number of controversial issues. When I talked about some of these issues in sociolinguistic interviews or taped conversations with other former members of this group, it was extremely difficult to elicit narratives about past neighborhood events, because they assumed 1) that I knew as much as they did about the events, 2) that I knew their positions regarding these events, and 3) that I agreed with them. Whether or not these assumptions were accurate (sometimes they were and sometimes they weren't), they resulted in people not discussing information about Mt. Pleasant that they considered to be shared background knowledge.

My association with this organization also impacted research relationships that I had with people who had opposed the stances of this group. Such people sometimes aligned me with the positions of the organization, which was evidenced through evaluations in their stories that were often implicitly directed towards disagreeing with, or disdaining, policies which this organization had supported; this happened even when they were not explicitly discussing the organization. Other people were less open towards me because of my affiliation with this organization.

My identity as a neighborhood resident also created challenges because it enabled people to categorize me in specific ways which they might have been less likely to do if they had seen me solely as

a researcher. When this happened, community members related to me according to the norms for interaction with someone in the particular category within which they placed me. While this categorization was beneficial in some cases (for example, being seen as a neighbor who was friendly with long-term residents and rented from a former president of the condominium was very helpful in doing fieldwork in my apartment building), in other cases it had some deleterious effects: In order to be an effective community researcher, I could not position myself as a disinterested observer. Because my legitimacy as a researcher was based on my legitimacy as a community resident, I had to construct myself as just that – a legitimate community resident. In Mt. Pleasant, community members are expected to have opinions about the goings-on in the neighborhood. So showing myself as a legitimate community member meant that I had to have opinions, and having opinions entailed positioning myself – and being positioned by others – in ways that distinctly influenced data collection and the shape of interviews that I conducted.

The idea of a sociolinguistic interview is that the researcher has a bunch of questions to start off with, but otherwise more or less tries to sit back and let the interlocutor talk and develop the conversation as they like. When I did interviews, however, I was asked as many questions as I posed – there was a much more equal distribution of the discursive labor, or the division of who asks and answers questions. There was also a fair amount of differentiation in the types of discourse data that I could collect among different community members. For example, people who saw me as having similar political leanings told many moral outrage stories about the way that others had acted in neighborhood controversies. People who saw me as having opposing political positions told me virtually no moral outrage stories. Instead, I got stories with lengthy explanations and justifications for political positions; such narratives were not told to me by people who aligned themselves politically with me.

“Where do you live?”

Not only residence in the neighborhood in general, but the particular location and circumstances of residence are important factors in

shaping neighborhood identity. Mt. Pleasant St., the neighborhood's commercial corridor, serves as somewhat of a dividing line between the richer and Whiter western part of the neighborhood, and the poorer and more multi-ethnic eastern part of the neighborhood. The majority of Mt. Pleasant's apartment buildings are on Mt. Pleasant St. and to the east, while the western part of the neighborhood sports townhouses and rowhouses. Rental property is also more prevalent on Mt. Pleasant St. and to the east. In the neighborhood, the owner-renter dichotomy has strong social meaning, although it is interpreted differently by different community members. Much of the social meaning of place of residence has to do with class and politics, two important characteristics of the local landscape. My class positioning was ambiguous – as a graduate student I was poor, but I had significant cultural capital and the potential for at least a middle-class salary in the future. My place of residence also gave off ambiguous signs; I lived on Mt. Pleasant St. in the poorer part of the neighborhood, but my building was a co-op/condo building (more about that in chapter 7) that was a microcosm of the neighborhood in terms of economic and ethno-racial makeup.

My status as a renter who lived on Mt. Pleasant St., coupled with my age (early thirties when I started fieldwork), formed a text for me which people interpreted in a number of ways; some viewed these characteristics in terms of my politics, assuming that I would have an anti-gentrification stance, that my relationship to the neighborhood was based on something more community-oriented than a concern for property values, and, because I lived on Mt. Pleasant St., that I was more “authentically” Mt. Pleasant. Others interpreted renting on Mt. Pleasant St. in terms of my dedication to the neighborhood – that, because I did not have an economic investment in the neighborhood, I was not committed to Mt. Pleasant and had no plans on staying. Some people also drew this interpretation from the fact that I was a researcher, assuming that once I finished my project, I would move to a fancier neighborhood. Alternately, some thought that because I lived on Mt. Pleasant St. I had no concern for “quality of life” issues that affected people west of Mt. Pleasant St. These various attributions are testament to the way that social beings imbue the details of everyday life with immense cultural meaning, a phenomenon we'll see much more of in the chapters to come.

“Where are you from?”

In addition to current place of residence, past connections with places also play a strong role in people’s perceptions of each other’s identity. An example of this can be seen at social gatherings, where the most frequent conversation-starter questions are “Where do you live?” and “Where are you from?” As I was asked these questions numerous times, I found that “Where are you from?” could mean many different things. When I answered that I had grown up in Massachusetts, people wanted to know what kind of town; I quickly learned that it was to my benefit that I’d come from a small city and not a suburb, giving me some insight into the ideological importance of the urban–suburban contrast in the neighborhood. But I also found that that answer did not always satisfy my interlocutors, as people frequently followed up my response with questions about where my *family* was from. So I similarly discovered that my mother’s being from Baltimore (a Maryland city about an hour away from DC) often worked in my favor, as it established a kind of historical local connection for me, as well as an urban connection. The urban–suburban theme sometimes found its way again into this line of questioning among people who knew Baltimore well and would ask if my mother grew up in Baltimore City (which she did) or Baltimore County (the suburbs).

So while “Where do you live?” gives an interlocutor information about whether someone lives in Mt. Pleasant and where in the neighborhood geography they’re located, “Where are you from?” can reveal whether or not the person is native to DC or the larger Washington area, as well as what their national or ethnic background is. One example of this is an interaction that occurred at a party given by a woman named Claudia in Columbia Heights, the neighborhood just to the east of Mt. Pleasant. On the southwest side of Mt. Pleasant is the neighborhood Adams Morgan. Although many people do not make a distinction between Adams Morgan and Mt. Pleasant (and, for that matter, parts of Columbia Heights), and the border between the three neighborhoods is very fuzzy, overall there is a common perception that Adams Morgan is more upscale than Mt. Pleasant. (However, the image of Adams Morgan as more upscale or gentrified than Mt. Pleasant does not bear out in the details of who lives in

the two neighborhoods. According to local realtors, the housing stock in Mt. Pleasant is primarily single-family homes, many of which were built as luxury houses at the turn of the 20th century. In Adams Morgan, the housing stock is mostly apartments, and the single-family houses there were built primarily after the First and Second World Wars as housing for working and middle-class families. While prices for comparable properties are higher in Adams Morgan, however, the overall amount of money invested in property is higher in Mt. Pleasant, because of the number of large houses. Thus, some local realtors have the view that Mt. Pleasant, with its wide assortment of large renovated old homes, is actually more gentrified than Adams Morgan.)

At a conversation at Claudia's party, her friend Miriam exploited the view that Adams Morgan is more upscale than Mt. Pleasant, as she tied person and place identity together by characterizing the people under discussion as certain kinds of people based on their neighborhood residence:

La Crème de la Crème

At Claudia's party, Miriam, Yadira, and I, all from Mt. Pleasant, were talking in the back yard with Aviva, who lived in Adams Morgan. Javier, a colleague of Claudia's, came outside and started talking with Miriam:

JAVIER: ¿Dónde viven?

Where do you_{pl} live?

MIRIAM: En Mt. Pleasant. Ay, perdón, **nosotros** vivimos en Mt. Pleasant, **ella**

*In Mt. Pleasant. Oh, excuse me, **we** live in Mt. Pleasant, **she***

*vive in Adams Morgan. **Ella** es la crème de la crème.*

Nosotros somos

*lives in Adams Morgan. **She's** the crème de la crème. **We're***

la crème de la merde.

the crème de la merde.

[laughter]

JAVIER: ¿Y de dónde son?

And where are you_p from?

MIRIAM: Yo soy de Puerto Rico, ella es de El Salvador, ella es judía de New York, ella es judía de Massachusetts.
I'm from Puerto Rico, she's from El Salvador, she's Jewish from New York, she's Jewish from Massachusetts.

Miriam's answer to Javier shows that "Where are you from?" is a question not just about geography, but also about ethnicity. It is enough for Miriam to say that she is from Puerto Rico and Yadira is from El Salvador, for this implies that they are Latina. However, Miriam deems it insufficient to answer Javier's question in the same way for Aviva and me, because simply telling him where we grew up would not supply any information about our particular ethnic background. In order to be maximally relevant, then, Miriam includes our ethnic identities in her answer. So this exchange points to the salience of ethnicity in placing people in the Mt. Pleasant landscape.

While my mother's place of origin contributed to my positioning in terms of local urban connections, talk of my father's place of origin was used (sometimes by me, sometimes by others) in the construction of my ethnic identity, as can be seen in the following example. The conversation in question, which started out as a discussion of old stereo speakers, occurred one night in my apartment after dinner at some friends'. The friends wanted to go to sleep, so those guests who wanted to continue the evening came to my apartment. The conversation shows the complexity of local musings on ethnicity. And perhaps these particular speakers' own ethnic backgrounds (Afro-Dominican, Jewish Honduran, Salvadoran-Mexican American) influence their awareness of such complexity.

FREDDY: What's wrong with them big speakers?
 GALEY: They don't work anymore. My father bought them when he was twenty-five.
 ERNESTO: Twenty-five. How old is he now?
 FREDDY: /???/old they look- They look like, back in the sixties.⁹
 GALEY: Sixty
 ERNESTO: Sixty
 FREDDY: Yeah, they look a lot like in the sixties.
 GALEY: They were good speakers, but they don't work anymore. So now they're just holding stuff.

ERNESTO: Pero [*but*], it's nice to have a:, something from the family.
From far away, from, from home.

GALEY: Yeah, yeah.

ERNESTO: From long ago.

FREDDY: But I was looking at the speakers because they do
look like something they would do in the sixties.

GALEY: They were like the first thing my father bought in the
United States.

ERNESTO: Oh yeah? He emigrate from Israel?

GALEY: Yeah.

ERNESTO: Really?

GALEY: Yeah.

FREDDY: Where you from?

ERNESTO: Do you speak um, Hebrew?

GALEY: A little.

ERNESTO: A little bit.

GALEY: My father's from Israel.

ERNESTO: My brother was there. He was in, como se llama [*what's
it called*], the big hill where the, uh, the, Masada.

GALEY: Masada.

ERNESTO: He was there.

FREDDY: I thought she was White, man. See I
thought she was, I thought she was White. You know? =

ERNESTO: Yeah. Uh-huh, I saw you a few times before, and I =

FREDDY: = And, and, she said she's from-

ERNESTO: = thought then you were a Gringa, you know? Pero, ésa,
ésa es la confusión, es lo que te digo, que [*But that, that's
the confusion, it's what I'm saying, that*] el color- You know
something, there is a lot of racism against Africans,
descending Africans, and African Americans, and African
Hondurans, and African Dominicans, and African
Cubans. And a lot, a lot of Africans, you know? Pero este-
[*but uh*], after all, a lot of Africans also have shown that =

FREDDY: Yeah, and now it's like, =

ERNESTO: = they are eh, igual to un blanco, igual to cualquier =

FREDDY: = a /picture/

ERNESTO: = raza, cualquier cabrón [*the same as / equal to Whites,
the same as / equal to whatever race, to whoever*], in many,
in many- many ways, man. Entonces, ya no hay [*So, there's
no longer*]- I think that there is no more reason to think
about, to fight against, what color or which color or what-
ever, si no [*if not*], against, el que tiene el poder, y cómo

se puede distribuir, entre [*the one who has the power, and how to distribute it, among*] the people who need it? You know? How many millions my friend over here he had to share with us, because we are from third world countries and we miss that money?

FREDDY: But I bet you one thing is that-

ERNESTO: And that if you don't give us that money, you gonna have five million El Salvadorians in your country, so you should share- why you don't share with us?

[. . .]

OSWALDO: But see what I was getting at, you know, about the Black – about the Black thing, is that this-

FREDDY: Who made that shit up?

OSWALDO: And not only that, it's like Victoria, I keep going back to Victoria – you know when you talk to Victoria, and you ask her, where you from? Well, you know, my family's from Guatemala. We're from Guatemala. And you know, we're Indian, we're Mayan. Okay? Right. Well then, Victoria, how did you come to talk English the way you talk English? Because, because I grew up with Blacks – alright? So when she says – when I ask her where she's from and she says <in Spanish accent: Guatemala>, that doesn't tell me about her, having lived in a part of DC where she grew up with Black- kids, and how she learned to talk English like Black kids talk English.

FREDDY: Yeah

OSWALDO: So you see what I'm sayin?

FREDDY: Yeah, and how she, grew up with Black kids, but she never grew up with Guatemalans.

OSWALDO: Exactly.

GALEY: Right, exactly.

FREDDY: And that's the confusing ^thing. And that's what we saying. See, you not White- you- **this** [pointing to white notebook paper] is white. You know what I'm sayin? But we call it White.

GALEY: But, do you think I'm White? Like if –

FREDDY: I thought so, I didn't know, I didn't know. You know, it's, this, this [color thing, that we all are,

ERNESTO: [Well if I- if

- I could, let me, let me tell you something–
- GALEY: So **now**, do you think I'm White? Or not.
- FREDDY: No, I don't think you're White. I don't think you're completely White. But you probably have some White in you.
- ERNESTO: Pero [*But*] let- Freddy, mira, /espere/ me [*look, wait*]– let me tell you something – si tu pusieras [*if you put*] two teeth of gold here, and you walk in Mt. Pleasant con otro– con trenzas y un vestido short, y unos huaraches, [*with other, with braids, and a short dress, and some sandals*], she will look Salvadorian,
- FREDDY: Yeah
- ERNESTO: ¿Sí? ¿O de Honduras? O de Costa Rica. O de Costa Rica. Yeah. Una chelita. Uh huh. [*Right? Or from Honduras, or Costa Rica. Yeah. a light-skinned girl.*] Éso es la onda. [*That's the thing.*] Really, que la onda– de– hay que– [*that the idea, that- we have to-*] we have to focus – quando hacemos idea, y ideología o whatever, nosotros tenemos que enfocar mas a dentro de el color. [*When we're forming ideas, and ideology or whatever, we have to focus beyond color.*]

I offer this excerpt here to give some insight into the way that the topic of race/ethnicity and color often crops up in casual conversation in Mt. Pleasant. The excerpt also shows how “Where are you from?” is often interpreted as a question about familial origins; this is clear both from my answer “My father’s from Israel” to Freddy’s question “Where are you from?” and Oswaldo’s voicing of Victoria’s answer “my family’s from Guatemala” to his posing of the same question.

What was interesting to me at the time of the interaction (which can be seen by the fact that I pushed the question) was how my attributed identity as White and Gringa became reclassified with the information that “my father’s from Israel.” At the time of the interaction I assumed that the reclassification was based on my being Jewish,¹⁰ but it is also possible that the reassignment here to “not (completely) White” and non-Gringa is based on what we might call inherited immigrant status. Indeed, in Mt. Pleasant it is not uncommon for people to use *White* as synonymous with *White American*; a German (white-skinned, blond-haired, blue-eyed) friend of mine with a German accent (and an American mother) related to me that

often people told her that they didn't consider her White, because she was not "from here," and also because she spoke Spanish. Similarly, while some people use the term *Gringa* to mean *American*, others use it to mean *White American*, or sometimes *White Westerner not of Latin American descent*. (For example, an Anglo-Australian might count as a *Gringa* for some people.)

Perhaps because I don't have stereotypical Jewish coloring or what is considered in the US to be a canonical Jewish name (i.e., an Eastern European or German Jewish name), people in Mt. Pleasant did not always assume that I was Jewish; they read my ethno-racial identity generally as White. This put me in an interesting position, since not infrequently interactions took a different turn when people found out that I was Jewish.¹¹ This was the case particularly for members of minority groups who were around my age (again highlighting the significance of age as a factor influencing social interaction).

What I noticed particularly was that some people used less monitored speech around me, making more ethnic-related in-group jokes in my presence, and more stereotyped and/or negative statements about members of their own ethnic group. In the case of Jews, in addition to this behavior, many were also intensely interested in how members of other minority groups related to me in interviews. While it was common for community members of all backgrounds to ask what kinds of things I was finding out in my research, Jewish interlocutors frequently asked me questions like, "What about other minorities you talked to? Did they have the typical stereotypes of us?" (But this was the case only with people who identified themselves on-record as Jewish. Others – people who for various reasons I assumed were Jewish – seemed to scrupulously avoid saying anything that would identify them as Jews, for example changing the subject abruptly.)

Another extremely important factor in how people related to me was my level of linguistic competence in Spanish. The dominant languages in the neighborhood are English and Spanish, therefore it would have been quite useful for me to speak Spanish while doing fieldwork. I took an intensive Spanish class at the beginning of my fieldwork and at the time had pretty good comprehension, but my speaking was a long way away from fluent. While speaking Spanish of course would have aided my data collection, the politics of Spanish and English led me to avoid such an endeavor except, at times, with monolingual Spanish speakers. However, bilingual native Spanish

speakers, especially in conversations with multiple participants, sometimes spoke Spanish to me and frequently code-switched¹² between English and Spanish in their conversations with me, even though I tended to reply only in English.

Obviously my linguistic skills were a major constraint in this research, as it made it hard to develop deeper relationships with monolingual Spanish speakers. (Of course the same holds true for speakers of other languages, particularly Vietnamese, but I focus on Spanish here because it plays such a large role in the public discourse of the neighborhood), and it made it more difficult to conduct interviews in Spanish (although I did conduct a few). On the other hand, however, my marginal competence in Spanish gave me insight into the politics of speaking non-fluent Spanish as a native English speaker, and the wide range of opinions among native Spanish speakers about this issue. Some people – particularly elderly community members – encouraged me to speak Spanish, telling me it was the only way to improve my speaking skills. These were the same people who were generally positively disposed towards native English speakers who spontaneously spoke Spanish to them, even if they had started a conversation in English. These community members evaluated such behavior as a solidarity move. As one woman said, “Oh, I like it, ah, la gringuita habla Español. There are many people here who know about our countries, so they tolerate – they know how we are.”

Others had quite negative reactions towards native English speakers not fluent in Spanish who spoke Spanish to them.¹³ Many with high competence in English explained that it was just annoying, since it was so much easier to hold a conversation in English. Others called it insulting, interpreting it as an implicit critique of their English. Some voiced resentment at having to play Spanish conversational partner for a free Spanish lesson. Another common explanation, particularly among US-identified native Spanish speakers (generally, people who grew up in the US or came to the US in childhood or their early teens), was that native English speakers speaking (non-fluent) Spanish were trying to be cool. This attributed “coolness move” in turn was described as exotifying a stereotypical Latino culture, simply the flip side of negative stereotyping. Given these dynamics, it seemed somehow more comfortable for me to avoid speaking Spanish, as it narrowed the ways in which community members interpreted me. This is not to say that an ethnographer should always go

for comfort, since there's a lot to learn by making yourself uncomfortable. But in the context of the politics of this neighborhood, I felt that, given my limited competence in Spanish, I would be able to build better relationships if I stuck to English.¹⁴

Linguistic Data

The data on which this book is based are written and spoken texts taken from a wide range of discourse settings and genres, as well as detailed fieldnotes of local speech events. Spoken data include meetings of neighborhood civic organizations and the local business association; casual conversations at parties and other social gatherings such as dinner or “hanging out” on streets, stoops, or front porches; get-togethers for particular interest groups such as a Mennonite women’s group or a monthly potluck among a group of friends with ties to local Latino community-based organizations; 60 ethnographic interviews; and artistic performances. The members of the civic organizations were by and large White, college-educated (with many holding graduate degrees) homeowners who tended to live west of Mt. Pleasant St., the neighborhood’s main commercial corridor. The business association membership was multi-ethnic (White, Black, Latino from a number of different countries, Pakistani, Korean, Iranian). Participants in the casual conversations reflected the demographics of those in the interview data: Most belonged to the neighborhood’s three major ethnic groups (Latino, White, and African American). They ranged in age from 7 to 72, although most were in their thirties and forties. Some had lived in Mt. Pleasant all their lives, while others had been there for as little as two years. Most had been in the neighborhood for at least a decade. There were an equal number of owners and renters (with some people renting apartments by themselves or with their families, and others renting rooms in group houses with unrelated housemates).

The written part of the corpus consists of a grant proposal; messages posted to the Mt. Pleasant community email list; and articles, flyers, and other literature put out by community-based organizations, individuals, and the local press about events in the neighborhood. This written data is an important companion to the spoken data of

the study. Much of the written data, such as the grant proposal analyzed in chapter 4, emerged as a result of discussions carried on in the spheres where spoken data was recorded. The grant proposal and other data were written to be put to argumentative and persuasive uses, and in this capacity they offer a distillation and crystallization of particular ideologies and attitudes circulating in the community. They also serve as an enduring record of which views won out over others in the spheres from which the written data emerged and in which the texts were being read and used for rhetorical purposes.

A Note to the Reader: The Structure of the Book

In keeping with the overall structure of the *New Directions* series, this book is divided into two parts – Part I, the ethnography proper, and Part II, which provides an intellectual/scholarly context and background to the ethnography. An addendum also appears at the back. There are a number of ways to approach reading this book. If you want to jump right into the story and analysis, then you can continue reading the rest of Part I. If you want to know more about the terminology I'm using and why I've chosen the terms I have, you might want to turn to the book's addendum, *Defining Terms*. Many of the terms that I use in this ethnography have multiple and/or contested meanings. The addendum therefore lays out how I distinguish between *community* and *neighborhood*, or why I use certain ethnic or racial terms and not others (or why I use the terms *ethnoracial* or *ethnic* rather than *racial*), and what I mean by *space*, *place*, and *public discourse*.

If you'd like to get oriented to the theoretical frameworks that undergird the ethnography you can turn to Part II, which consists of chapters 8 and 9. As an ethnographer who lived in the neighborhood I studied before I started the research, and as someone who believes in the fieldwork principle that the knowledge an ethnographer gains is directly connected to their own social positioning in the neighborhood, in Part I of the book I've tried to be explicit about my own position in this neighborhood, and to narrate events in a way that shows my status as a participant in those events. In Part II I set out to do the same thing in terms of the theoretical

frameworks that I'm bringing to this analysis of neighborhood life; I discuss those frameworks by explaining how I became interested in them – what aspects of my disciplinary training and, later, of what I was finding out in my fieldwork, led me to investigate the various theories that I use here.

My training is in discourse analysis, a field that has developed out of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. When I started getting interested in the politics of urban identity and how urban-ites use language in political struggles, I turned to research in urban anthropology. I quickly realized that many of the struggles that were going on in the neighborhood were struggles over space – over access to space and over who got to define what kind of place a given space was or should be. I wanted to analyze the processes of place-making, and theories from cultural geography helped me do this.

Because this is an interdisciplinary project, I imagine that few readers will have a background in all the disciplines that have influenced my research. Part II is meant to introduce the various theories that I'm drawing from to a range of audiences. In chapter 8 I explain how I became interested in community-based fieldwork and the notion that, somewhat simplistically stated, language shapes reality. I then discuss current sociolinguistic/linguistic anthropological theory on discourse. This part might be particularly useful for non-discourse analysts, who often have a somewhat different understanding of what constitutes discourse analysis. Chapter 9 is a discussion of theories and research on place identity from sociolinguistics/linguistic anthropology, urban anthropology, and cultural geography.

I was trained in discourse analysis in a linguistics department, whereas my interest in urban anthropology and cultural geography developed out of conducting research in Mt. Pleasant, which means that my orientation to the former fields differs from my orientation to the latter. What I have endeavored to do in discussing urban anthropology and cultural geography is to give an account of the major theoretical frameworks and scholars in these latter fields who have influenced my thinking about how we construct identities for the places we live, work, struggle, and play in.¹⁵

Discussion of theory is not limited to Part II, however. Much of the analysis in the ethnography chapters uses somewhat technical sociolinguistic theories. So that the analyses will make sense to readers without a background in this area, I provide explanations of the

theories I am using at the point where they are relevant within each chapter. The difference between these explanations and the discussions in Part II is that Part II is concerned with a more general description of past research that bears on the current study, while the explanations within the ethnography itself (Part I) provide the details of particular theories so that readers will understand the specifics of how I'm applying these theories to what people in Mt. Pleasant have said or written about life in the neighborhood.

I also want to make a brief note about the writing style I'm using. My goal in writing this book is to make ethnography and theory engaging and accessible to a wide variety of readers. Part of that approach means writing in a less formal style than I would use for, say, an article in an academic journal. And part of that style includes choices such as using "they" and its associated forms as a third person singular pronoun (in order not to invoke gender where it is not relevant), structuring a sentence with a pronoun at the end (in order to avoid a more convoluted construction), or splitting an infinitive (for aesthetic purposes). Singular *they* has been widespread in English since at least the early 16th century, and its use mirrors the similar shift of the pronoun *you* from an exclusively plural pronoun to a pronoun that represents the second person in both singular and plural cases (making *thou*, which originally marked second person singular, obsolete). The rules against putting a preposition at the end of a sentence or splitting an infinitive are arbitrary constraints dreamed up by 18th-century pundits who wanted to make English more like Latin. This book aims to bring to a wider audience an understanding of how language works, and writing against prescriptivist conventions is a way to promote a wider acceptance of sometimes-stigmatized but perfectly grammatical and instrumentally and aesthetically useful forms of English.

Topics in the Ethnography: What's in the Rest of Part I

In order to understand the world which Mt. Pleasantites both create and live in, it is important to know the "lay of the land," both literally and metaphorically. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive

history of the neighborhood within the context of the development of the District of Columbia, as well as a discussion of the neighborhood's current physical and social landscape. It focuses on the contrast between Washington as a federal city and DC as a local city; demographic shifts and tensions that went hand-in-hand with desegregation, Northern migration, immigration reform, suburbanization, war in Central America, and gentrification. The chapter also discusses civic activism in the neighborhood and city.

Chapter 3 investigates how community members draw contrasts between the categories *City* and *Suburb*, and to a lesser extent between Mt. Pleasant and other DC neighborhoods. In their talk, locals construe the city as a place of heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, economics, and architecture, as well as a dense, disorderly, dirty, and dangerous place. In contrast, they construct the suburbs as homogeneous ethnically, economically, and architecturally, and as orderly and safe, but bland. City and suburb are also opposed to each other in terms of gendered identity – in local discourse cities are constructed as masculine spaces, while suburbs are feminized. This chapter traces the roots of these contrasts from the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe, which led to new conceptions of the private and public sphere, the development of suburbia, and the limitations of women's presence on city streets. This delineation of gendered space leads to a local discourse of fear in which suburban people are constructed as fearful of public spaces in the city, whereas city people are talked about as street-smart and fearless. An analysis of messages posted to the Mt. Pleasant email listserv shows how community members use this system of contrasts to construct a moral geography that disparages the suburbs and delegitimizes some neighborhood residents' claims to neighborhood membership by characterizing them as suburban people.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on examples of public discourse about place, in order to see how community members across the local political spectrum use similar themes to construct an identity for the neighborhood, while centralizing and marginalizing different groups of people in relation to legitimate community membership. The data in these chapters shares what we can call a *discursive arena*: Chapter 4 examines a grant for public toilets, while Chapter 5 analyzes a play by a local performance artist. The grant proposal was submitted to the same funder that funded the play. Thus, through these two media,

the contestation of place is brought into an arena with material implications – which vision of place wins out in convincing funders what kinds of projects should be financially supported in the neighborhood.

More specifically, chapter 4 – the analysis of a grant proposal for public toilets – examines themes of filth, geographic distancing, ethnicity, and behavior on Mt. Pleasant St. Through the use of a number of different linguistic structures, the writers of this proposal (not necessarily consciously) align Latino men with foreign and rural places, with filth, and with inappropriate behavior (urinating and making comments to women) on the street. These alignments peripheralize Latino men in the moral geography of the neighborhood. At the same time, through these same strategies the writers oppose other community members (among which they count themselves) to the above themes. Instead, they align themselves with urban environments, and with responsible and appropriate behavior vis-à-vis the built environment. These alignments and oppositions construct them as core community members.

Chapter 5, an analysis of two scenes from a play performed by a local Latino performance artist, shows how a speaker can use the same themes discussed above to marginalize a different set of people. In a section of the play on fear, the author characterizes the neighborhood as a place in which crime, men commenting to women on the street, and danger are inherent features of the neighborhood. This writer uses the same linguistic forms and themes as the grantwriters in chapter 4, but he uses them to position a White woman – and by extension Whites in general – on the margins of the neighborhood's moral geography. In contrast, the writer aligns the Latino narrator to what's cast as the inherent characteristics of the neighborhood. This constructs the Latino narrator – and by extension Latinos in general – as a core community member. Similarly, in a section about joy, the writer uses the same themes of ethnicity, behavior on the street, and geographic distancing to construct a Latina woman who takes an aggressive stance in her interactions in public space as a core community member who finds joy in public interaction and embodies the neighborhood's character.

Whereas ethnicity plays a central role in the texts analyzed in chapters 3, 4, and 5, chapter 6 examines a model of community construction which de-emphasizes ethnic boundaries and ethnic tensions.

The data in this chapter consists of stories about how a multi-ethnic group of tenants who formed a co-op¹⁶ association and won ownership of their formerly decrepit apartment building. As a kind of “mini-Mt. Pleasant,” the co-op and the co-op stories provide a smaller stage upon which to view the interaction of place and person identities in Mt. Pleasant. In these stories, co-op members use a discourse of family to construct a social structure which, rather than separating the members along ethnic lines, links people together through actual and fictive kinship ties. This family discourse, in bringing with it ideologies about the roles and responsibilities of different types of family members (e.g., mothers, adult sons), also served as an effective means of housing organizing. The narratives of the co-op members promote a view of urban fearlessness which differs greatly from that seen in the public discourse analyzed in previous chapters; co-op members connect an orientation of fearlessness to feminized roles of being a good mother and caretaker, and construe fearlessness as a position that is needed in order to confront (rather than valorize) crime and danger in order to get rid of it and make the neighborhood safer.

At the same time that co-op members de-emphasize (without ignoring) ethnic differences in their stories, centralization and marginalization of community members occur in other ways. The co-op members set up a system of community values that are linked to influences of the physical environment of the building at the time of the struggle for ownership. Through strategies of contrast and reference, co-op members align themselves to the building value system, and oppose new, wealthier residents to the values the co-op members have set up as integral to the building community. Thus, class becomes an important component in the construction of (centralized) self and (marginalized) other identities.

Chapter 7, the epilogue, brings us up to the present, exploring the changes that have occurred in the period between the speed-up of gentrification and the height of the real estate boom in 2004 and 2005. Rather than focusing on analysis, this chapter presents the stories of Mt. Pleasant residents, in order to show multiple ways that community members have dealt with the changes. It also gives insight into what community members would like a larger audience to know about their neighborhood.

As messages from neighborhood listservs find their way into metro section stories in the *Washington Post*¹⁷ and city council members and

beat police make comments like “Zero-tolerance policing is what people want in this neighborhood, don’t you read the website bulletin boards?”, I hope to show in the following chapters how the discourses of the mid- to late 1990s have played a role in the development of the neighborhood in light of what continues to be massive upheaval, and what contributions discourse analytic work can make to urban planning and policy issues.

Notes

- 1 Immigration and Naturalization Service
- 2 Briefly put, gentrification is the “upscaling” of a neighborhood. It is a process whereby poor neighborhoods with well-built but generally rundown housing stock gain new, comparatively more well off residents. This results in individual and commercial housing rehabilitation and investment, which drives up real estate prices and displaces the original, poorer, residents who cannot afford increased rent or property taxes. Gentrification prototypically occurs in central city neighborhoods, although this is not always the case. (For other definitions of gentrification, see David Ley (2003:2527) and Robert A. Beauregard (1989:1).)
- 3 Schiffrin (1994)
- 4 In Mt. Pleasant people tend to use *ethnicity* and *race* interchangeably and in ways that seem to have more to do with shared group identity and peoplehood. Therefore, I choose to use the term *ethnic/ethnic* or sometimes *ethnoracial*. For a fuller discussion of these terms in local discourse, see the book’s addendum, *Defining Terms*.
- 5 Williams (1988:1)
- 6 In his article *Objectivity and Commitment in Linguistic Science* (1982), Labov is talking more specifically about using the particular *linguistic* knowledge gained from research to benefit a community. However, not all researchers necessarily limit the means of contributing to applying linguistic knowledge. For a discussion of ethics in linguistic anthropological work, see Wolfram (1993) and Cameron et al. (1992).
- 7 See Nessa Wolfson (1976) and Charles Briggs (1986).
- 8 Hamilton (1996:65–66). Amy Shuman (1992) makes a similar point. For more on intertextuality, see Bauman (2004).
- 9 Transcription key:
 - . falling intonation and brief pause
 - , level or fall-rise intonation and brief pause

..	slightly longer pause
. . .	longer pause
-	cut-off word, false start
,	fall-rise intonation
?	utterance-final rising intonation
“quote”	“quoting” intonation
^	pitch rise on syllable
/???/	unintelligible
/word/	author’s guess of difficult-to-interpret word
:	lengthened vowel
<i>italic</i>	English translation
bold	emphatic stress
<loud>	stretch of discourse said in a certain way: loud, with Spanish accent, etc.
<u>underline</u>	draws attention to a particular feature under analysis
[brackets]	author’s comments or additions for clarity, or non-verbal sounds
[. . .]	ellipsed talk
=	turn continues on speaker’s next line
indented line	Second speaker starts talking during first speaker’s turn, at the point above the beginning of the indentation
[	overlapping talk that comes at a page break

- 10 One reason I interpreted it this way was because, when people found out my father was Israeli, they often asked me, “Is your mother Jewish, too?”
- 11 While some people seemed to consider Jewishness as a subcategory of Whiteness, others seemed to consider it a distinct category.
- 12 Codeswitching is the process whereby interlocutors interweave multiple languages within the same conversational turn and often within a sentence. Ernesto’s speech in the previous excerpt is a good example.
- 13 While these attitudes were generally applied regardless of native English speakers’ ethnic background, some native Spanish speakers made different evaluations for native English speakers who were Latino. Sometimes people were more accommodating, seeing native English speaking Latinos’ use of Spanish as a legitimate claim to identity or as something that was important for them to learn. However, others were more critical of Latino native English speakers, finding the move to speak Spanish an illegitimate claim to identity if the people in question had limited competence.
- 14 Ideally I would have liked to have been fluent in both Spanish and Vietnamese before starting fieldwork, but budget and time constraints did not allow this.

- 15 Readers interested in a more comprehensive discussion of place identity in urban anthropology and cultural geography might want to read Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga's edited volume, *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture* (2003) or Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000).
- 16 A co-op, short for cooperative, is an association that owns real estate, usually an apartment building. Rather than owning a specific, individual unit, as is the case in a condominium, members of co-ops own shares in their buildings.
- 17 See for example Schwartzman (2005).