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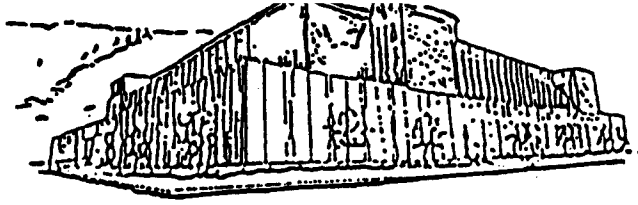
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MAKING MISSOULA HOME:
VOICED REPRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN CREATING
A SENSE OF PLACE

by

Jennifer P. DeBerry

B.S. Applied Cultural Studies. Northern Kentucky University 1996

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

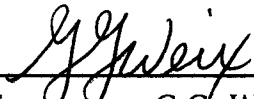
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Master of Arts

The University of Montana

2000

Approved by



Chairperson, G.G. Weix



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Making Missoula Home: Voiced Representations and Participation in Creating a Sense of Place. (70 pp.)

G.G. Weix 

This thesis is a contribution to the field of anthropology concerned with giving priority to the meaning and understanding of place--in particular Missoula, Montana. Anthropological studies that give priority to the meaning and understanding of place are a relatively recent pursuit (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Feld and Basso 1996). These studies question how individuals shape the location in which they live to make them places embedded with meaning.

I interviewed twenty people who live in Missoula, Montana. Their representation of their experiences and practices became a way for me to investigate a 'sense of place' theoretically and ethnographically. From listening closely to people's words I discovered a triangular relationship between people, social amenities and landscape. Despite bleak statistics on cost of living, unemployment rates, and wage levels, this triangular model of relationship elaborates Missoula as a good place to live and gives it meaning. From this I also discovered that sense of place was created and practiced by those who I interviewed.

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CHAPTER ONE
Introduction to the Meanings
and Understandings of Place

A place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, lived in it, known it, died in it-- have both experienced and shaped it, as individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities, over more than one generation.

Stegner 1992:201

Anthropological studies that give priority to the meaning and understanding of place are a relatively recent pursuit (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Feld and Basso 1996). These studies question how individuals shape the location in which they live to make them places embedded with meaning. Major contributions in literature concerning place began in 1990, marked by the publication of David Harvey's book on postmodernity (Harvey 1990). Prior to this time Michel de Certeau's The Practice of Everyday Life was considered the dominant theoretical work in the field. Informed by this wider body of literature, this thesis is a contribution to the field of anthropology concerned with giving priority to the meaning and understanding of place.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the importance of Missoula, Montana as a place--with its theoretical implications--to the people who live there. My personal experience living in Missoula and my own observations first brought this location to my attention. What is it about Missoula that makes people like it so much? What causes so many college-educated young people to forgo lucrative jobs in other cities to live in Missoula on minimum wage? With these questions in mind I began my research on the people who live in Missoula, Montana. Their representation of their experiences and practices became a way for me to investigate a 'sense of place' theoretically and ethnographically.

Traditionally, anthropologists' understanding of place has been as a "...setting for action, the stage on which new things happen," (Rodman 1992:

641). Rodman calls for a broader understanding of place, one that is not limited to location as a “setting for action”. Rather, one that examines the construction of place as it represents the temporary grounding of ideas (1992:652). To do this Rodman states anthropologist must reunify ‘sense of place’ or attachment to place with the spatial distribution of socioeconomic activity and the setting in which social activity occurs (1992:641). To see how people construct their own places anthropologist must join ‘multilocality’--multiple meanings exist for a single place--and ‘multivocality’--multiple narratives exist for a single place. These ideas--‘multilocality’ and ‘multivocality’--are often overlapping or competing narratives of how “different actors construct, contest, and ground experience in place.” (ibid)

Feld and Basso in the introduction to Senses of Place challenge their contributors. They wanted articles that examined cultural processes and practices “through which places are rendered meaningful-through which...places are actively sensed.”(1996:7) They also asked for “...essays that described how specific expressive practices and performances imbued acts, events, and objects with significance, thus illuminating different ways in which place is voiced and experienced” (1996:8).

Michel de Certeau also examines the concept of place. A place is “...the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” (1984:117). He differentiates this concept from the concept of space. Space, on the other hand, is fluid and does not imply stability. Space is the product of movement. de Certeau compares the relationship between place and space to that of the text and the reader, the street and the walker. “In short, space is a practiced place.”(ibid)

In this thesis, the theoretical implications of philosophical debates about space (and time) will not be examined. I focus instead on a ‘sense of place’ grounded in the social practices of individuals. Although, Michel de Certeau distinguishes space as being where the activity occurs and place as a

set and formal location, I am going to conflate both space and place. I use the term place to describe where the activity is occurring. I do this because it is more similar with the writings of other authors on the subject.

The method by which I examine the social practices of individuals is by listening to how they talk about particular places. Bruner supports this method. He states that narrative:

operates not simply in the realm of the mind, as ideas; to be convincing they also must have a base in experience or social practice. (139-158)

A second way to examine the social practices of individuals is by observing them. Feld and Basso support this method and call for examinations of practices.

Throughout this thesis I rely primarily on narratives of what some people of Missoula say about this place. I draw upon the stories of twenty individuals to examine practices and activities that give Missoula meaning. (For a detailed description of these individuals go to Appendix One.) I examine social practices based on representations rather than my personal observations. For example, I listened to peoples narrative of participation in the Farmers' Market rather than watching people participate in the Farmers' Market. From listening closely to people's words I discovered a triangular relationship between people, social amenities, and landscape. This model of relationship elaborates Missoula as a good place to live and gives it meaning.

Method

My research project developed in three phases. The first phase consisted of ten interviews for a course in research methods, in the Spring of 1998. These ten interviews were informal and mostly involved questioning friends of mine. My original topic was to compare the attitudes of people who consider themselves Montanans with those who consider themselves outsiders, in terms of their relationship to Missoula and Montana in general. I was also interested in how these two groups of people felt about each other. Some of

the questions I asked during these interviews addressed: where the participants came from, why they came here and what is it like to live in Missoula.

The original research question allowed people to define whether or not they considered themselves Montanans, regardless of where they were born. I then used their definition as one of my primary categories. This strategy also allowed an examination of how Montanans define themselves. However, this open ended approach made the categorization of participants confusing and subjective. For example, everyone I talked to who was born in Montana called themselves a Montanan, whereas half of the people not born here also called themselves Montanans. Both natives and newcomers were able to identify with what it means to be a Montanan.

To avoid this confusion, I employed a more objective distinction in describing participants' origins: whether or not they were born here, instead of whether or not they considered themselves a Montanan. In the second phase of my research, when I conducted twenty in-depth interviews, I first determined birthplace and then asked them if they considered themselves a Montanan. This research design allowed me to explore the relationship between natives, newcomers and their identification with Montana.

Of the first ten interviews, only two were taped. These were transcribed to the best of my ability, for a written record. The other eight interviews were also written down as soon after the interview as possible, using my notes as guidelines. In addition to interviewing during this phase, I also began reading sources on insider/outsider group theory, theory about place, and literature and studies specifically about Montana (Ferrante 1995; Kemmis 1990; Simmel 1971; Kittredge 1996; Gallagher 1993).

At the time of my proposal defense, I determined my original question was too broad. I had two choices: to study people in a more specific geographical location (possibly Ravalli County) to ask how increased numbers

of people moving into the area changed perceptions of distinctions between “locals” and “outsiders”, or to study how people ‘create a sense of place’ through social practices in Missoula. It was tempting to stay with the former project since at that time I felt that I had more of an theoretical understanding of insider and outsider differences. However, I chose the latter question since it was closer to my original interests.

Exploring how people create a sense of place in Missoula, Montana, allowed me to focus on the practices that make the city meaningful. I rearranged my original list of questions and added new questions to learn what it is like to live in Missoula.

Phase two began in summer 1998. The majority of my fieldwork included twenty informal, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix Two for an example of an interview) conducted over two months. In addition to the informal, semi-structured interviews, I asked twelve people to fill out a questionnaire consisting of the same questions asked during the interviews.

I used the method of ‘judgmental sampling’ to select people that I interviewed. That is, the people that I interviewed were a mixture of my acquaintances, the people they recommended and community figures. While this method of picking interviewees provides no statistical representation it is representative in another sense. I sought out people who I thought might have different things to say. As a result it provided a local mapping with diverse narratives.

The eleven women and nine men I interviewed were between the ages of twenty-one and seventy. Three were born and raised in Missoula, while four were born and raised in other parts of Montana. In addition, two individuals were born outside of the state, but were raised in Montana. The remaining eleven were from California(3), New York(2), Minnesota(1), Michigan(12), Texas(1) and Pennsylvania(2). Two people were unemployed and the remainder worked in jobs that ranged from mechanics to higher

academia (professors) at the university. For a detailed description and a list of pseudonyms of all the individuals I interviewed, turn to Appendix One.

My interviews took two months to complete, beginning on May 29, 1998, and concluding on July, 14 1998. All interviews were recorded. I completed transcribing the taped discourse on July 31, 1998.

At times I made a conscious effort to talk to people whom I thought might not like Missoula or their lives here because of undesirable employment situations. However, most people professed to enjoy living here very much despite their dislikes of the place. In Chapter Three, I concentrate on their responses, observations and contradictory statements about life in Missoula.

Generally, the interviews went smoothly and people spoke at length about their relationship to Missoula. I always began the interview with the question, What is it like to live in Missoula? After that, I only used my questions as an outline (see Appendix Two for the list of questions). Frequently, multiple questions were answered in a single monologue. The interviews were between fifteen and thirty minutes long. Writing and talking about Missoula and Montana as places is very popular. I found this to be true in my interviews as well. They often expressed feelings about Missoula that I shared.

I was able to give seven of the respondents a copy of the questions before we did the interviews. I either did this by mail or fax. This was helpful in several ways. For example, one respondent wrote short answers to each question to refresh his memory as to what first came to mind after reading the questions. Another respondent used one of my questions in her radio commentary.

Before I move on to the third phase of research it is important to note that as a result of my selective sampling, there is a limitation in my study of the meaning and understanding of place in Missoula. This is because I discovered there are at least three other types of people living in Missoula that

if interviewed could significantly expanded themes voiced by the people of Missoula and the ways in which people voice their practice of place in Missoula. These three types of people are those who experience extreme levels of poverty, those who are being displaced because of Missoula's shift from an industry economy to a service economy, and those who feel trapped in Missoula due to the economy.

The third phase of my research was "putting it all together"--the writing. My original intent was to write during September and October 1998 at my new home in Los Angeles. However, it became clear to me that to write a thesis about the meaning of place in Missoula, Montana I had to be in that place. Thus, in mid October I returned and wrote until November 20th. During this period I completed the majority of the writing. The writing process was continually inspired and rejuvenated by living among Missoula's residents and walking its streets. The writing phase was finished completely on May 29, 2000. Annick Smith writes: "No two days are the same, no season returns, and I am never bored with the stories I find in this land. I live in my city" (1995:3) Fred Haefele writes:

"And those mountains--lumpish and unheroic, the ones that block the morning sun--those mountains come alive in the evening, when they seem to absorb the twilight, to grow and shift into great mysteries shapes, like the pyramids, but older."(2000:11)

Like these writers Montana inspired me to write about "this land". However, unlike their stories which are based on personal experiences, mine moves beyond my experience and includes others' words, feelings and experiences. Like other anthropologists, I examine the meaning of place.

Geographers, Economists, Sociologists

Anthropologists aren't the first of the social scientists to delve into the meaning of place. Geographers study natural features of the earth and its climate, products *and* inhabitants. According to Margaret Rodman, during the 1950s and 1960s geographers who were once interested in region and place

abandoned such inquires in an attempt to make their discipline more scientific (Rodman 1992:641). Now, however, interest has been rekindled. Geographers are interested in place and how it contributes to the human experience (ibid). Their interest in how places produce meaning and how meaning can be grounded in place, states Rodman, has taken little hold of anthropologists.

Even though anthropologists may be behind the other social sciences in their emphasis on the theoretical implication of place, we are also at a distinct advantage. Rodman states "...while this [tendency to privilege verbal communication] has been common in anthropology, it has been rare in geography until recently. Lack of attention to speech now troubles geographers interested in narrative" (1992:642). In Chapter Two, I will be drawing on geographer Christiane von Reichert's work. She has conducted statistical reports on population dynamics and migration trends in Montana. She states that natural amenities and better quality of life affects migration. Her studies show that people are moving to amenity rich areas of Western and Southwestern Montana. von Reichert mentions her work is limited, however, in that it does not reveal what the population she studied had to say about moving to Montana.

Economist have also recently delved into issues of place. Thomas Power examines how preferences for various residential environments affects local economy. Preferences determine economic activity due to local economies responding to particular preferences. Preferences are diverse. Factors include "the diversity and sophistication of the commercial environments, the natural environment, including climate, landscape, water and air quality, and recreational opportunities, and the social environment" (1996:17).

The economy is thought to be part of human social organization that focuses on scarcity and the satisfaction of needs and desires. However, Thomas Power states that the 'folk' economy has come to focus on commercial activity

that satisfy material needs and desires. For many reasons he believes the focus on commercial activity needs to be reworked. One, which is relevant to this study is that in the conventional notions of economy, there is no consideration of the importance of natural amenities. Natural amenities, as just mentioned are a factor in the preferences of where people chose to live.

If using the conventional notion of the economy than the value of a high amenity area that is experiencing low wages and high unemployment, is considered low and the location is interpreted as economically stagnate. However, this is not the case, states Power. In fact, it is “a measure of the value residents place on the services they receive from the natural or social environment” (1996:21). Although stated differently, this is similar to Bourdieu’s symbolic capital. Bourdieu’s symbolic capital emphasizes the value of things, such as respect and honor, or natural amenities, not usually associated with a monetary value (1977:72-87). Power acknowledges that there is a value of natural amenities that cannot be explained in traditional economic views. I examine this idea further in Chapter Four when answering the query of why people decide to live in Missoula.

Location

Montana has been introduced to the rest of the world in many ways. It has been featured as a “hot bed of kooks” (Helena–Associated Press 1998) in the national news in response to the Freeman and the Una-bomber. John Updike called Missoula the “Paris of the 1990’s” referring to its growing artistic and literary community. This year I came upon a national article by Fred Haeefele describing Missoula as a natural paradise. He writes: “Aurora in the night sky, wilderness at your doorstep, and those great green rivers with their rushing dreams of flood.” (2000:11) Such articles have introduced Missoula and Montana to the rest of the world as having natural beauty and many outdoor adventures like fishing, hunting, hiking and skiing.

The ever-growing popularity of Montana becomes evident while one

lives here. Organizations like the Center for the Rocky Mountain West host lectures on topics concerning this region. The Chamber of Commerce's new slogan that can be seen in store windows around town is "We like it here, Missoula". Jimmy Buffet even uses Missoula as a setting in one of his songs. Store window signs, musical events and academic speakers concerning Montana all give testimony to the growing numbers of people thinking, talking and even singing about what this place means to them and how it makes them feel.

Two contradicting social forces emerged as I began to study Missoula: the myth of Montana that draws outsiders to its stunning natural beauty and relaxed paced of living, and the force of poverty (in terms of low wages compared to high cost of living) that infiltrates everyday life.

People in Missoula tend to grant these forces unequal attention. They talk mystically about the rivers and the mountains. But, their remarks would be brief regarding how they couldn't afford to buy a home and that they didn't want their family living in an apartment any more. I would talk to people about what it was like to live in Missoula and they would be hard pressed to tell me what they didn't like about it. But, in later conversations, the same person would complain about how difficult it was for him and other children to grow up in rural parts of Montana due to poverty levels and domestic violence. Despite their inconsistencies, people in my study were often able to resolve those contradictory social forces. I wanted to find out why.

Another reason I thought Missoula was an important place to study was the way people responded to my thesis. The residents of Missoula had a lot to say about it and that gave me the impression that their city meant a great deal to them.

It is important to note that the majority of the people whom I spoke to have jobs and all of them have homes to live in. This thesis does not explore how people who are homeless or experiencing profound levels of poverty feel

about living in Missoula.

Nevertheless, the economy is central in the narrative of those who I interviewed. Thus, in Chapter Two I will give the reader a feeling for Missoula and explain the socio-economic situation. Chapter Three is the narratives. Here I will let my informants speak for themselves about what it is like for them to live here—how they feel about Missoula and its people. In Chapter Four I place Missoula into a larger theoretical context about making place.

CHAPTER TWO

Characteristics of Missoula

For any sense of place, the pivotal question is not where it comes from, or even how it gets formed, but what, so to speak, it is made with. Like a good pot of stew or a complex musical chord, the character of the thing emerges from the qualities of its ingredients. And while describing that character may prove troublesome indeed (always, it seems, there is something ineffable about it), the elements that compose it can be selectively sampled and separately assessed.

Basso 1996:84

In this chapter I select five “ingredients”—economic well-being, population changes, landscape, recreational opportunities, and social amenities—that people use to construct sense of place in Missoula. Basso asserts that like the ingredients of a stew, the elements which make sense of place can be independently sampled and assessed. In this chapter, I present these elements from a statistical and objective view.

The first theme I examine is the local economic well-being of Missoula. Statistics characterizing income levels and housing costs indicate some of the difficulties people living in Missoula face. However, when considering overall local economic well-being social and natural amenities must be included (Power 1996:81). Indeed, many residents of Missoula point to landscape, recreational opportunities, and social environment as their favorite aspects of living in Missoula.

Despite Missoula’s bleak statistics on income levels, unemployment rates, and cost of living its population is still growing. I assert this is because of the importance of people establishing a sense of place through connection with people, social environment and landscape. Thus, in the second section of this chapter I will consider Missoula’s landscape, recreational opportunities, and social environment. Finally, I will examine Missoula’s population growth and the affect it has had on perceptions of newcomers and how that is tied to people’s attitudes toward place.

Local Economic Well-Being

Like other residents, I enjoyed living in Missoula. However, conflicting factors existed. For example, consider the following. A conversation with a relative or friend “back east” who hasn’t heard from me for awhile usually begins: ‘So, what is it like to live in Missoula?’ For a second I think to myself...‘Great! But wait. Maybe I should just mention that it would be nearly impossible for me to stay here after I’m done with school? No, the reasons why I love it are so much more important...’ Then I say, ‘Missoula is a great place to live because it’s not so hectic. Ten minutes I’m out of the city and I feel like I’m in the middle of nowhere. But on the other hand there is a lot to do. Cultural events, music, fun bars.’ Inevitably, they then ask if I plan on staying here after I graduate. ‘No, I probably won’t stay after I’m done with school because there are very few jobs, and the ones that they do have are very competitive.’

This conversation demonstrates a very familiar situation that is occurring in Missoula. Several of the people I spoke to expressed the same type of concern. Despite Missoula’s social amenities and access to recreational opportunities, its economic situation makes it difficult for some to stay. However, there are many who decide to stay regardless of this fact.

Missoula’s economy is an important factor in many people’s narrative sketch about place. It has many stores, bars, and services that most people would agree are uncommon compared to other cities in Montana. Over the past twenty years in Missoula County, there has been a large increase in the retail and service industries. This indicates that the economic base has shifted away from extractive industries to service industries. In fact, retail and service industries, between 1980 and 1990, accounted for almost 90 percent of the new jobs (Anonymous 1998:1).

Furthermore, it is projected that retail trade and services will represent 68 percent of the increase for the 1990 to 2010 period (Polzin 1997: 12). These

new jobs, such as positions at WalMart or Target stores, tend to pay minimum wage. These jobs will always be available to the citizens of Missoula, but generally speaking do not offer an opportunity for advancement. Paul Miller addressed the issue of welfare reform at the annual statewide Hunger and Homelessness Conference in Helena in 1998. He stated that, in addition to the shortage of jobs, new businesses are not working to establish long-term relationships with their employees (Missoulia 1998).

Low wages and high unemployment are common concerns of the people I interviewed. In some instances, even people who are not affected by this economic situation still cite it as the worst thing about Missoula. On a national level, Missoula County's per capita income for a family of four is strikingly low-- \$19,818 in 1996, compared to the national average of \$24,426. Montana as a whole was slightly lower than Missoula, with a per capita income of \$19,214 (Anonymous 1998:3). Montana and Missoula's per capita income levels are significantly lower than the national level, nevertheless people who move to Missoula have a better chance of being paid higher wages than in the rest of the state (Polzin 1997:12).

It is important to note that Missoula County has experienced a downward trend in labor incomes in almost all industries between 1980 and 1990. This is important because migration reports indicate that during this period, Montana's population grew by less than two percent. This fact supports Christiane von Reichert's claim that economic well-being corresponds to migration patterns (although economic well-being is not the only determinate of migration patterns). In most of Montana this economic downward trend started reversing in 1990. The remaining areas will start increasing after 2000. Regardless, by 2010 the projected overall average labor income per job will still be slightly less than in 1980 (Polzin 1997:12).

As I stated previously, people who live in Missoula are more likely to be paid higher wages than in other parts of the state. However, they are also less

likely to get a job. This is reflected by the Missoula's labor force unemployment rate. Montana's unemployment rate as of January 1998 was 6.5 percent compared to Missoula's unemployment rate of 6.9 percent. Once, again when compared to the national level of 5.2 percent, both are high.

The influence of the University of Montana in Missoula's economy is large. During the school year of 1996-1997 students, residents and non-residents spent \$96 million in the Missoula economy. Only \$11 million of that went to housing and food while the remainder went to restaurants, department stores, medical care, etc. (Seninger 1997:17).

However, it is also important to question the influence of the student population of the University on the unemployment levels of Missoula. Economist could attribute Missoula's high unemployment to the presents of full time students who are not working.

Statistics indicating low income levels and relatively high unemployment in Missoula are even more striking when we consider basic needs. Housing availability is a big topic for residents of Missoula. Throughout the 1990s Missoula has experienced an increase in housing costs. At the beginning of 1998 the average selling price of homes was \$120,838 (Anonymous 1998:3), compared to the average selling price of homes in 1990, \$72,463 (Anonymous 1990). Another important factor of the cost of living is rent costs. In 1998 the average monthly rent was \$569. Based on my interviews, residents are concerned that they cannot afford to buy a home, especially, those in their late twenties supporting families. They are currently renting and are frustrated that they are unable to build equity in the place they like live.

While the monetary payment for work may be low and the monetary expenditure of cost of living maybe high, economist Tom Power asserts natural and social amenities also play a role in overall economic well-being. Power's, in Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies, states that in areas where high

unemployment, low wages and high cost of living exist natural and social amenities can in effect provide a second paycheck (1996:81). In areas where high level of amenities exist, such as Missoula, these amenities need to be taken into account when considering aggregate local economic well-being.

Migration reports also help support the assertion that the value placed on amenities is significant. Migration reports are helpful in trying to determine what place means to people because they ask two important questions: Why do people move to a particular place? and, Why do they stay? Migration reports using statistical methods have given us a good indication of why people move to a particular place and why they stay: previous ties and a better quality of life.

In addition to Power, Christiane von Reichert et al. support the assertion that natural and social amenities are reasons why people move and stay in a particular place:

Economic conditions alone do not explain the large number of people moving to Montana. The search for natural amenities and a better quality of life also affects migration. The relaxed Montana lifestyle, along with the scenery and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, attracts many urban migrants seeking refuge from the busy city life (von Reichert et al 1997:12).

In Missoula residents, students and guests are able support a large number of cultural activities. In March 1998, the Chamber of Commerce listed 145 restaurants, seven museums, six theatrical playhouses, twenty-one art galleries, four symphonies and fifty-one parks (Anonymous 1998:3). These amenities are only part of the total amount of amenities that residents point to as their reasons for enjoying Missoula.

Landscape, Recreational Opportunities and Social Amenities

In this section I write about what Tom Power and Christiane von Reichert refer to as social and natural amenities. These social and natural amenities are what I call landscapes, recreational opportunities and social amenities.

The city of Missoula has different appearances. Depending on the season, for example, one might drive through misty mountain passes and descend on a lush, spring-green Missoula. Or, when flying into Missoula during the fall, the view may be brown and stark. Regardless, there are unmistakable human-made landmarks and there is a distinct natural landscape. The human-made landmarks include the “M” on Mount Sentinel, the Peace sign on Water Works Hill, and the “L” on Mount Jumbo. On the University campus the clock tower of Main Hall building is clearly seen, especially when flying in. Residential neighborhoods are distinctive on the northside. In the west industrial and commercial businesses are dominant.

The natural landscape includes three rivers, one of which, the Clark Fork, runs directly through town. Missoula is also the point where five valleys meet. Hidden within the natural landscape surrounding Missoula are many recreational opportunities. A 61,000 acre land preserve, the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area, offers hiking, fishing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and hunting. Montana Snowbowl and Marshall Mountain Ski Area are two major downhill skiing areas both within 12 miles of Missoula.

The rivers provide recreational opportunities like fly-fishing and rafting. The mountain, Mount Sentinel, with the “M” (the university at its base) is also part of a trail system, the Kim Williams, which goes around, over and up to Pattee Canyon.

These are all pictures of Missoula that can be seen when flying in, looking down on, or driving by on I-90, but there are also different

appearances that can be seen from a walk, bike ride or drive through town.

While observing the space of Missoula, its sidewalks, store fronts and parks, one can begin to understand the place of Missoula through the people who have rendered it meaningful—the place of Missoula is a reflection of the values, likes and dislikes of its people. For example, the people of Missoula have decided to recognize its history by restoring historical sites. Thus, Missoula's main street through downtown, Higgins, is lined with historical buildings. Throughout the city there are many indications of people's tastes and preferences. Drive through espresso stands dot the city. There is a very popular health food store. A boutique with products from all over the world that claims to be sensitive to fair wages is located on Higgins. Thai, Tibetan and Indian foods are available to the Missoulia.

There is also an artistic influence in Missoula. The presence of writers and painters, to mention the most obvious, have led to galleries and bookstores throughout the city. Book signing's, gallery openings and poetry readings are just few a examples of what one can do anytime of the week. These generally occur at places that are locally owned and reflect a type of person not usually associated with Montana. Other services that are not usually associated with Montana are Missoula's popular national chains: The Gap, Barnes and Noble (controversy discussed in Chapter Three) Pier One, Staples, Gart Sports and Target.

Other types of locally owned businesses provide services like western wear and gear for horseback riding. Many bars offer country music, karaoke, and line dancing. These services usually attract people more typical of the Western ideal. The county fair that is held in Missoula attracts all types of people. While the fair is primarily geared towards people interested in agriculture and livestock, activities such as carnival rides and horse racing attract the type of people I interviewed.

Missoula is isolated in many ways. The closest big cities are Seattle (488

miles away) and Salt Lake City (500 miles away). Airplane tickets in and out of Missoula are more expensive than other comparable airports in the state. Thus, Missoula has developed to be able to provide services that are uncommon in a city of its size and location.

Changes in Population

Missoula's social amenities have caused an increase in its population. The influx of people to Missoula has perpetuated the social category of the outsider. *Outsider, newcomer, Californian*—these are terms often used to describe the people moving to Missoula and other parts of Montana. These people are perceived as a threat to the things which *old timers* or *natives* enjoy most about Missoula.

Throughout my research and two-year residence in Missoula, I have heard many different opinions about newcomers. For example, newcomers are accused of changing cultural values. One example of this is the de-emphasis on self-sufficiency from the government. 'Oldtimer's' prize an ability to be what they consider self-sufficient. Rather than needing assistance from the government, locals believe in taking care of their own. With recent propositions to raise taxes many natives are frustrated. Increased traffic and road rage are also attributed to newcomers.

The expansion of Reserve Street as an economic center with big corporate shops is also seen as a threat to something people like about Missoula—its small, locally-owned stores. Once a two-way, country road Reserve Street located on Missoula's western edge, has become a busy commercial area. Now a six lane road, Reserve Street occupies stores such as Barnes and Noble, Costco and Petsmart. Newcomers are sometimes associated with the increase in stores occupying Reserve Street. 'Old timers' surmise that "newcomers" must want these new corporate stores because they had them where they came from.

However, when this popular perception is compared to a statistical

analysis of migration reports, another picture emerges. Two studies, "Population Dynamics in Montana" by Christiane von Reichert and James T. Sylvester and "Montana or Bust" by James T. Sylvester, Paul E. Polzin, Susan Selig Wallwork and Marlene Nesary have compiled statistical data on who is coming to Montana, their numbers, origins, age groups and income. These studies indicate that sixty percent of people moving to Montana had pre-existing ties there. Either they themselves or someone in their household had lived in Montana before (Sylvester et al 1995:10). This is important for two reasons.

First, by indicating that newcomers have previous ties to the land it is less likely that they are the ones changing cultural values. Secondly, it indicates that it could be the sheer number of people moving to Montana that is changing cultural values. Between 1990 and 1996 Montana's population grew ten percent. In 1990 Montana's population was 799,065. Within the next six years that number grew to 879,372 (von Reichert et al 1995:10). Two-thirds of this growth can be attributed to people moving into the state. Furthermore, studies indicate that the majority of these people have moved to the western and southwestern areas of this state (ibid). Missoula and Ravalli counties are two of seven counties that are experiencing seventy percent of Montana's growth (1995:12). Ravalli county is adjacent to Missoula County and is experiencing the greatest amount of growth.

Montana is the fourth largest state in the Union in terms of land mass but has one of the lowest populations. Thus, compared to states with large urban areas, increases in population do not have to be large to be felt. The actual population increase between 1990 and 1996 was only 80,307.

The fact that sixty percent of newcomers have previous ties to Montana is also relevant because more than half of the people I talked to fit into this category. They moved to Missoula because of previous ties. In the Sylvester et al article, the two additional reasons for moving to Montana were quality of

life and employment. These were cited almost equally by respondents as to why they moved here (Sylvester et al. 1995:3). In Chapter Three I will be exploring this idea further.

The Narrative Analysis

The purpose of this thesis is to discover the relationships people have with Missoula as a composite place. The first part of this chapter represents one way of discovering that relationship. I began by visiting the Chamber of Commerce to obtain a community profile sheet listing the number of restaurants. The city's 21 galleries and seven museums indicates a devotion of Missoulians to the arts. Furthermore, I could read Michael P. Malone's analysis of Montana; *Montana A Contemporary Profile*. This additionally mentions that Missoula is unique from the rest of Montana in how many writers and artists it attracts. It gives the reader a very elaborate understanding of historical forces and economic factors of the world economy that helped create a boom in the 1970s and bust in the 1980s in Montana. While Malone's analysis is accurate, it is also incomplete (Rosaldo 1989:128).

There is another way to discover knowledge about a place: through narrative. Narrative analysis not only allows people to mention how historical forces have influenced their experiences, it allows them to talk about their practices of place.

Regardless of Missoula's bleak statistics on unemployment, cost of living and wage levels, people are moving to Missoula in significant amounts. This is because of its landscape, recreational opportunities and social amenities. Now I will describe how some people make this place their own.

Through practices common to members of a community people define place. Following are three ways people in Missoula practice place. First, people buy locally grown vegetables on Saturdays at the Farmers' Market. Second, people raise money for local causes. Third, residents plan and build a playground solely on private donations. These practices give certain places

meaning. They are what add “flavor to the stew”.

There are other ways in which particular places are rendered meaningful. (For example, historical forces shape ways in which people respond to a place.) While planning and building a playground are ways in which people experience place, lay offs and rising rents are historical forces people must deal with as they experience place. In my thesis I attempt to examine how people shape their own experiences.

Chapter Three Giving Voice to Sense of Place

Locked within the mental horizons of those who give it life, sense of place issues in a stream of symbolically drawn particulars--the visible particulars of local topographies, the personal particulars of biographical associations, and the notional particulars of socially given systems of thought.

Basso 1996:84

Basso's quote speaks to the core of my research. This thesis is about how people talk about a specific place. It is about how people have turned Missoula, a geographical location, a physical object, into a place in which they actively attach meaning. Attachment to this particular place caught my attention soon after moving here--from listening to people's narratives, to casual conversations, to informal interviews, it became clear that people chose specific details about Missoula and attach meaning that creates a place with specific details, which in turn symbolically represent values or even evoke certain emotions.

In this chapter I present portions of personal narratives in which people discuss what it is like to live in Missoula, in the process unlocking their "mental horizons" by giving voice to specific details (the farmers market, job security, the people who live here) of Missoula that contribute to their understanding of place. There are two ways in which sense of place is voiced--the representations of specific details (which I have categorized into five themes) and the participation of specific details. Before I present this information, it is helpful to have a clearer idea of who is talking.

Who is a Montanan?

As presented in Chapter One, the majority of this fieldwork includes twenty informal, semi-structured interviews. I interviewed eleven women and nine men between the ages of twenty-one and seventy. These people were selected because they were either acquaintances, people that were

recommended, or community figures. The results of this selective sampling, which does not offer a statistical representation, are that the types of people I interviewed have similar backgrounds.

Two of the clearest examples of the similarities among my interviewees is that fourteen of them are educated with at least a four year college degree and fifteen of them consider Missoula their home. These people decided either to move to Missoula or stay here, even if it meant some type of sacrifice. Their sacrifices include income reductions, less job security or a compromise in their careers. Most of these people would be able to leave if they wished. They would also be able to compete for higher paying jobs elsewhere.

Six of the people moved to Missoula despite their awareness of the financial sacrifice. Whatever the sacrifice, however, they are still able to manage Missoula's cost of living. These people specifically mentioned the sacrifice that they were making. Similarly, seven of the people who didn't mention a specific sacrifice did make reference to a high quality of living in Missoula that does not involve monetary value. These thirteen people all place a higher value on quality of living than on a monetary value of living.

I did interview three people who have great job security. Their jobs enable them to do whatever they want (for example, travel) and they do not feel like they are making financial sacrifices. These people stated that Missoula is their home and they have not considered leaving.

Five of the people do not consider Missoula their home. One of them, however, at the time of her interview, had only been living in Missoula for a few months. She stated that she would consider staying here but would not be willing to sacrifice her career to do so. The remaining four people felt that the reasons they are in Missoula do not contribute to their sense of belonging. They are in Missoula due to circumstances rather than a desire.

Who is considered a Montanan seems to be a popular question in Missoula. It is closely linked to feelings of belonging. While listening to the

sentiments of Missoula's residents on this subject some have expressed the importance of maintaining distinct boundaries between Montanans and outsiders, while others feel the distinction is meaningless. Sandy's husband, for example, received some negative remarks about out-of-stater's by someone at his work. A friend of mine from Minnesota was yelled at in a bar one night over this issue. These experiences are common.

Yet, most of the people I interviewed expressed their concern differently. For them, the distinction between both groups is not so clear. Regardless of similarities and differences, among those I interviewed all of them expressed a commonality of what it means to be a Montanan. Consider what Emily, who was born in Billings and has been living in Missoula for nine years, told me after I asked her if she considered herself a Montanan:

Yeah--I actually hate that whole thing, I just think it is so stupid how everyone worries about whether you're a Montanan or not and to me it's ridiculous. (54:4-5)

I then asked her, Who worries about it?

I don't know, apparently the people who are Montanans and the people who aren't. And I just feel like who cares. You live here, you either contribute or you don't. What is where you born have to do with anything?--Nothing. What are you doing is all I care about. I get very tired of that whole distinction, people making a big deal about it. Every meeting you go to every has to go around and say I'm a native Montanan and bla bla bla and such an arbitrary difference but apparently it's a big deal right now... I try not to dwell on it myself. (54:7-16)

She might find it easy to say that because her status as a native Montanan has never been questioned. Scott, the University Professor from New York whose specialization is Montana literature has this take:

That legend sort of excludes people who live by books of the land and only with their heads. So it is tricky. In Montana I would never claim to be a Montanan. I always say I'm a newcomer but now that it has been 24 years and I've worked a lot of state history and issues and I've been politically involved in the state. Some Montanans would then say then 'no, no you're a Montanan' but I'm also a Missoula intellectual you know so it's--I have no grand desire to occupy the tradition. So it is really up to Montanans whether they are looking for continuation of the myth or they are recognizing some one who has made the state their

home. Now in that sense, see there is no question, I've made the state my home, I'm not going to leave, I want to be buried here, I'm totally committed to Missoula and the state. (84:46-50;85:1-6)

Emily would probably consider Scott a Montanan. This is because she, and many of the other respondents who were born in Montana, state that belonging to Montana is more about what you contribute than where you are from.

Responses to the question, Do you consider yourself a Montanan? had more to do with whether respondents felt like they belonged here than whether they were actually born here. Earlier, I used the example of Sandy. Because she doesn't agree with the state's politics, she doesn't consider herself a Montanan (however, she does feel like she is a Missoulian). What, then, creates a sense of belonging to Montana? Most of the responses were social reasons: where family and friends lived, how well the respondents knew his/her community and his/her relationship with the landscape. Here is one example:

My family is here. My husband and I, and our two dogs. When you marry someone and you move with them that becomes your home. If I lived in a trailer, where ever I stopped for the evening would be my home. Home is where my family is and even though most of my family is out of the area this is still the nucleus--My husband and I. (50:29-33)

This woman's sense of belonging has to do more with her family than connection to a particular place.

Rebecca moved to Missoula from Pennsylvania. Most of her family is in the eastern United States and she stated that living in Missoula is not her first choice of residences. She had this to say in response to the question of why she feels like she does not belong.

I think it is too far afield from my roots, I guess. (61:21)

Here is a response from someone who feels her strongest connection to Missoula is its people:

Well, because of my occupation and my organization I contact hundreds and hundreds kids and their parents every year..I've worked really

hard with these people to create this institution...That kind of support system took a decade to build and I couldn't imagine--when I think about if I lived somewhere else I couldn't do it. It's like this fine web of suspension that is too small to see but without it I would just be cut loose. (59:20-32)

This quote is from Wanda. In response to the question of contributes to her sense of belonging in Missoula, she points to the relationships that she has spent a decade to build. When her husband was considering taking a higher paying job elsewhere she told him she would be unable to move because of these relationships.

Steve, the college student who was raised outside of Missoula, does not feel that he has made that same kind of connection. He states:

I don't enjoy the culture of most of Montana at all. I don't understand it. I don't related to it at all. (37:39-40)

He also states that if the University did not bring in out-of-stater's that he would find living in Montana unbearable. The only reason he is staying in Missoula is because he has not finished his education and could not afford to move elsewhere.

Representations--Five themes voiced by the people of Missoula

There are two ways in which people talk about their relationship with Missoula. Both ways use specific places or institutions. First, people talk about specific details, such as the Farmers' Market, in terms of its value to them. The value can be positive or negative. For example, one way the Farmers' Market can be talked about is in its symbolic value. The Farmers' Market can be talked about in terms of how it represents community. I have categorized the ways people talk about place into five major themes. These five themes are diversity, local economic well-being, quality of life, growth and environment. From these themes and the original query of Who is a Montanan?, sense of place is explored.

Diversity

Many people describe Missoula as diverse but they are usually speaking in terms of how its diversity compares to that of other Montana cities. I have identified three ways in which my interviewees perceived diversity: politically/socially, as a matter of lifestyle, or as a matter of employment/economic status.

Residents find that Missoula lacks a diversity of people with different skin colors and nationalities. Yet, when compared to the rest of Montana, Missoula's people are rich with different ideas, activities, and opinions.

In addition to his day job, Jack, who is in his forties, works as the president of a neighborhood association. He came to Missoula twenty years ago because his wife has family here and both had friends here. When I asked Jack to name his favorite thing offered by Missoula, he cited the diversity of its resident's viewpoints:

There is not a lot of cultural diversity here in terms of racial or ethnic diversity but there is a lot of diversity of thinking and there is an openness here. (29:9-11)

Of the twenty people I talked to some agreed with Jack. They feel that Missoula has a welcoming mixture of ideas. This welcoming mixture of ideas is relevant when compared to the rest of the state. Consider what Scott, a university professor, said when asked if he could live anywhere else in Montana:

We have a cabin down in Big Hole, in a small valley with a local ranching community and we certainly love the people down there but we wouldn't think of selling our house here and only living in the cabin there for all the reasons I've implied and what we like in a community. I'm well aware that, of course I work on Montana writers and praise the state, I would have a tough time in a small town, unless by luck, I got into exactly the right role of the one valued maverick, with a beard, it would be luck. But, I could get on the wrong side of all sorts of issues and have a lot of trouble (83:17-24)

His reason for keeping a residence in Missoula is that he feels his views are more accepted and shared here. Being accepted or sharing political views

is an important factor to many of the people I spoke to. There are many other places in Montana that could provide the wilderness component Missoula offers. However, many of the individuals I interviewed feel that Missoula's community of people provides a certain level of tolerance. This level of tolerance is the only reason they are able to live in Montana.

A woman in her late thirties recounts an incident that happened to her in another part of Montana, which indicates the lack of tolerance in places other than Missoula: (in Montana)

I think Missoula is an island or an oasis of liberalism. Partly because there is a college here. It is more active. There is more political action and awareness. Other parts of Montana, eastern Montana, I don't like going there because it is kind of scary. The attitudes are small minded. I was on a tour a few years ago and we were in Miles City or Havre and I was dancing with another woman and some guy came over and told us to stop. That would never have happened in Missoula. So, we are an amazing anomaly here. (57:20-26)

Sandy, who moved to Missoula four years ago, is a professor at the University, and made this point several times during our interview:

My sense of this being a tolerant community especially for Montana is a really strong reason why we live in this town. (41:27-29)

Furthermore, the main reason Sandy does not consider herself a Montanan is because she feels like she does not agree with the states politics:

I consider myself a Missoulia but like in Minnesota the states politics were closer to mine, I mean we elected Paul Welstone. Here most of the state I think I disagree with on almost everything. So, I don't consider myself a Montanan. (43:31-34)

Jack, Scott and Sandy feel closer to the politics of Missoula than to the politics of the rest of the state. They feel this way because Missoula is more diverse than the rest of the state. However, is it really diverse? The implication that emerged during the interviews is the three respondents have liberal political perspectives. This is probably why they feel more aligned to the politics of Missoula. The question we arrive at, then, is: Is Missoula diverse or are its politics just the mirror image of the rest of the state?

Priscilla, a woman who had only been living in Missoula for five

months at the time of the interview observed this about Missoula and its people:

I'm used to places that are more diverse. Maybe not in terms of ethnicity but just in terms of political thought. And Missoula, for the most part, is such a liberal town that there is not so much diversity in terms of ways of thinking and to me that scares me a little bit. (39:30-34)

Granted, Priscilla is an intern at Missoula Urban Development so her perspective might be slanted. At least that is what I originally thought when I heard her say that. However, throughout my stay in Missoula and from traveling around Montana I have heard many statements that support her. Those who support her are usually people with a conservative political perspective. I have heard many statements similar to this one:

I can't stand Missoula. Too many liberals!

With all said, I don't agree with Priscilla's observation. Missoula County is known for its progressive environmental laws, however, I have heard too many complaints about stalls at governmental meetings, to think there is only one dominant perspective here. Additionally, three people I interviewed felt that when they went to other parts of Montana they were unjustly shunned for being from Missoula. They felt that it was unjust because even though they preferred to live in Missoula they shared many of the same conservative political views with the people who shunned them.

Other reasons people label Missoula "diverse" involve the lifestyles of its residents and how this affects local jobs and services. Generally speaking, Montana has "pockets" of relatively homogeneous types of employment opportunities. Because of the university and other unique cultural opportunities, Missoula attracts artists, activists, and academics. People in eastern Montana, on the other hand, are limited, for the most part, to ranching and farming, while those in other parts of western Montana are primarily limited to mining and timber jobs.

Unlike the economies in other parts of Montana, Missoula is able to

sustain people with “alternative lifestyles”. Living in Missoula is not like living in Harlem, Montana. In Harlem, job opportunities are primarily limited to taking care of cattle and farming, which support a particular type of lifestyle.

Sandy said the following about living on the westside of Missoula:

One thing that I like about Missoula that I hope doesn't disappear, it seems to be that when you have a place that people can live for less money it encourages the presence of people with alternative lifestyles. People who are working part time or artists or writers not necessarily two adults with full time jobs all this and to have people at home or people doing different kinds of things and to be living in a place where they feel like they are part of a neighborhood makes this a really nice place to live. I appreciate that diversity in neighborhoods. (42:12-18)

Besides, if someone living in Harlem wanted to eat at Pizza Hut for dinner they would have to drive sixty miles west to Havre. Harlem is an extreme example of other types of communities in Montana but Missoula is, by comparison, as mentioned in the first chapter, amenity-rich. This diversity of services and cultural activities is also unique to Missoula and along with more diverse job opportunities also attracts a certain type of person like the artists, activists and academics.

Diversity of services also provides people with more opportunities in the way in which they live their lives. For example, Sandy is a vegetarian. She has this to say about being a vegetarian in Montana:

I don't know if you can be a vegetarian outside of Missoula. I'm sure you could be in Bozeman and you could be in a lot of places but it would be really tough and just having a place like the Good Food Store where you can buy any kind of food that you like to eat as opposed to in a lot of little towns having a hard time finding good bread or stuff like that. (41:40-42;42:1-2)

It would be my guess that there are not many vegetarians living in Harlem, Montana.

This diversity of services is perceived to be threatened by some. Here is another statement from Jack. He is worried that the new business developments threaten older businesses unique to Missoula.

Like having a huge Barnes and Noble where you can go and won't have to order a book because it will probably be there. Places downtown like Freddy's, small bookstores, are going to get hurt by that. That diversity that I like so much about Missoula could be threatened. (30:7-10)

Barnes and Noble is part of an interesting shift that is taking place in Missoula. Just in the past several years Reserve Street has experienced an amazing amount of development. This development is almost exclusively in the form of "chain" type restaurants and services like Barnes and Noble, Pier One, Staples, and most recently PetSmart and Home Depot. One woman from California said: "We are getting all this stuff--we are looking like California." (20:26)

Her perception is an important indication of how many Missoulians feel about this type of development. People feel that shopping on Reserve Street is like shopping anywhere. Since the people of Missoula value the distinctiveness of its downtown shops, Reserve Street seems like a sore thumb. While the woman who made the above statement still shops on Reserve Street, other people have made a conscience decision to stay away. This is primarily because it is threatening the shops downtown, as Jack said.

Reserve Street is just one example of how people talk about the economic diversity in Missoula. In addition to worrying about losing economic diversity in terms of different types of unique stores, many people also worry Missoula is becoming a place where only the wealthy can live. Jack, the president of a neighborhood association, cites this in response to what he thinks is unique about Missoula:

That was one of the things that probably made Missoula unique was that people stayed here even though the economic opportunities were not here. They stayed here because they liked the place they also stayed here because it was affordable to live here. That has really changed dramatically in the last six, seven years. People used to be able to accept insufficient wages because it was cheap to live here, they could do whatever schtick they were into. They could be a starving artist, but now I fear this is a place that you come to to be a successful artist. You can't be a struggling artist. (30:27-36)

Like Sandy, Jack appreciates the diversity of different lifestyles. As

mentioned earlier Missoula has created an atmosphere that attracts writers and artists. Having these types of people living in Missoula provides resources to people who appreciate the arts and literature. There are not many places in Montana that encourage poetry readings and has gallery openings as Missoula does.

Clare, a past County Commissioner, also appreciates the diversity of different types of people in Missoula. She believes Missoula's affordability attracts outsiders but also enables native Montanans to live there.

I just heard someone today in the County groups say so and so is moving they can't afford to live here and when you become that unique that means you are not as diverse as its people are. You take Caramel or Santa Fe who really have this image of being a special place they have lost what makes a city--all kinds of people--able to make a living. (47:24-29)

What she is indicating here is that although people of all types live in Missoula now, that might be threatened. Already some people have had to move outside of Missoula. Cities like Caramel, California and Santa Fe, New Mexico are places that are special but not diverse in terms of peoples economic status. If Missoula's economy can only support people who have made their money prior to moving here, then it risks losing the struggling artist and other types of people who have lower incomes and thus provide diversity.

Local Economic Well-Being

How people perceived Missoula's economic well-being as it affected them personally also became a way of indicating how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their lives here. However, many people I interviewed who are happy with their jobs and feel they have economic security, identify economic struggle as a problem for others living in Missoula. This point is made clear when considering the different types of people in my study (in Appendix One I use the same categorizes). For example, those who were raised here and have voluntarily decided to stay feel differently then those who were raised here and would like to leave but because of circumstances are unable to do so.

Another group includes those who were born here or who were brought here when they were very young, left Missoula, and later returned. They prefer to live here and earn less than they could elsewhere.

There is also the group that are here but want to leave either for good or to make “their fortune” and then come back. One woman, Wendy, who was born in Missoula, has a son, Mike, who is a senior in high school. She believes that her son will have to move away to earn a decent wage and then he will be able to return when he is ready to retire.

I told Mike you are going to have to go away, make your money and retire home. To really make a decent living, because it's a struggle, it's a struggle, unless you move away because how many places in Montana do they pay decent wages? (86:24-27)

I will discuss Wendy's situation later but it is important to note that this woman lived in California. She moved back without any money because she felt that this was a better place to raise her son. Regardless of her close relationship with Missoula and lack of financial success elsewhere, she still thinks that it would be better for her son to temporarily move away.

Wendy is one of two people who would like to move to another part of Montana. She was born and raised here and has not left because of her perception of the economy in other parts of Montana. Although she is unhappy with her job, she feels thankful for it because if she were anywhere else in Montana, she believes she would not even have one.

Ya, I would like to live--definitely--I would like to live up in Whitefish. I was up there for awhile, beautiful or the Hi line. I would like to live up in Libby. Lakes everywhere, lakes and mountains, quite. Just--the more Missoula grows the more I would like to go on the out skirts. But to hold a job in any of those small towns is kind of survival again, would be tough. (88:22-26)

Even though most of the the people who were not born in Montana made the conscious decision to move here, they still have issues with the job market. Priscilla, the intern at Missoula Urban Development, discovered her job on the internet. Priscilla told me that she has always had a fascination

with the West while she was growing up in Michigan. Even though she enjoys living in Missoula, Priscilla had this to say:

I'm going to look into staying here but I'm not willing to flip hamburgers or something in order to stay here--it is a tough job market around here. (38:20-22)

The next quote is from Sandy. As previously mentioned, she is a professor at the University but her position is dependent upon receiving grant money. She just received a three-year grant. This three year grant has given her the most job security that she has had since she and her family moved to Missoula. Yet, at the end of this three year grant if she is unable to keep her position, similar to Priscilla, she does not plan on staying in Missoula.

The hardest thing about Missoula in terms of thinking about living here and staying here is the jobs are so bad. So we are sort of planning on staying here but not adamantly, it is going to depend on if we have good jobs here. (44:13-15)

Another quote comes from Rebecca. She originally moved to Missoula twenty-five years ago. Although she gave me no indication that she is planning to move away, I got the impression that she was not satisfied with living in Missoula. One reason is because she is not working in the career of her choice. Currently she is employed in a social service type job. Her professional training is in English education. This is what she had to say about Missoula's job market:

I guess there are not many jobs here and there is no where to go career wise. I guess that would be the thing about Missoula that I dislike the most. You get stifled here as far as what you can do and where you can go. There is not many job opportunities and when a job does come up the competition is keen because there are so many people here that are highly qualified that want that job so your chances of getting it are really pretty slim. (60:35-36; 61:1-5)

Not working in their chosen profession or issues of low pay and working many hours are also factors in people's happiness. Those who work minimum wage jobs have to work many hours to support their families. One woman I interviewed was married but getting very little support from her husband in raising their three children. She attributes having to work so much as the

cause for a breakdown in her family: an example of how an “impoverished” public life affects personal life.

Gosh for a whole year I worked out there. I was gone from three to whenever. I had no time to work on my marriage. (21:3-5)

A reason why the economy is detrimental to the people living in Missoula is because minimum wage incomes are not sufficient for the cost of housing. This native Montanan moved to Missoula to attend the university and decided it would be a good place to raise his family. He lives with his wife and their three children in a two bedroom apartment.

I really like it but it's tough to make a living here. The jobs don't pay a lot. The price of housing is really high. But, I guess that's sort of a trade-off because it is such a beautiful area so you've got to give something up if you want to live in a nice place like this. (81:2-5)

Later in the interview, he mentioned that he does not like the fact that they have to live in an apartment and would like to get a house.

Wendy discusses her frustration with the people who own rental properties:

They have taken advantage of not only the people that actually live in Missoula all the time but the college students because they have to have some place to live, and I think that is wrong. Everything has gone so high, you have to pack people in there to survive. Me being the single mom, I really can't afford anything over \$400 and enjoy life, and even now, once and awhile I struggle. Now with Mike working it's not as bad. And with the college students, sometimes I wonder how they do it. For what Montana pays wage wise how do people survive, I'm blessed to have the job that I have but I'm burnt out, I'm getting a little too old for bartending. (88:31-40)

This presents the stimulating question of why, then, do people in lower income brackets and those who don't have job security stay in Missoula? Based upon these quotes and other statements made in my interviews, dominant reasons for staying in Missoula despite low income and poor job security been to emerge. Some of these reasons are: Missoula's people, social amenities, and the surrounding landscape. These all create a feeling of a high standard of living, in a non-monetary and non-material sense.

Quality of life

One of the ways Missoula's people speak of Missoula is in terms of its quality of life. In chapter two I mention Tom Power's idea that social and natural amenities are in affect a second pay check. Sandy supports this idea when she states:

A town this size in a state that had big metropolitan areas wouldn't have as much stuff if it was really close to a big urban area so that is good. I've never lived in a city this size before. A lot of people are moving here because they want to, not because the jobs are great or anything else, so that sort of dedication to a community, I think, has a lot of payoffs for Missoula, as a whole. (43: 18-23)

Things like appreciating nature, feeling safe and being close to friends and family, play into this feeling of satisfaction. They trade off financial success for safety, comfort and ease. One woman, Tara, who was raised in Montana, left and later returned, gave this reason why people seemed more laid back here.

Because it attracts a certain type of person. People appreciate nature so they like to have time to do that so they don't aspire to have packed lives with money taking kinds of activities, so people tend to do simplistic kinds of things. People tend to do things like be outside and visit friends. (23:7-10).

This woman is indicating that people who live in Missoula value things other than money, like nature and friends.

Wanda and her husband are professionals in Missoula. Wanda's husband was offered a higher paying job that would have required him to move. Wanda told him that if he wanted the job, he would have to commute because she had no intention of moving. She loves her life in Missoula:

I still think it is very affordable to live here. I don't think that—I know that we couldn't live anywhere as well as we do on what we earn, as we do here. (58:27-29)

She had a very smooth experience buying a house. Before they started looking Wanda knew that she wanted to live in the lower Rattlesnake and that was the first place they looked:

So when we decided to buy a house this is the first house we looked at. We walk in, looked around and took it. And I'm really glad we did, I haven't seen any place that I would rather live. It's amazing having a mountain just behind my house, there's a herd of deer and a herd of elk and there's foxes and coyotes and bears and eagles and hawks, it's just amazing. We have a picnic table in the back yard and sit and watch the mountain change color and the wild life move across it. We let the dogs out to go and do their business on the side of the hill and it's just incredibly convenient. Pleasant. (57:44-48;58:1-3)

Wanda, like Tara, is revealing an important aspect of living in Missoula: there is a significance placed on things other than material goods. Wanda adds this:

I also like the fact that I don't have to join a health club because the mountain behind my house is a great work out and I just think that it is so much easier to live here at a much higher standard of living and by standard of living I don't mean owning a Mercedes and having a big house I mean that it is quiet and peaceful and you know people and I vary rarely see acts of violence in Missoula where as in New York I saw them daily. People know each other and know each others--I'm mean when I see a dog on the street I know where it lives, I can go and put it back. (57: 10-17)

Many people talk of Missoula and its way of life as nurturing to their private lives (Bellah et al.:163). Time spent making money and worrying about crime are minimal. Thus, people have time to do what they really want. Missoula's public life is easily accessible. For example, consider the following statement, made by Tara:

I think the liberal perspective that Missoula has is what I find so refreshing even living in New York in Brooklyn where people are basically liberal they don't have the room or the space and the time to be thoughtful or caring. (24:2-4)

Later she added this:

I really appreciate the ease of living in Missoula. It just enables you to do things that just follow your interest without too many obstacles. In New York you have to go through so many steps to get to where you want to be. You have to deal with a lot of ego and stuff like that. (24:42-44;25:1)

Growth

As I mentioned in Chapter One, between 1990 and 1996 the population of Montana grew by ten percent. Below I have listed quotes from three people who were born in Missoula. They have watched Missoula grow over the years and offer insight to its change.

This first quote is from Curtis, a man in his early fifties. He was born in Missoula and for the majority of his life has lived here, although he has lived in other places for several years. When I asked him what he thought the worst thing about Missoula was, he offered:

I don't know if I like the growth all that much. Some ways I do and in others it's like, I don't want to see--the downtown area is pretty safe--it can't grow any more than it has but say they came down and started tearing down the downtown and building up bigger buildings then I would be pretty bummed. As long as the growth is just population off in subdivisions and it is not really effecting the downtown culture, I'm fine with that. (64:14-19)

He makes a clear distinction between downtown and the rest of Missoula. This is similar to the other statements respondents made about Missoula. When people are asked what their favorite thing Missoula has to offer, it is usually the services that are provided in the downtown area. The best-liked neighborhoods are the ones closest to downtown. These neighborhoods include the Rattlesnake area, University district and the Northside. The latter two areas have old architecture, and all have mature trees and are within walking or biking distance of downtown.

The biggest growth areas are those surrounding the downtown area however, which has increased the presence of people and traffic. These increases are what Jessica, a native Missoulian, cites is the worst thing about Missoula.

There are just too many people right now. It used to be--like I said, the traffic, that's the worst thing because I don't like to drive. It's just a lot of cars and its hard to get these kids down to McCormick and stuff and back and we went to the mail yesterday and there's a lot of traffic, that's about it. I'd rather live here though, than a smaller town. (79:1-5)

Though Jessica has noticed Missoula's growth, she went on to say that things are for the most part the same as they have always been. She appreciates the continuity.

Like Jessica, Wendy expressed her concern about Missoula's growth.

I understand Missoula is growing and a lot of that, but it makes its turn around. I love it here and I will always come back here, always... People are friendly still. You always meet a friendly face, always. There are a lot of neat things, we have got lakes, and mountains, and clean--when I was down in California their lakes and their mountains were over crowded and slimy. You can go ten miles, maybe 15 miles and be out in the woods. By yourself, no people. Or a few people. Go up Pattee Canyon and hike around all day and see the wildflowers and the animals. So close. Where in cities you have to travel miles and miles and put up with traffic. Although our traffic is getting really bad because they did not plan for the growth that we are getting right now. To watch Rattlesnake--we were the first house to settle in the Rattlesnake. There was hundreds of acres around us. We built a little log cabin, still stands and to go up there now you just want to die. (87:4-18)

She has noticed change in the Rattlesnake area. In addition, she also complains about traffic, attributed to poor planning. This quote is significant because it indicates that regardless of growth, many things that are valued in Missoula are still vibrant. There is still easy access to wilderness areas and the people of Missoula are still friendly.

Environment

Missoula's small-city setting that allows easy access to the wilderness is a main attractor for many of the people I spoke to. Having the conveniences of city life--espresso and shopping--combined with close proximity to trail heads and wilderness areas is ideal for their lifestyles. With these natural amenities has come some perceived problems associated with them. Along with growth and traffic, many see environmental problems as one of the worst things about living in Missoula. The people I interviewed worry about threats to the natural beauty that surrounds them, particularly rivers and air quality. For example, Emily said the following in response to the question about

Missoula's worst characteristic:

I think we are somewhat threatened environmentally just because of the way we sit on top of our aquifer so those are things I worry about and I think the air quality stinks and people definitely have more respiratory problems. (53:16-19)

Similarly, Wanda expressed concern about the environment. In fact, she feels environmental threats are the worst thing about Missoula.

The worst thing (about Missoula) --the air, the fact that the mills, lumber companies, mining companies are allowed to extract at will, that Montana functions as a third world country where things are just taken. But Missoula itself--the traffic, reserve street, the cars and that there is no emissions testing here I think that is really bad. In Minnesota emissions testing, mandatory recycling, where here you look at people's garbage and it's all beer bottles and paper--they could be recycled. (58:31-37)

The environment for most people in Missoula is something they take part in one way or another. Aside from expressing concerns about the environment another way people take part in the environment is by participating in it.

Participation--The ways in which people voiced their practice of place

The second way people talk about specific details of Missoula is in terms of participation or activities. Through actively doing something in Missoula, people's sense of place becomes more defined. This is reflected in the way they talk about Missoula. The ways in which the people that I interviewed voiced their practice of place ranged from going to the Farmers' Market on Saturday to being on a planning board that organized community efforts to build a playground.

I will explore four ways people practice place. First, I will explore how the Farmers' Market is voiced as a practice of place. Secondly, I will look into the way Missoula's recreational opportunities and admiration of nature brings people and place together. Finally, I will look at the Historic Preservation Board and the neighborhood associations as two final ways people participate

in place.

Farmers' Market

Almost all of my participants used at least one specific activity to talk about their connection with Missoula as a place. The Farmers' Market, an activity mentioned often, can be talked about in terms of one way a person feels like they belong in Missoula. To further illustrate this point, here is a quote by Wanda.

The Farmers' Market I think is a very good example of what Missoula is about because there is this community--people get out and do things together and talking to each other and down town on farmers market...there is just this beautiful experience...this great peaceful swell of human beings every Saturday morning. (56:45-46:57;1-6)

This is an interesting quote because Wanda not only illustrates how the Farmers' Market enables people to participate in community, but she also uses the Farmers' Market as one example of how Missoula, as a community of people, has activities and events that bring people together. Here are two common themes I discovered in the way people talk about their participation of place.

First, relationships with people are closely tied to relationship with place. Relationships with people became an important factor in why many of my respondents feel like they belong in Missoula (Bellah et. al. 1985). This quote indicates that it goes beyond just having relationships with people in your immediate family. It is about taking steps to get out and get involved. This involvement can be as simple as talking to people you encounter at the Farmers' Market on Saturday morning.

Secondly, Wanda's quote mentions that Missoula is a place open to and supportive of activities that facilitates connection with people--which in turn, facilitates a connection with place.

Participating in Recreational Opportunities

Missoulians frequently talk about getting outside. A second way the people I interviewed talked about participation of place was through Missoula's vast recreational opportunities. Many mentioned hiking, hunting, fishing, biking, rafting and walking downtown as activities that contribute to their sense of place.

In the following I use two quotes from two different people who push these activities a step further. For them, getting out and being active in Missoula and its surroundings is akin to getting out and learning about the place in which they live. Getting out and learning about the place in which they live also connects them to people. Similar to Wanda's quote about the Farmers' Market, Emily states the importance of getting involved and building relationships.

You build...relationships over time and over seasons...I know this place slightly and it's the same with people. Just being in relationships with people, that's why I think it is sad that so many people move in and out of Missoula. I think because of the economy, because you get this fragmentism and you don't have long relationships over time. To me it's like a big pyramid, there's your personal relationships that are close and they build over time and that becomes how you are with the community and the more breaking up with those relationships either with places or with people the less anyone feels like they belong. (54:41-44)

While Emily does not mention a specific activity, she does mention making a commitment to place--the need to stay in one place and build relationships with that place and its people to foster a sense of belonging.

The second quote doesn't mention a specific activity either, other than staying put and "building" relationships with place and people.

There is a poet, I can't think of his name, said if you want to start a tribe just stay put. You got to put your roots down somewhere. And every one is looking for a community, running all over the place looking for a community and not finding it. But, you have to build it. You have to stay some place. (31:20-24)

As mentioned above, Missoula's recreational opportunities are a way people

build relationships with places and people.

Nine respondents are actively involved with the community of Missoula in a more committed way than going to the Farmers' Market or participating in recreational opportunities. These nine people either have full time positions in jobs or spend their spare time volunteering in groups that affect Missoula's policy-making or community planning.

Preservation of Historical Buildings

Two respondents participate in the preservation of Missoula's historical buildings. Their involvement includes helping plan to save historical buildings or helping create ways for other Missoulians to learn about and appreciate Missoula's history. Here is a quote from Jack, who is the president of a local neighborhood association.

I'm on the Historic Preservation Board. I like the old buildings that have been saved. I like the fact that there's a re-awakened sense that we have to save what's left of our history. (29;12-15)

Here is a quote from Clare, a past county commissioner. She talks about the preservation of historical buildings and the plan to add walks that connect them.

You'll notice that Missoula has, I think it's been three years ago we developed a walk which features the historical buildings...we celebrated that at that time which is available now and we are working on trails that add to that walk. I think of a lot of good historical buildings...Its not that this is a terribly historical area but I think that we have taken advantage of what we've got. (46:20-28)

Both of these quotes are examples of how people voice their participation in Missoula. They also speak to the value some Missoulians have for the preservation of local history.

Participation in Neighborhood Associations

The final two quotes I use in this section come from the presidents of the Northside and Westside Neighborhood Associations. Both Jack and Sandy mentioned a project their associations have been working on together--the building of a play ground next to Lolo School. Jack explained to me that the building of the playground became a community effort.

Well, I'm very involved in the community. We are making community. We are in this terrific community building project right now [the playground]...it's just really taking off and everyone is exited about it. It's going to be entirely built by community labor and volunteers. It's all volunteers doing the fund raising and the organizing. It's terrific. Those kinds of things are unique. And we are doing it. Everyone has that feeling. (31:44-45;32:1-5)

The people in this community identified a need, and through working together have been able to build a new playground. As demonstrated in this quote, creating a new place for children to gather contributes to people's sense of place.

Sandy also talked extensively about the things her neighborhood association identified as needs and how they have been addressed through working together. Originally, Sandy got involved when the city made plans to create another interchange. After a neighborhood group met and stopped the plans, they decided they didn't just want to be fighting things, but also wanted to be proactive. Since then they have been working to calm traffic on Phillips Street, created a tool library on the Northside and built the playground at Lolo School. This is how Sandy voiced her sense of place:

That is what makes you feel like you belong--to have dreams about what would be nice for the neighborhood and then see them work. (44:37-47)

Values shared by community members manifest through actively creating new places in Missoula.

In this chapter I have presented concerns, feelings, likes and dislikes of people who live in Missoula, Montana. Their narratives have added to the vast amount of commentary on this particular town. In the first half of this

chapter, I presented themes expressed by the people I interviewed: diversity, local economic well-being, growth, environment, standard of living and belonging. These are all values expressed when talking about attachment to a particular place.

Another way my participants talked about attachment to place was through how they participated in local activities. This participation also indicates their values. For example, participating in the farmer's market demonstrates valuing relationships with people. Recreational opportunities demonstrate the value of knowing a place. Similarly, Missoulians demonstrate valuing the preservation of history through actively working to save historical landmarks. Lastly, the neighborhood associations are proactive in fulfilling the needs of the community.

In the last chapter, I will examine the underling cultural logic of these people's narrative. I contend that the reasons people write so profusely about Missoula are the same reasons people choose to stay. To explain why people stay in a particular place and have assorted perceptions about life there I will examine the symbolic value of Missoula. I propose that the intangible reasons for staying are based on cultural values, rather than on economic values. They are based on landscape and personal relationship with that landscape, on value of relationships with people and the sense of safety.

I will also consider the different theoretical implications of place. From this I will place Missoula, a city in the Western United States, in a larger theoretical context.

CHAPTER FOUR Beyond Missoula

Contact with the natural world is an experience that comes to us like a gift in Montana; we look up and find ourselves in some kind of intimacy with things as they have always been in the history of our species. It is the main reason many of us stay forever.

Kitterage 1996:108

The appeal of living in Missoula was powerful enough to inspire me to move 3,000 miles from familiar ground, but as I have shown such a decision is not unique to my experience. In Chapter Three I presented five ways in which people talk about Missoula. I also discussed the ways in which people voiced their practice of place in Missoula. The people I interviewed delved into ingredients of what constitutes their sense of place: the importance of family, friends, jobs, natural amenities and money (all of which I condense into the idea of a triangular relationship between people, social amenities, and landscape). These people, like myself decided to move to Missoula, however, it is their reasons for staying that I find most interesting. Although these people may not be living in their ideal situations, their experiences contribute to their active sense of place.

In this Chapter I have selected three remaining elements. These elements will anchor the statistical findings I presented in Chapter two and the voiced experiences of those I interviewed and presented in Chapter three to established anthropological thought. The understandings of place by western writers and a hand full of sociologist will also be presented to concluded this study.

The first element of Chapter Four is philosophical understandings from two western writers and one philosopher about the significance of individuals connecting to place and its role in the human experience.

Philosophical Understandings

I began this chapter with a quote from Bill Kitterage. In many parts of his book, Who Owns the West, he moves beyond his personal attachment to place and questions the importance of being placed. I begin this chapter with this particular quote because it resonates with what the overall impression the people I interviewed revealed about their sense of Missoula--for good and bad-- it is a gift. The natural world, snow capped peaks of Glacier for example, are Montana's gift, however this gift goes beyond an aesthetic value. Montana's natural world enables us to tap into a world that has been the same since the beginning of our species. Montana provides a sense of continuity.

Kitterage takes this one step further. He writes about what some of those who I interviewed alluded to. For example, in Chapter Three, Tara talked about Missoula's natural and social amenities as creating an atmosphere of caring and nurturing. He states his belief that contact with the natural world is a psychological need. Returning to nature renews a sense of humanity and left to our own creations we become chaotic.

In Who Owns the West Kitterage also explores the question of what is the appeal of living in Montana. He doesn't believe it is the natural beauty but rather the safety. A sense of fear is what has people running from cities (1996:141). Many of the people I interviewed felt safer in Missoula compared to other places they have lived. However, sense of safety was talked about as an aspect of overall quality of life rather than an overriding single reason why they have stayed or returned to Montana.

Wallace Stegner, another western writer, also speaks of the need to have a connection with place. In his book Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West, he writes about the aspects of a "placed" person. Stegner states that in order to have a healthy country or society, people must learn to belong to a place. This does not happen until people settle down, learn a place and live there for extensive periods of time.

Belonging to place can only develop after one invests time and effort.

Stegner states in his article that during his childhood he moved from home to home. During this period he was envious of children who lived in homes with attics full of things. The example of an attic full of things illustrates being placed. It symbolizes a lifetime of living, which can only be accomplished when one lives in the same house over a long period of time. While Stegner uses this example in the context of envying fellow youth who did not have to move, it also serves as an example of a social process that contributes to an understanding of place. This understanding of place incorporates the belief that not establishing bonds with a place leads to a feeling of "dissatisfaction and hunger".

Stegner uses the investment of time and labor into particular locations as the markers of the placed person. This is similar to the anthropologists in that they state we must look at specific examples of the social and political process (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:1-29) that goes into establishing place. Two ways this could be done is to see how one invests time and labor in a particular location.

Throughout my interviews people talked about the ways in which they have invested time and labor into Missoula. These segments of the interviews are where people are stating that they know they belong to Missoula because they have taken the time to do things, such as learn a bend in the river or establish a place for children to play (this will be explored further in the next section).

Edward Casey is a philosopher who clearly states the importance of sense of place in the human experience. He also identifies the need for anthropologist to study how people experience place. Casey, in Stephen Feld and Keith Basso's book, Senses of Place (1996), states humans are more placelings than earthlings. This is because place is such an essential part of human perceptions. According to Casey, a sense of place, in fact, is an

ingredient to perceptions. Since humans are always perceiving they are also always having “emplaced experiences”. Emplaced experiences contribute to local knowledge of a place. Thus, Casey states anthropologists should begin to investigate the actual experiences of those who practice place (16).

Anthropologists Feld, Basso, Gupta, Ferguson and Rodman do just that. Each of these social scientists can be linked not only to the elements of sense of place mentioned by the western writers but also what I found in my study.

Theoretical Understandings

Sense of place is a relatively recent pursuit among anthropologists, yet is an increasingly popular topic. Anthropologists are now taking upon themselves to study this field of investigation. Stephen Feld, Keith Basso, Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson, and Margaret Rodman are anthropologist, who have established the importance of studying place and how to do so. Additionally, they have explored the challenges of studying place.

Gupta and Ferguson examine how we are to investigate sense of place. They state that for an understanding of how people attach meaning to a place, one must study the actual social and political processes that go into place making. One must pay careful attention to the cultural processes and practices that give meaning to place (1997:1-29). The value of these places were created. It was made by the participation of people living in Missoula. Social and natural amenities value in a community is dependent on people’s participation and narrative.

In Chapter Three I introduced people who are investing time and effort into projects they value. Previously I stated that investing time and effort into a place is an example of social and political processes. In Missoula, projects such as the Westside playground, preservation of historical sights, the Writers’ Collaborative and the tool library are all ideas that originated at the grassroots. These ideas were actualized because people made the commitment to put the time and labor in necessary to make them happen. Other ways people practice

place is by attending community activities, such as the Farmers' Market and participating in recreational opportunities.

A second aspect of the investigation of sense of place is the need to pay attention to the "perception and experience of place" by those who are creating it (1996:6). Through paying attention to perceptions and experience of place anthropologists can begin to examine how places can create different worlds of sense. Furthermore, we can see how "acts, events and objects" are imbued with significance (1996:8).

Feld and Basso have established how to study place, while anthropologist Rodman examines the intricacies of studying place. Margaret Rodman is an anthropologist who focuses on how place can take on different meanings according to time and to people. In her article, "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality", place is seen as a politicized social and cultural construct, as such, it can take on many different and changing meanings. Rodman states constructions of place "represent the temporary grounding of ideas" (1992:652). In general anthropologists should take place more seriously. Through listening to various "voices" about place and understanding places mean different things at different times we can examine why places are "constructed as they are, see how places represent people and begin to understand how people embody place" (1992:652).

Rodman's conceptualization of place is relevant to this thesis. In Missoula, what I learned about peoples' actual experiences of place came from well-educated people with similar backgrounds. As mentioned earlier in my paper this focus excludes the meaning of Missoula from those from different socio-economic groups. Even within the group I interviewed events occurred in Missoula after I completed my interviews that may have influenced them. For example, a locally-owned bookstore was closed. Its closure was attributed to the presence of a corporate bookstore.

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson are anthropologist who also address the

issue of associations of places being social creations (1997:4). As such, places can be explained in its social and historical context. According to Gupta and Ferguson it is important to think of places as “complex and contingent results of ongoing historical and political processes” (1997:4)

Habits of the Heart

In the beginning of this paper I asked the question: What causes so many college-educated people to forgo lucrative jobs in other cities to live in Missoula on minimum wage? I have answered this question by presenting what I discovered through listening to the people I interviewed--they value a triangular relationship between people, social amenities, and the landscape. Where does this aspect of my research connect with established thought on the subject? It lies somewhere between what the western writers and the anthropologists have established with Robert Bellah, et al.'s book, Habits of the Heart.

Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton compiled an extensive collection of work examining individualism and commitment in American life. An important part of this work is the role of community in an individual's sense of self. Additionally, aspects that contribute to a healthy community are explored.

According to Bellah, et al. characteristics of a group with a strong sense community is a group of people who share practices, are socially interdependent and make decisions together. This type of community is formed over long periods of time. Events of the past begin to shape a collective memory of the past. In turn these memories help define the community. One way these communities of memory are kept alive is through practices of commitment (1985:333). One practice of commitment is the way people talk about their lives in terms of their commitment to community.

Bellah states that there are languages of tradition and commitment. These languages can be used to organize life by references to certain ideals of

character (he uses courage and honor as two examples of an ideal) and to institutions that are seen as “embodiments of those values” (1985:160). People voice virtues that are part of their sense of self and help define a worthwhile life. These virtues play a part in people making commitments to community, for example becoming politically involved. This language of commitment and tradition is passed down and modeled by others who share the same values. Thus, everyone is connected due to keeping concrete commitments.

This idea of a shared language of commitment and tradition can be tied to Pierre Bourdieu’s symbolic value. Bourdieu created a social outline where by social practice can be examined. While examining exchange and production in a North African context Bourdieu identified what he calls the symbolic value of exchange. The exchange of produce, dairy, meat and land do not always involve the exchange of money but can also be given as a gift. In these exchanges there is an underlying value which surpasses conventional economic value. Such symbolic value includes honor, respect and familial ties. This concept of exchange can also be applied to production.

The people of Missoula are actively creating places that foster community. Through creating places that foster community people are expressing a shared value based in connection with landscape and people. Like the North African context of exchange, the symbolic value of creating places extend beyond the conventional notions of economic value. Thus, Missoula’s social and natural amenities are gifts given to its residents. At the same time, Missoula’s social and natural amenities are the expression of values created and practiced by its residents.

For example, the people that I talked to felt Missoula provided for them a sense security and a connection with land and with people. This enables them to sacrifice things such as expensive cars, large homes or other material possessions. This is not to say that people in Missoula do not have expensive cars, large homes or other material possessions but rather those are not the

symbols people point to when talking about representations of Missoula. People point to symbols, such as the Farmers' Market, that represent a wide shared value of community.

The idea of commitment and tradition is significant in other ways as well. Bellah cites case studies where people are living content lives "drawn from an active identification with communities and traditions." An identification with communities and traditions comes from a dialectical relationship between the private life and the public life. The private life issues are self-reliance, individualism, finding oneself, and close relationships. The public life is the need to get involved. Bellah et al. states that the public life and the private life should not be thought of in terms of being at odds with each other, but rather working together, mutually enriching life.

He goes on to clarify this idea by asserting that an impoverishment of one entails the impoverishment of the other. Similarly, of the people I talked to, those who lack more than one of the triangular relationship between people, social amenities and landscape (the public life) mentioned a dissatisfaction with their private lives.

In 1995, a political scientist, Robert Putman, wrote an article about Americans' lack of participation in social activities. He stated that Americans have declined in their ability to create social capital together. Social capital (capital not based in an economic value) is similar to Bourdieu's idea of symbolic capital. This decline in participatory social activities has caused a break down in community (Missoulian May 29, 2000). In contrast, the people of Missoula are still creating, participating, and talking about their shared value of community. They support activities such as the Farmers' Market and Out-to-Lunch, a riverside community luncheon, which continue to revive peoples sense of place in Missoula.

The last element of this chapter goes beyond this study and examines

the scope of understanding sense of place by looking into three different aspects of its application.

The Scope of Understanding Place

In the first half of this chapter I explored a handful of understandings of place to situate this study into a larger theoretical framework. Another way to place my research into a larger theoretical framework is to discuss how this paper could influence future studies. Future studies could include those in Missoula and Montana as well as studies in other cities in other states.

In Chapter One I mentioned that I considered doing a study on distinctions between “locals” and “outsiders” amidst increasing numbers of people moving into the area. From listening to the people that I interviewed about Missoula I discovered several distinctions that are made. First, “newcomers” are portrayed as being aggressive drivers, showing little patience on the road. They are also perceived as being the ones who want the large corporate businesses that are threatening locally owned businesses, thus not caring about the people who own stores. A third perception of newcomers is that they want to live in large houses, “up on hills, looking down on every one”—giving the message that they are not interested in establishing bonds with neighbors.

The study of how people attach meaning to place reveals values systems of the community. This information is helpful in understanding conflict between “newcomers” and “old-timers” in Missoula or anywhere else. In insider/outsider theory one way people set up boundaries is through value systems. My study shows that people reveal values when they talk about place.

This study would also be helpful in the examination of why Missoulians are perceived as being different from Montanans. Missoula and Montana each represent something different to those I interviewed. Most people who are transplants and even some who are not talk about the myth of Montana. It is a myth that belongs to an even larger category: the Myth of the American West.

Missoula is a stepping stone into the imagination of the American west. Yet, it subtly reminds, even provides a taste of, “back East”. Plays, poetry readings, book stores, the University, espresso machines--all things that represent values of people who live by books, rather than by their hands. These are all offered as gifts to those who live in Missoula. But it is the other gift of Missoula that inspires: the natural world. But the credit of the gift of the natural world belongs more to the state, than the town. Missoula is merely the gate, or the stepping stone. The natural world of Montana is about ruthless winter months, freezing streams and rivers, fierce bears and towering mountains--far removed from The Old Post, a favorite Missoula bar, on Sunday nights.

Thus, there is a distinction made between Missoula and Montana. Reasons that separate the two politically and socially. Reasons that were giving to me by those who I interviewed. These differences involve the influence of the university. The university is seen as contributing to a liberal influence in Missoula. Missoula is also perceived as being more environmental conscience than any other city in Montana. It is also perceived as being open minded to different types of life styles where as other places in Montana have relatively less options.

Another scope of the study of place is how people in places resolve seemingly conflicting values. Moving beyond city issues of insider/outsider conflict and comparisons between a city and its state. In Missoula, as I have mentioned, the people I interviewed are able to resolve the contradictory social forces that exist for them: The myth of Montana (i.e. a place offering a relaxed pace of life amidst stunning beauty) that draws people to seek a life here, verses the realities of its high cost of living and financially crippling wages.

They are able to do this because they place value on a reciprocal triangular relationship between people, services and activities, and landscape

that transcends an economic value (Bourdieu's symbolic capital). The specific examples that I used in Chapter Three show how the triangular relationship affects peoples happiness in Missoula. The result was that the majority of the people I interviewed who felt a strong connection with Missoula mentioned more than one of the aspects of the triangular relationship as being fulfilled. On the other hand the five people that I interviewed who don't feel a strong connection with Missoula mentioned that they were lacking more than one of the aspects of the triangular relationship.

How does the way Missoulians resolve their conflicting values apply to people living in other cities? How do people in other cities incorporate different understandings of place into their perceptions of where they live? I have been living in Los Angeles for a year and half and have discovered that there are people in Los Angeles, myself included, who's construction of place represents the opposite of those I studied in Missoula.

In Los Angeles peoples placed experience are more based on an economic value. Missoula is like Los Angeles in many ways. People from other places (usually very long distances) fantasize about what Los Angeles can do for them. But rather than reconnecting themselves to the land, a place, some where worth committing to and settling down in, people move to Los Angeles to find their fortune. Los Angeles, with its Hollywood, is a place where people can realize their dreams. In the meantime of becoming rich and famous, there are endless sunny days, the beaches, open spaces for hiking, the desert. I propose people move to Missoula for its link to the natural world with its unique touch of urban city just as people move to Los Angeles for its link to riches with its unique touch of the natural world.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the importance of Missoula, Montana as a place with its theoretical implications to the people who live there. Through twenty people's representations of their experiences and

practices I investigated 'sense of place' theoretically and ethnographically. From an understanding of place based on my personal experiences living in Missoula and my own observations I began this study. It has brought me to an understanding of place based on a large theoretical framework including sociologist, economist, geographers as well as anthropologist view points.

I began my study by identifying what I think are five main characteristics of Missoula. As I stated in Chapter Two these five characteristics are local economic well-being, changes in population and landscape, recreational opportunities and social environment. Throughout Chapter Two I looked at these five characteristics in a statistical and objective view. Chapter Three presents the voices of the people I interviewed. In Chapter Three I attempted to provide the reader with examples of peoples voiced experiences of place and examples of how people voiced their active creation of place in Missoula, Montana.

At the conclusion of this study I have discovered another limitation, in addition to those mentioned elsewhere. I have attempted to present various representations of place by examining what people told me during interviews. My intention is to portray these representations as temporary and constantly changing. However, in light of Rodman's article I can think of several ways my thesis and future studies of Missoula could be improved upon. First, more diverse types of people could be interviewed. This would allow for the study of conflicts. Although I did not focus on conflict, the people I interviewed did mention conflicts. Yet they still had a commonality that enable them to overlook those conflicts. Furthermore, specific practices could be the focal point of the research. For example, one of my questions was "What sorts of things do you do to contribute to that feeling [of belonging]?" This is a general question that got various answers. However, participation in the Farmers' Market came up frequently. A study that questioned the people of Missoula about the Farmers' Market specifically would further examine how people

give meaning to place.

Although it has its limitations, this thesis can be situated among current writings about place. Writing about sense of place in Montana and Missoula, in particular, is at a high. At the end of my writing I came across Fred Haefele's article about Missoula. He writes about Missoula's recreational opportunities, diversity of people, social amenities and the hardships of living in Missoula. Yet he writes: "Certainly it's easy to imagine a place where the economy is more supportive, where the living's not quite so hard, but it's impossible to find a spot that's so much fun as this one..." (2000:11). The gift or gifts which Montana and Missoula gives to its inhabitants have inspire writings from all types of people.

Appendix One

Sketch of Characters

Born in another state, live in Missoula with no financial sacrifice originally moved to Missoula because of job opportunity and consider Missoula their home.

Scott Burns—Professor at the University of Montana. He lives in the Rattlesnake area. Scott was born in New York and has live in Missoula for twenty-five years. He has traveled extensively.

Clare Davies—Past County Commissioner, lives in the Rattlesnake area, and is well know in the community. Over the years she has been involved in helping many small businesses. She has also in on several planning boards: building roads, historical restoration, and the city parks and recreational center. She moved her originally from Virginia when her husband was offered a job at the University.

Jane Myers—Jane and her husband moved to Missoula more than 20 years ago. They own a popular motorcycle shop in the southern part of town. She remembers being there before the mall and has watched Missoula grow in many other ways. She is concerned the county commissioners are not for new businesses. Jane enjoys living in Missoula and considers it her home however, she feel that wherever her and her husband are for the night is home.

Born in another state, stated they live in Missoula with some financial sacrifice, moved to Missoula for personal reasons and consider Missoula their home.

Wanda Orlet—Working with the children of Missoula is what contributes to Wanda's sense of belonging in Missoula. She revealed to me knowing the children, their parents and other relationships she has made with people are what she enjoys about living here. She moved here from New York city and one of her first impressions about what it is like to live here is that it is accessible. She lives in the Rattlesnake area.

Sam Yost—After retiring from the Navy, Sam and his wife research different places to move. They knew they wanted to be in the Rocky Mountains, but it wasn't until they visited many places that they decided to move here. He is also a student at the university and is involved with Missoula's politics. He states that his financial sacrifice moving here is that Montana doesn't give as many tax breaks on retirement income like other states.

Sandy Tate—In her late 30's, Sandy was born and raised in a small town in Northern Minnesota. She moved from California to Missoula with her husband and two children five years ago. She received her Ph.D in Biology from Berkeley and has a soft position in the Biology department. She is also the president a neighborhood association in Missoula. Through being involved in organizing many different types of neighborhood activities she feels as though she belongs here.

Born in another state, moved to Missoula for personal reasons, mention difficulties with living here, doesn't consider Missoula home.

Shannon Banks-- A single mother in her late twenties. She moved her from California with her husband. She works full time at a local restaurant. She resigned as one of managers because she felt the stress and amount of time she spent at work was affecting her home life. Her and her husband, Bill, have recently separated and she is now living in a two bedroom apartment with her three children.

Rebecca Robbins--Originally from Pennsylvania, Rebecca has been living in Missoula for the past twenty years. She works at Missoula YWCA and lives in East Missoula. Rebecca isn't working in the profession of her choice. The absence of her family is the main reason she gives for feeling like she doesn't belong in Missoula. She also doesn't share the experience of feeling like Missoula is her home, with most of the other people I interviewed.

Priscilla Waters--An intern at the Missoula Urban Development, Priscilla, has only been in Missoula for two months. She enjoys living in Missoula but finds it to be homogeneous. She will look into staying there however feels it is doubtful due to the job situation.

Born in another state, moved here for personal reasons, doesn't state any sacrifice, considers Missoula home.

Jack Smith--President of a Missoula neighborhood association in his mid forties. Jack was born in New York and moved here twenty years ago. He is actively involved in community development. He moved here from Seattle with his wife. They decided to move here because this is where her family is from.

Greg Portis-- Greg lives on the west side of Missoula with his wife and daughter. He is a mechanic and they have lived in Missoula for 25 years. He is originally from California. He moved to Missoula because of its location and landscape. He didn't mention a financial sacrifice.

Born in Montana, doesn't state financial sacrifice, chose to move here because of family ties, uncertain about job market, considers Missoula home.

Jessica Thomas--Born and raised in Missoula, Jessica has just recently moved back from Kalispell. She as lived in several other places in Montana and Idaho. Separated from her husband, and temporarily unemployed

Born in Montana, lived elsewhere and decided to move back because of quality of living, states financial sacrifice, considers Missoula home.

Wendy Lane--Born and raised in Missoula, Wendy remembers when her parents house was one of several in the Rattlesnake area. She lives here now

with her son, Mike. Wendy returned to Missoula 10 years ago, after living in Los Angeles. In L.A. she made more money, however, when she had Mike she wanted to move back to Missoula because she feels it is a better place to raise children. Although her job as a bartender at one of Missoula's local bars is stressful she finds her quality of life much better here. Wendy has hopes of moving to one of the smaller towns outside of Missoula but feels that the economy in those areas makes it almost impossible.

Curt Kelly--Patrick is a county engineer. He has moved around the country and feels that this is the best place to live. Does state that he could make more money elsewhere and would consider leaving Missoula for a brief period if the price was right.

Dylan Reed--One of two people I interviewed who live in the Target range area, Dylan enjoys not living near the downtown area. Dylan thinks Missoula is great and was first turned on to it when his older brother moved there for high school. Dylan and his family is from the Billings area. Although he enjoys the recreational activities available to him, such as hunting, he finds it hard to support his wife and two children. They live in a two bedroom apartment and are hoping to own a home in the same area. Dylan sites being unable to find a high paying job as the only reason why they would move away from the area.

Born in Montana, lived elsewhere and decided to move back because of quality of living, doesn't state financial sacrifice, considers Missoula home.

Emily Marks-- Working at CCD, Emily is involved in many aspects of community in Missoula. Her involvement doesn't end after work. For example, she has a weekly commentary on the local radio station. Additionally, her family takes great care in making sure they know the landscape, the neighborhood in which they live, and the people who live around them. For Emily knowing place in those kinds of ways is what makes people belong, not whether or not they were born there.

Joel Neely--A realtor in Missoula, Joel considers himself a veteran of Missoula's economic up swings and down swings. In the late 1970's and early 1980's when Missoula's housing economy hit bottom he decided to stay, lower his standard of living in monetary terms, and wait it out. Joel lives in the Target range area and feels as though it is the best place in Missoula due to easy access to recreational areas.

John Neely--A Missoula man who enjoys golfing, John works as the manager of a tire company in Missoula. He lives in Missoula because of all of the recreational opportunities.

Raised in Montana, but born in another state, has lived elsewhere and decided to move back, considers Missoula home.

Tara Brown--A musician and children's entertainer, Tara enjoys living in Missoula. She wasn't born in Montana but moved there shortly after she was

born. Her parents moved the family to a small town in Montana. Thus, Tara wasn't unfamiliar with the people and the landscape when she moved to Missoula several months before I interviewed her. She moved there from New York city where she had lived for many years. Her interview gave many interesting insights into the differences between big city and big town.

Raised in Montana, but born in another state,would like to move.

Steve Gilbert--Steve is a student at the University and enjoys some aspects of living in Missoula however he doesn't feel like he identifies with the majority of the people in this state. Steve states that Missoula is the only city he could live in because of the influence from the University. When Steve is done with school he will leave because he is doubtful that he could find a job that would allow him to pay off his college loans. Mentions that he feel trapped here do to lack of finances.

Appendix Two Interview Questions

What is it like to live in Missoula?

Do you think that would change if you were living some where else in Montana?

Where in Missoula do you live?

Can you describe what it is like to live there?

How does it compare to other parts of Missoula?

Is there any other place you would like to live in Missoula?

What sort of things do you do in your free time?

What is your favorite thing that Missoula has to offer?

The worst?

Is there any thing that makes Missoula an unique place to live?

Where were you born?

How long have you been here?

Why did you move here?

Do you consider yourself a Montanan?

Is there any other place you would like to live other than here?

Do you feel like you belong here?

What sort of things do you do to contribute to that feeling?

Appendix Three
Sample Interview

Interview Number 9- June 29, 1998--taped (t5 side b)

Born in Billings--female--Friend of a friend

I met her at her office downtown. She liked my questions very much and used the first one in one of her commentaries for the radio station.

¹Q: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE IN MISSOULA?

²A: It is--you are just taking these questions completely straight, however they hit ³us? Oh-okay...Missoula is really friendly, it's informal, you can get to know people. ⁴There is lots to do outside and it's not really expensive, for starters.

⁵Q: WHERE WHERE YOU BORN?

⁶A: In Billings.

⁷Q: HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE THERE?

⁸A: Well, I grew up there and then I came here to Missoula for school. Then I left ⁹here for nine years and lived in Wisconsin and I've been back for about nine years.

¹⁰Q: WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK?

¹¹A: My husband wanted to do a graduate degree at the University so we came back. ¹²And then my work kept me here.

¹³Q: WHERE DO YOU LIVE IN MISSOULA?

¹⁴A: I live by the Dairy Queen on Higgins, so I don't know what you call that ¹⁵neighborhood, we don't really have a neighborhood name, we aren't the slant street ¹⁶and we aren't the university district, but we are close to both.

¹⁷Q: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE THERE?

¹⁸A: My neighborhood people have been there for quite awhile so it is really a not a ¹⁹pretentious neighborhood the houses are kind of small, it kind of has these natural ²⁰limits on how expensive it's ever going to be to live there, so we are a working class ²¹neighborhood, some students, there is a fair number of rentals but mostly people ²²own their homes. It's easy, not real showy neighborhood so people aren't spending ²³a tons of time on their lawns and everything but its nice people keep it up and there ²⁴is a pretty good amount of kids, I have kids so I like it if there's more kids in the ²⁵neighborhood, you can walk everywhere you go, ride a bike, short car trip, it's real ²⁶convenient.

²⁷Q: HAVE YOU THOUGH ABOUT MOVING ANY WHERE ELSE IN MISSOULA?

²⁸A: No, we actually plan on to stay there for--forever if we are in Missoula.

²⁹Q: YOU MENTIONED NATURAL LIMITS ON THE PRICE...

³⁰A: Where I live? The houses are actually quite small, I think I live in the biggest ³¹house on the block, and the lots are modest, and the construction isn't like gorgeous ³²bungalows, it's sort of 1950's, not that interesting of architecture, so I don't think ³³it's every going to be that fancy of a neighborhood. And it's just not big enough for ³⁴people who need more square feet, the houses are quite small.

¹Q: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT MISSOULA? (asked that wrong)

²A: Probably the easy access to doing things outside. We do a fair amount of just ³walking with our kids in Patty Canyon or Rattlesnake or we actually spend a pretty ⁴good amount of time up on Mount Sentinel. So I like that. I like the informality of ⁵the town. And there's not a big disparity of groups, there's not a big elite group, and ⁶this kind of group and that kind of group. I know all kinds of different people, I ⁷know bankers, and I know writers, and I know nurses and you know you don't get ⁸segregated into economic groups here. I like that about Missoula, I like that for my ⁹kids.

¹⁰Q: HOW ABOUT THE WORST?

¹¹A: About Missoula? I should have thought about that more ahead of time--well, for ¹²me I probably come to political things or economic things. I think we have a real ¹³economic problem. I think it's tough to make a living here. I mean I think I'm ¹⁴probably not the only one who thinks I have the only job that would work for me ¹⁵here and I can't imagine that there is another one I could move into because we ¹⁶have a very limited economy so I think that worries me. I think we are somewhat ¹⁷threatened environmentally just because of the way we sit on top of our aquifer so ¹⁸those are things I worry about and I think the air quality stinks and people ¹⁹definitely have more respiratory problems so I guess those are the biggest irritants.

²⁰Q: THOSE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT--DO YOU THINK THEY WOULD ²¹CHANGE IF YOU WERE LIVING SOME WHERE ELSE IN MONTANA?

²²A: You know, I haven't lived in the other cities as an adult to know, I know it would ²³be very easy for me to move to Billings because it's familiar to me, but it's a much ²⁴bigger city. My folks live in Helena. I actually think the one thing about Missoula ²⁵that sets it apart is the University town--it's a very tolerant town and there is a lot ²⁶of thoughtful conversations about all kinds of different things so I think that aspect ²⁷would be a little different. But as far as I can tell, I get around to the other towns ²⁸somewhat, Montana as a whole is staying pretty informal and not having this ²⁹income spread that makes communities harder to live in, I probably, from what I ³⁰understand I think it would be different if you were in Bozeman, that whole valley, ³¹or Livingston. But the other towns are staying pretty friendly. I haven't lived ³²there as an adult, though, so I don't know.

³³Q: YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME OUTDOORS-- CAN YOU GO MORE ³⁴INTO WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

³⁵A: Well, this weekend is probably a pretty good example, on Saturday and Sunday ³⁶our kids were in a swim meet, outside at McCormick Pool, so they were swimming so ³⁷we had to go back and forth to that a lot and when we took them out of the pool on ³⁸Sunday we got our raft out and just took a short float down the Clark Fork, so we do a ³⁹lot of that. On another Sunday we might, like I said we go on these hikes, the trails ⁴⁰that are within 10-20 minutes of town we use those a lot and we take our kids on ⁴¹them. So we do a lot of that and we just walk, we are just outside a lot, we are in our ⁴²front yard, riding our bikes around the block or walking somewhere, I actually ride ⁴³my bike to work, because I rather be outside, or walk in the winter, it's about a mile ⁴⁴walk. Just being outside I like. We ski in the winter, so we do all that stuff. We are ⁴⁵just in the habit of being aware of what season it is, not consciously, we just like to ⁴⁶be outside.

¹Q: DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A MONTANAN?

²A: Yea!

³Q: CAN YOU GO INTO THAT A LITTLE BIT?

⁴A: I actually hate that whole thing, I just think it is so stupid how everyone worries ⁵about whether you're a Montanan or not and it's to me it's ridiculous.

⁶Q: WHO WORRIES ABOUT IT?

⁷A: I don't know, apparently the people who are Montanans and the people who ⁸aren't. And I just feel like who cares. You live here, you either contribute or you ⁹don't. What is where you born have to do with anything?--nothing. What are you ¹⁰doing is all I care about. I get very tired of that whole distinction, people making a ¹¹big deal about it. Every meeting you go to every has to go around and say I'm a ¹²native Montanan and bla bla bla and such an arbitrary difference but apparently ¹³it's a big deal right now. It's probably just scarceness. It's scarce to have been ¹⁴born here. We have a state with less than a million people so not that many people ¹⁵are born here so I guess whatever commodity people can figure out is scarce they ¹⁶will call valuable. I guess that's what's behind it. I try not to dwell on it myself.

¹⁷Q: YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BELONG HERE THEN?

¹⁸A: Oh, yea!

¹⁹Q: WHAT DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO THAT FEELING?

²⁰A: My works about economic development so I think about the community everyday ²¹and that happens to be my work. So, trying to make a contribution to economic ²²development and to jobs to people that don't have them. But there is other--I don't ²³think you can say I've done it 8 to 5 so that's my contribution. I think I try to make ²⁴the block I live on a better place. I really like my neighbors and I make sure I meet ²⁵new neighbors and I love to, on the weekends, see everybody and chat a little bit ²⁶and I think that is a really good thing. I think that every block was that way it ²⁷would be a slightly better place, and I think that is a contribution any body can ²⁸make, just to get to

know their neighbors. I do contribute to political campaigns, ²⁹whether you are a republic or democrat I think its really important to be involved ³⁰with politics and I do that to the extent I can with my time. I'm here making a ³¹home, I'm making relationships with the people that live around me and that I'm ³²working with my friends and my community and so I feel like I belong because I ³³never assume that I don't. Just being connected with where you live, you have to ³⁴make a relationship with people and you have to make a relationship with the place. ³⁵That's the way my family works. We have made a conscience, but not an intellectual ³⁶effort to be outdoors and know some places and as you build those relationships over ³⁷time and over seasons, well yeah I feel like I belong, I know this place slightly and ³⁸its the same with people. Just being in relationships with people, that's why I think ³⁹it is sad that so many people move in and out of Missoula. I think because of the ⁴⁰economy, because you get this fragmentism and you don't have long relationships ⁴¹over time. To me it's like big pyramid, there's your personal relationships that are ⁴²close and they build over time and that becomes how you are with the community ⁴³and the more breaking up with those relationships either with places or with ⁴⁴people the less anyone feels like they belong. It just becomes a real--everything ¹gets chopped up all the time--and I like continuity. So that's what contributes ²to it for me--the deepening of those layers of relationship with people and with ³places--going down the same stretch of the Clark Fork over and over and over that's--⁴Yea, I belong, I know a little strip of the Clark Fork.

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