Mounds In The Landscape: A Comparative Study Of Landscape Archaeology In English-Speaking Northwest Europe And North America

Jennifer Ann Rich
University of Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd
Part of the Archaeological Anthropology Commons

Recommended Citation
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/361
MOUNDS IN THE LANDSCAPE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING NORTHWEST EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Anthropology
The University of Mississippi

By
JENNIFER A. RICH
July 2013
ABSTRACT

Humans have been intrigued by their surrounding landscape for centuries. Sometimes intrigue has led to particular manipulations of the land by groups of people, such as the building of mounds and other monuments. Thus, the study of past landscape use is an important part in understanding our own interests. Over the years, developments in archaeology have come to include various perspectives on how past landscapes should be interpreted. This thesis will examine the changes within the theoretical perspectives in landscape archaeology through the decades. Within the regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America, I will specifically focus on the effects that theories have on mound interpretation as seen within a literature sample from each region. By tracing the path the various theories and their applications take within the two regions, a better understanding of landscape archaeology for each region can be gained. It is expected that a study of landscape methodologies can later be used to find gaps within the two regions’ interpretations and what can be learned from the other.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated the family and friends who dealt with my insanity during this time of stress. I love each and every one of you and appreciate all you have done for me. Specifically, I would like to dedicate this to my parents for supporting a six years old’s decision to become an archaeologist.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation goes to my advisor, Dr. Matthew Murray, and my committee members, Dr. Jay Johnson and Dr. Robbie Ethridge. Your guidance throughout the process and in class has meant a great deal to me.

To the Department of Anthropology as a whole, I express my gratitude for the assistantship, without which I would not have been able to complete my studies at the University of Mississippi.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ...................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................... iv
LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................ vii
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................ viii

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1
  LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY ....................................................................................... 2
  DEFINING MOUNDS ....................................................................................................... 4
    MOUNDS IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND ........................................................................ 4
    MOUNDS IN NORTH AMERICA ............................................................................... 5
  WHAT IS THEORY ......................................................................................................... 7
  THESIS STRUCTURE ................................................................................................... 8

TERMS AND THEORY IN LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY ........................................ 10
  DEFINING LANDSCAPE .............................................................................................. 11
  SPACE, PLACE, AND TIME ....................................................................................... 13
    SPACE ...................................................................................................................... 14
    PLACE ..................................................................................................................... 15
    TIME ....................................................................................................................... 16
  DEVELOPMENTS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY ........................................... 20
    ARCHAEOASTRONOMY ......................................................................................... 21
    COSMOLOGY ......................................................................................................... 23
    PHENOMENOLOGY ............................................................................................... 25
    SOCIOPOLITICAL IDEOLOGY ............................................................................... 27
    CROSOVERS .......................................................................................................... 30

METHODS .................................................................................................................... 32
  THE DATA ................................................................................................................... 33

STUDIES IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING NORTHWEST EUROPE ..................................... 37
  ARCHAEOASTRONOMY ............................................................................................. 38
  COSMOLOGY ............................................................................................................ 40
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1- Schiffer’s Flow Model.................................................................18
FIGURE 2- Sites discussed in Chapter 4.........................................................37
FIGURE 3- Aerial view of Newgrange and Knowth........................................39
FIGURE 4- Newgrange passage tomb (Cooney 2000:216)...............................41
FIGURE 5- West Kennet Long Barrow.........................................................46
FIGURE 6- Avebury and surrounding sites (Sims 2009:392).............................49
FIGURE 7- Avebury stone rings (Sims 2009:399)..........................................50
FIGURE 8- Silbury Hill................................................................................55
FIGURE 9- Construction phases of Silbury Hill (Bayliss et al. 2007:29).............57
FIGURE 10- Sites discussed in Chapter 5......................................................59
FIGURE 11- Marching Bear Mound Group..................................................63
FIGURE 12- Marching Bear Mound Group (Theler and Boszhardt 2003:128)....63
FIGURE 13- Monk’s Mound, Cahokia.........................................................69
FIGURE 14- Spiro Mounds...........................................................................71
FIGURE 15- Bear effigy mound at Effigy Mound National Monument Park........75
FIGURE 16- Comparison of Sample Percentages.........................................83
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1- Key Words .....................................................................................................................34

TABLE 2- English-speaking Northwest Europe Sample ..................................................................38

TABLE 3- North America Sample ..................................................................................................60

TABLE 4- Counts and Percentages of Data Sample ......................................................................83

TABLE 5- English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America Comparison P-Values ......84
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“You who dwell in the earth, whose secret songs vibrate deep in her memory, you who are close to the beating heart of our great mother, hear me now. Take the broken shell of a good man and use it well. In death, may he nourish life. May he be part of the old and the new that twine together in this place of deep mystery” (Marillier 2001:159).

The mystery of mounds is something that has intrigued humans for centuries. Our need to explain the existence of mounds in the landscape has surpassed the realm of academia and has seeped into other parts of our lives, such as fictional works. Like Juliet Marillier’s (2001) medieval novel Son of the Shadows, where mounds are respected places of the Old Ones, or Stephen Lawhead’s (1991) Paradise War, where mounds are magical portals that can transport a person to the time of their creation in Iron Age Britain. In both books, mounds are still viewed as the unknown that are entwined with a variety of explanations for their existence.

In the following chapters of this thesis, a comparative study of mound interpretations between English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America will be discussed. The purpose of this thesis is to look at different theoretical frameworks in landscape archaeology within a literature sample from the two regions and how each framework affects the interpretation of mounds. Furthermore, the comparative study’s objective is to identify any use of a one particular theoretical framework over others within the regions and what that prevalence means for the understanding of mounds.
Landscape Archaeology

The practice of landscape archaeology has been around much longer than the term itself, which took root during the 1970s and 1980s. Like other terms, “landscape archaeology” can be defined in a variety of ways, but Wendy Ashmore and Chelsea Blackmore (2008:1569-1578) argue that all definitions in some way describe it as the “archaeological study of people’s involvement with their surrounding environment.” Similarly, Matthew Johnson (2007:3-4) explains that landscape archaeology includes two elements; the study of human created and natural land beyond the site and the view of landscape from current and past perspectives. Definitions shifted as the focus of landscape studies changed. Early archaeological studies focused on landscape as a backdrop for artifacts to be plotted, and human activity was studied within the political systems and economics of a society (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Anschuetz et al. 2001). Landscape studies were focused on the natural environment and its connection to humans, such as subsistence and occupation (David and Thomas 2008: 28; Anschuetz et al. 2001:157-158). By the 1960s, Lewis Binford’s “New Archaeology” resulted in advances in methodology that focused around explaining data more accurately and understanding past cultures as social systems different from our own (Binford 1962; Binford 1964; Darvill 2008: 63; Johnson 2007:121). Gordon Willey’s (1953) study of Viru Valley and Vincas Steponaitis’ (1978) study of the organization of Mississippian centers are examples of the settlement pattern studies that apply the methodological concept of the New Archaeology. Willey’s (1953:7) study looks at Viru Valley settlements within four functional categories; living sites, community or ceremonial structures, fortified strongholds or places of refuge, and cemeteries. Willey (1953:1) suggest that settlement pattern studies like his, “offer strategic starting points for the functional interpretation of archaeological cultures.” Similarly, Vincas Steponaitis (1978:437) offers a
model to study the centering of settlements within Mississippian society. Steponaitis (1978:437) explains that three characteristic are seen within the organization of Mississippian centers. One, that a high-order center with a stable, politically unified system engages in little competition with adjacent centers resulting in the regular spacing of centers. Two, low-order centers cluster around high-order centers. Three, the location of high-order centers is determined by the location of the low-order centers within its control.

By the 1970s and 1980s, Bruno David and Julian Thomas (2008: 27) argue that landscape “ceased to be simply a unit of analysis over and above the ‘site’ and became instead an object of investigation in its own right.” Within this shift in theory, landscape studies took on a “spiritual dimension,” or a focus on past religions, beliefs and experiences, to include the study of sacred landscapes as well as the settlement and subsistence studies (David and Thomas 2008:27; Ashmore and Knapp 1999:1-2). The arrival of the spiritual component resulted in developments in theories like archaeoastronomy, cosmology, and phenomenology. Landscape archaeology now includes studies regarding translations of past beliefs and myths (cosmology), past knowledge of the sky (archaeoastronomy) and past experiences within the landscape (phenomenology) (Darvill 2008: 67; Patterson 2008: 79-80). Thomas Patterson (2008:80) states that in more recent studies landscape has become “spaces of public performance, the transcendence of the ordinary, communication, and the cultural reproduction of social relations, replete with spectacle, theatricality, ritual, impersonation, movement, and meaning, on the one hand, and sights, sounds, smells, textures, light intensities, temperatures, humidities, and so forth, on the other.” Like archaeology as a whole, landscape archaeology continues to develop and shifts views with each passing year. The goal remains the same, however, what did landscape mean to the people of the past?
Defining Mounds

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (website accessed 20 Jan 2013), a “mound” is “an artificial bank of hill of earth or stones; especially: one constructed over a burial or ceremonial site.” Within the regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America mounds come in a variety of forms. For discussions in this thesis, mounds in Britain and Ireland include long barrows, round barrows, and cairns. In North America mounds include burial mounds, platform mounds, effigy mounds, and shell rings.

**Mounds in Britain and Ireland**

Long barrows in Britain and Ireland are commonly dated to the later Neolithic (circa 4000 BC-2500BC) (Philip’s Encyclopedia 2008). These mounds are oblong in shape with a stone chamber area built into one end made up of one room or many. All chambers are made with large, flat stone slabs for the walls and roofs (Philip’s Encyclopedia 2008). With the remains of multiple individuals within each chamber, long barrows are thought to be communal in nature and not solely places for the elite of a community (Edmonds 1999; Barrett 1994). However, some long barrows have been found to contain no remains at all (Barrett *et al.* 1991). Examples of long barrows include West Kennet Long Barrow in Wiltshire and Wayland’s Smithy in Oxfordshire.

Round barrows became common in Britain and Ireland during the Bronze Age (circa 2500 BC-800 BC) and were in use into the Iron Age (circa 800 BC- AD 100) in some cases (Barrett *et al.* 1991; Hingley 1996). These mounds are conical in shape, no longer include a stone chamber, and usually contain one or more burials (Barrett 1994). The burials are suggested to include a person of importance within a community, which is seen by the types of goods (jewelry, weapons, or special clothing) buried with the individual (Renfrew 1986; Shanks...
and Tilley 1982). On the contrary, round barrows with multiple burials are thought to be a representation of kin groups within a community (Barrett 1994). Manton Barrow and Hemp Knoll Mound in Wiltshire provide examples of round barrows.

Cairns are man-made piles of stone marking a memorial or landmark (Encyclopedia Britannica accessed 20 Jan 2013). The use of these forms of mound span from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Encyclopedia Britannica accessed 20 Jan 2013). Cairns are similar to long barrows in structure without the earthen mound covering the stone material. These mounds are conical or rectangular in shape and contain one or more chambers within (Cummings et al. 2002). They may or may not contain burial remains inside, but reflect a communal use similar to long barrows. Examples of cairns include Ffostyll North and Ffostyll South in southwest Wales (Cummings et al. 2002).

**Mounds in North America**

Burial mounds are earthworks that are either conical or linear in shape and contain one or more burials (Kavasch 2004; Theler and Bozhardt 2003). Sometimes burials are found within effigy, or animal and human shaped, mounds, but more often those types of mounds are empty of remains. Burials may also be associated with some kind of grave good, either simple (weapons, jewelry, or pottery) as seen in the Adena (1000 BC- AD 100) culture or more elaborate (conch shells, copper, silver, or obsidian) as seen in the Hopewell (200 BC- AD 500) and Mississippian (AD 750- AD 1500) culture (Kavasch 2004:55-93). Example of burial mounds sites include the Dickson Mounds in Illinois and Spiro Mounds in Oklahoma (Harn 1980; Kavasch 2004).

Platform mounds are large, step pyramid earthenworks with flattened tops (Kavasch 2004:30). Associated primarily within the Mississippian (AD 750- AD 1500) time period, platform mounds are thought to be the residential areas of society’s elite (Butzer 1990; Chappell
However, platforms mounds are present during the Archaic period (7000-1000 BC) like Poverty Point and Watson Brake in Louisiana (Kavasch 2004:4; Saunders 2004:147-148). A plaza and other smaller conical and linear mounds are often surrounding a platform mound (Emerson 1997a; Chappell 2002). Monk’s Mound at Cahokia and Mound A and B at Moundville are examples of these forms of mounds.

Effigy mounds are Late Woodland (circa AD 350-AD1300) earthenworks shaped as animals or humans (Gartner 1999; Kavasch 2004; Theler and Boszhardt 2003). Common effigies include bears, panthers, lizards, turtles, and thunderbirds as seen at Lizard Mounds in Wisconsin and the Marching Bear Mound Group in Iowa (Gartner 1999; Kavasch 2004). However, the Serpent Mound in Ohio and the Man Mound in Wisconsin are also included within the type. Effigy mounds are encountered within the Midwest region of North America including south and western Wisconsin, portions of Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa (Kavasch 2004:79; Theler and Bozhardt 2003:127-128). Burials can be contained within the mounds, but most commonly they are empty (Gartner 1999).

Shell rings are structures dating to the Middle and Late Archaic period (7000-1000 BC) (Saunders and Russo 2011). Consisting of a soil and shell fill, shell rings come in a variety of shapes. Most shell rings are in the shape of a “C”, “U”, or “8” and rarely form a complete circle (Russo 2004:55; Saunders and Russo 2011:45). Other artifacts may be contained within the fill of the shell ring, like pottery and fish bone. However, the plaza area, or the center of the ring is usually clear of artifacts and lithic debris is rarely found within the vicinity of these structures (Saunders and Russo 2011:44). The function of shell rings is debated among archaeologists, but many suggest the mounds to be used as a place of residence for important people within the society or the result of feasting activities within the area (Russo 2004:40-43).
What is Theory

Theory is the basis of all archaeological studies (Binford 1967; McGee and Warms 2008; Schiffer 1988; Johnson 2010). As McGee and Warms (2008:ix) state, “theories determine the types of questions anthropologists ask and the sort of information they collect.” An archaeologist interested in past settlement patterns would most likely pay little attention to a past society’s belief system or their understanding of the universe. Furthermore, theory is the starting point from which archaeologists interpret the data collected (McGee and Warms 2008:1). It provides the context for interpretation, the “fundamental assumptions” that an archaeologist has regarding past cultures (Binford 1967:203; Schiffer 1988:462). Schiffer (1988:462) explains that these “fundamental assumptions” are “very abstract, deeply held, and stubbornly incapable of empirical disproof.” Therefore, it is important to understand what theory is applied to data in a framework of interpretation, which could lead to an understanding of the assumptions being made and the ones being overlooked. Matthew Johnson (2010:6) argues that since theory is used in all we do as humans, intentional or not, it is more useful in our understanding of the past to acknowledge its presence. By outlining the assumptions, reasons, and approaches within a theory, archaeologists can compare one interpretation of the past against another (Johnson 2010:4-5).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore mound interpretations within a sampling of literature in English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North American landscape archaeology in a similar way to Johnson’s comparative approach. However, this thesis will go beyond the comparison of interpretations within one theoretical framework by looking at the interpretation of mounds, a specific archaeological feature seen in the two regions, within five theoretical frameworks. By including studies in different theoretical frameworks, the
effects theory has on the regional understanding of the specified feature can be compared and a region’s more prevalent assumptions within the sample literature are acknowledged.

Mounds were chosen as the specific archaeological feature in this study because they are prominent figures in the landscape that require a great amount of community effort to create and are the topic of discussion in many theoretical viewpoints (Dalan 1997; Chapelle 2002; Bradley 1998). The variety and extent of the resulting literature from the discussion on mounds provides a good basis for comparison on how theory can affect the practice of archaeological interpretation. Case studies within the regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America were included in this thesis to provide the reader with examples of the regional application of the theoretical frameworks in mound interpretation.

It should be noted that this thesis is in no way a literature review of mounds in the discussed regions. Instead, this thesis is focused on the practice of theory in mound interpretation as seen within a sample of literature reviewed and categorized by the author. However, the importance of this thesis is seen within the lack of such studies in the existing mound analysis literature. By comparing the use of theoretical frameworks in data interpretation between regions, the benefit and limitations of any theoretical dominance becomes clearer. The regions in question (in this case English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America) can learn from the other and incorporate beneficial approaches to future interpretations.

**Thesis Structure**

The following chapter in this thesis (Chapter 2) will provide the reader with the basic concepts in landscape archaeology studies, including definitions of the terms “landscape,” “space,” “place,” and “time,” as well as a description of the characteristics of the theoretical frameworks used to categorize the sample literature. These basic elements, the concepts, and the
Theoretical frameworks of landscape archaeology outlined in Chapter 2 will be helpful to the reader in understanding later discussions of case studies (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Tilley 1994; Bradley 1998).

A sample of the mound interpretation literature was acquired through the use of key words in database searches. The method utilized for the searches is outlined in Chapter 3, as well as the process of how the sample size was obtained. Case studies of mound interpretation in English-speaking Northwest Europe including Britain and Ireland (Chapter 4) and North America (Chapter 5) are used to offer the reader an example of how the theoretical frameworks within the sample are applied.

A discussion of the results from the analysis of the literature sample is provided in Chapter 6. This chapter explores the observed prevalence of any theoretical frameworks over others in English-speaking Northwest European and North American mound studies and how the theory influences the regional interpretation of mounds as seen within the sample. A discussion of the limitations that result from such a theoretical prevalence in the regions is also presented. The comparison between the results seen in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America can be applied to future studies as a way to reconsider the limitations in present interpretation.
CHAPTER 2: TERMS AND THEORIES IN LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY

The study conducted in this thesis is focused within landscape archaeology as seen in English-speaking Northwest European and North American mound interpretations. Landscape archaeology debates the definitions of many terms, important concepts, and the developments in the field. All of the topics of debate offer good arguments and provide a basis for the present practice of landscape archaeology. The following chapter will discuss the defining of the key terms landscape, space, place, and time. Defining each term is fundamental to the understanding and practice of landscape archaeology. For instance, is landscape the result of human manipulation or nothing more than the natural world around us? How does space become place within the landscape? Once the terms are defined by landscape archaeologists, theories are applied to a landscape study to interpret its meaning to past people. Research on the developments in landscape archaeology was conducted to understand the theoretical frameworks used within the field. From this research, it was determined that archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers are the five theories to be used as the categories for the completion of this thesis because they encompass different aspects of life in relation to mound construction and use that would include all the literature encountered in the sample. The characteristics used to determine between the frameworks will be described in this chapter. The information in this chapter will provide the reader with the basic concepts of landscape archaeology and the theories within it, which are used in the context of the case studies in Chapters 4 and 5.
Defining Landscape

There are difficulties in defining the term “landscape.” Each definition offered by archaeologists and geographers is usually introduced within the constraints of a theoretical stance. Definitions of the term “landscape” shift emphasis frequently and are discussed at length within the landscape archaeology literature. In *Envisioning Cahokia: A Landscape Perspective*, Rinita Dalan, William I. Woods, John A. Koepke, George R. Holley, and Harold W. Watters (2003) provide an entire list of explanations of what the term “landscape” encompasses. Two definitions from the authors’ list that emphasize the range of general to more specialized ideas include Roberts’ 1987 generalized definition of landscape as a “physical framework within which human societies exists” and the more specialized definition provided by Wagner (1972) where landscape is a “mode of human communication, a medium within which social values are actively debated and symbolically realized” (Dalan *et al.* 2003:19).

Further exploration of the term “landscape” is offered by Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp (1999) in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, where the “landscape” is divided into constructed, conceptualized, and ideational realms of the world. As Ashmore and Knapp (1999:10) explain, the constructed landscape consists of areas that are intentionally created by a culture. Often, constructed landscapes are the result of socio-economic developments in a culture, such as mines, quarries, and agricultural fields. Constructed landscapes are seen within every archaeological site and can be reconstructed easily for a better understanding of past life ways. However, Ashmore and Knapp (1999:10) caution that any reconstruction of constructed landscapes can project assumptions on the meaning gained. The definition of constructed landscapes, in turn, leads to the idea of conceptualized landscapes, which give meaning to the world. Conceptualized landscapes are derived from images that
people take away from the land that are interpreted by the individual and the group in terms of their own experiences (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:11). Interpretations drawn from conceptualized landscapes are usually made as a way to religiously or culturally explain the natural world and can be reinterpreted over time. The conceptualized landscape then leads into the ideational landscape where the interpretation of landscape becomes imaginative, emotional, and most importantly from an insider’s point of view (Ashmore and Knapp 1999:12). Ideational landscapes include natural regions and intentionally built structures that convey moral messages, recount myths, genealogical records and other meanings for the community.

Similarly, in An Archaeology of Landscapes: Perspectives and Directions, Kurt Anschuetz, Richard Wilshusen, and Cherie Scheick (2001:160) discuss a definition for “landscape” that includes four “principles” of landscape. First, “landscapes are not synonymous with natural environments” (Anschuetz et al. 2001:160). Instead landscapes are cultural systems that organize people within their environment. Second, landscape is a cultural product developed by the daily activities of the community, much in the same sense as Ashmore and Knapp’s “constructed” landscape. Also like conceptualized landscapes, landscape as a cultural product brings meaning to the natural world and does not need to be physically constructed. Third, landscapes should be considered the “arenas for all of a community’s activities,” which help them to sustain their way of life (Anschuetz et al. 2001:160). Lastly, Anshuetz et al. (2001) emphasize that landscape perceptions are always changing as the interpretation of each community and generation changes.

Even with the various definitions, Dalan et al. (2003:20) argue that the explanations of what landscape is and how it is perceived by people all share a common factor. At their most basic, landscape definitions all agree that humans take part in some way. Humans are viewing,
experiencing, shaping, or interacting with the landscape. Humans are involved with all aspects of the landscape and should be taken into consideration when conducting a study of past landscape manipulation and use as seen within the case studies provided in Chapter 4 and 5.

Within the context of this thesis, the definition of “landscape” follows Wagner’s (1972) idea of landscape being a source of human communication and Ashmore and Knapp’s (1999) idea of conceptualized landscape. More clearly defined, landscape is the vessel in which humans convey their beliefs, social structure, and experiences through the construction of mounds. Like Wagner’s (1972) and Ashmore and Knapp’s (1999) definitions, mounds are a feature of the landscape that are viewed as the result of human creation on the land as a way to express their culture in a physical way. Therefore, mounds are a glimpse of that culture and can be interpreted as such. Interpretations will vary due to the theoretical frameworks within which mounds are studied, but each framework is focused on explaining why mounds exist and what they meant to the people of the past. This thesis will look at varying theoretical interpretations of mounds as expressions of culture by humans in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America.

**Space, Place, and Time**

The concepts of space, place, and time are also important to the discussion of understanding the practice of landscape archaeology. All three concepts work together to create the world as we understand it and in most cases the existence of one depends on the other. Through space, place and time, researchers explain how the landscape was understood, viewed, and acquired history, which is foundational to the understanding of approaches in landscape archaeology from any theoretical point of view.
Space

Space is the point of beginning for landscape as our unconscious knowledge of the world around us (Tilley 1994; Tilley 1996; Geiryn 2000; Hillier and Hanson 1984). Removed from “material form and cultural interpretation,” space is described as abstract geometries by Thomas Gieryn (2000:465), which include distance, direction, size, shape, and volume. Once space becomes meaningful to humans, or contains history, it turns into place. Robin Beck Jr. et al. (2007) agree that space is where events occur to create place and is the platform for structural transformations, or cultural change. Furthermore, Beck et al. (2007:835) argues that “space is not simply where structural transformations happen. Instead, structural transformations create novel opportunities for making, inhabiting, and reshaping space.” Through the events of structural transformation, space acquires a meaningful history to become place, which becomes the consciously acknowledged landscape that people live within and archaeologists later study.

Christopher Tilley (1994:16-17) has divided space into five different types; somatic, perceptual, existential, architectural, and cognitive. “Somatic space”, or the sensory experiences of the world is much like place in that it is an experience for an individual with the exception that this space is the subconscious knowing of where you are in the world. From somatic space is “perceptual space,” where an individual becomes “egocentric” in Tilley’s (1994) terms. Perceptual space is where the individual experiences their daily life in the world and is related to the individual’s emotions and thoughts. Third is “existential space,” or a space that is interlinked with the perceptual, but goes past what the individual experiences in the world. Existential space incorporates the experiences of the entire group that cause the meaning of space to constantly change and leads to the creation of new social meaning. When the group intentionally creates or bounds existential space, it becomes “architectural space.” Social meaning becomes tangible
through architectural space and people are able to remember easily when referring to the meaning in the land. The group can then create a “cognitive space,” which is the “basis for reflection and theorization” (Tilley 1994:17). Within cognitive space, both the individual and group are able to understand the other spaces and their relation to the rest of the world. It is through the conscious acknowledgement of Tilley’s types of spaces that places are created. From the types of space, a place acquires meaning to the individual, but it is only when the individual consciously acknowledges the meaning of a space that it becomes place. Thus, as Wesson (1998:95) suggests, place becomes more than just the backdrop of space. Place is an influential part of societal actions that creates a physical link to all aspects of life. Places come “alive” to the community and are relevant in every aspect of individual life.

**Place**

The concepts “place” and “space” are interdependent. Since a place cannot exist without a perceived space, it is understood that space is the stage from which place is developed (Beck et al. 2007; Tilley 1994). Thus, place is the conscious knowledge of the world around us and is only limited by the stretches of the human mind (Tilley 1994:15). People experience space on a daily basis, often without even being aware of their experience. Through knowledge and experiences of the world, spaces begin to acquire a history and become places (Tilley 1994:27; Wilson 2010:4). Tilley (1994:27-28) suggests in *A Phenomenology of Landscape* that the daily experiences humans have are memory-based and are connected to past experiences. From past and present experiences, people learn the significance of place within their individual experience and how to move within the landscape according to this knowledge. Wilson (2010:4) agrees with Tilley’s (1994) explanation of places accumulating history; however, he goes further to propose that experiences can be reinterpreted and reformed several times even by the individual,
so that experiences are continuously different from the first to the last. Similarly, Christopher Rodning (2009:187) states that places are “the outcomes of [cultural] activity, and they shape the practices of domestic and ritual life.” Rodning (2009) contends that landscape should not be viewed as just environmental, a provider of food and shelter, but cultural and meaningful.

Once “space” has gained a history and meaning within a culture it becomes a “place.” Nowakowski (2001:139) provides a good example of how space becomes place for archaeologists doing field work by looking at sites with evidence of planned abandonment. Nowakowski discusses how abandonment is considered the entry of material culture into the archaeological record. By leaving behind material in the landscape, an individual provides that space with a meaning for an archaeologist (Nowakowski 2001:139). The meaning of material in the landscape can cause some interpretation problems for the archaeologists, since past meaning may not be the same as the present meaning associated with material culture and could result in “considerable implications for our interpretation of the histories of places” (Nowakowski 2001:139).

**Time**

For space and place, “time” is an important factor. Time provides the means to acquire history, since through time interpretations of space and place can change. Gavin Lucas (2005:2) argues that archaeologists perceive time as the chronology of a culture, which results in time being presented as a “uniform, linear phenomenon.” In turn, Lucas suggests that this treatment of time is reflected within the interpretation of the past. Sir John Lubbuck’s Three-Age system is an example of such a case. The Three-Age System, developed in the 19th century, was Lubbuck’s description of the progression of cultures from savages to barbarians to civilizations (Lucas 2005). With each progression a culture became more complex, where savages were the
simplest stage of a culture (*i.e.* the view of Native Americans at the time) and civilizations (*i.e.* the view of Britain at the time). Though the Three-Age System did recognize that cultures regressed as well as progressed, the concept was still linear in nature with no combining of the stages (Lucas 2005:2).

As a result of this uniform, linear understanding of time, Lucas (2005:32) argues that archaeologists focus on the spatial relationship of artifacts at a site, such as stratigraphy, or the idea that more recent artifacts are found above older ones. Therefore, archaeologists overlook the life cycle of artifacts and households (Lucas 2005:32). Lucas suggests that Michael Schiffer’s archaeological and systemic contexts offer a solution. Though some archaeologists, like Lewis Binford, believe the archaeological context (the archaeological record such as artifacts, ecofacts, and features) is static and unchanging once it is deposited (Binford 1981). Schiffer (1972) contends that the archaeological context is not such a direct representation of the systemic context, or the living population and activities, as Binford suggests. Instead, the archaeological context is always changing due to transforms. Transforms are the processes that result in change to the archaeological context, such as erosion, bioturbation (*i.e.* roots and rodent holes), and reuse by the systemic context (Lucas 2005:33-35). This process is cyclical and even includes the systemic context of the archaeologists because the current culture will inevitably bias the understanding of past cultures (Figure 1). Since transforms bring changes to the archaeological context, the record of the past becomes distorted (Lucas 2005). As more time passes, the more changes can occur.

Richard Bradley (1998:87) also argues that archaeologists primarily see time as a chronological sequence provided by material culture through locations in a site stratigraphy or certain styles of artifacts and source materials being used during specific times. However, he
Figure 1: Schiffer’s Flow Model (1972)

(1998:87) explains that time and the changes that occur can be viewed in two ways; “abstract” or “substantial.” “Abstract” or “chronological” time is measured, while “substantial” or “human” time is marked by experiences (Bradley 1998:87). Both are used to describe the changes within the meaning of places, but do so in different ways. Bradley (1998:87) states that,

“[Human] time consists of many recurrent moments, but abstract time is broken into equal segments, which are endlessly repeated. More important for the present discussion, human time can also be backward looking; people live their lives in relation to the past, and they understand their world by referring to tradition. Abstract time, on the other hand, involves rational calculation and can be used to plan the future.”

Abstract and substantial time provide a chronology of the land and the history it holds for people. Abstract time describes the physical changes in the landscape (erosion, the building of new structures, when material culture was left behind), but constrains the interpretation of a place within the chronology. Similarly, substantial time describes the changes in meaning to the landscape, but part of the interpretation of the changes in meaning are found within the aspects
of abstract time (Bradley 1998:87). Time provides a basis for interpreting place and the experiences that change the meaning.

Geoff Bailey (2007) makes a similar distinction as Richard Bradley (1998) for time within archaeology. Bailey’s distinction is made between “temporal archaeology” and the “archaeology of time”. Like abstract time, temporal archaeology focuses on dating methods and the chronology of material culture and the past (Bailey 2007:217). Whereas, the archaeology of time is similar to substantial time and is focused on how time is perceived (Bailey 2007:217). Time, then, becomes narrative and filled with the history of past people.

Though there may be some variation in interpretation, Tilley (1994;1996), Gieryn (2000), Hillier and Hanson (1984), Wilson (2010), and Wesson (1998) explain the difference between space and place. Space is the unconscious understanding and organization of the world, while place is the conscious acknowledgement of space that brings meaning to the landscape. Both are influenced by time, since time is when history is acquired and space becomes place (Bailey 2007; Bradley 1998; Lucas 2005). Within this thesis, the various interpretations of place within the scope of time are explored as seen within the mounds of English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America. Mounds are places of human manipulated landscapes that hold meaning and history, not only for the people that created them but also the people who live amongst them. Over time the meaning and history of mounds will change for the people that view the landscape, perhaps starting as places for the ancestors as seen in Britain and Ireland or places of elite power as seen in North America and ending as the places of mystery that archaeologist study today.
Developments in Landscape Archaeology

Bruce Trigger (2006:473) defines landscape archaeology as the study of “meanings that prehistoric landscapes had for the people who inhabited or used them and how these understandings channeled human activity.” Though landscape archaeology and settlement archaeology are similar, landscape archaeology has often been referred to as a separate field from settlement archaeology. The distinction between the two fields is made with the explanation that settlement archaeologists focus more on the uses of the land, while landscape archaeologists look to the cultural meanings of the landscape (Trigger 2006:473; Dalan et al. 2003:21). However, both the use and cultural meanings of the land in prehistoric life are important. Therefore, it can be argued that landscape archaeology could be used as a unifying paradigm; providing a way to look at the whole of human interaction with the land (Anschuetz et al. 2001:163). The idea of a unifying paradigm is seen throughout the development of landscape archaeology within the studies that include how past people used the land and what the landscape meant to them. Within this thesis, five theoretical frameworks seen within the practice of landscape archaeology were used for the categorization of the English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America literature samples on the interpretation of the creation and use of mounds by past people. The five theoretical frameworks used were included within this thesis because they hold characteristics that would encompass all aspects of life that would be encountered within the books and articles reviewed in the sample literature. The following sections will define these frameworks within the context of this thesis for the reader, including archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers. Each framework definition and resultant categorization is focused on what is considered the primary driving force behind the creation and use of mounds from the perspective of the interpreter,
whether it is religious beliefs, social hierarchy, individual experiences, or depictions of the sky. These categories are separated by arbitrary characteristics for the purpose of determining differences in mound interpretation. It is known that each theoretical framework is not strictly held within these characteristics and may result in a sampling bias.

Archaeoastronomy

Within landscape archaeology, archaeoastronomy is “concerned with the astronomical basis for orientation patterns discovered in architectural features and town layouts” (Brown 1997:469). Astronomers and archaeologists alike combine the fields of astronomy, archaeology, and engineering in order to interpret prehistoric structures (Baity 1973; Hawkins 1965). Scholars of archaeoastronomy, like Gerald Hawkins (1965) and Alexander Thom (1967), argue that prehistoric structures were created with a particular purpose in mind. For instance, a majority of the stones at Stonehenge mark two or more different alignments with features of the sky (i.e. sunrise, sunset, equinoxes, solstices, stars, and cardinal directions) (Hawkins 1965:394). Due to the high number of alignment instances, Hawkins (1965) argues that the positioning of the stones at Stonehenge are not a chance occurrence, but supportive of specific placement by the people who built the monument. From the alignments noted for a structure, archaeoastronomers interpret what the structure meant to people in the past and why they built it. Stonehenge is often interpreted as a calendar for ancient cultures because the spring/autumnal equinoxes and winter/summer solstices are aligned with the heelstone (Hawkins 1965:403). The fifty-six Aubrey holes surrounding the stones at Stonehenge are believed to work in tandem with the heelstone in predicting the lunar eclipse as a crude counting system for the fifty-six years eclipse cycle. When the full moon is aligned with the heelstone on the fifty-sixth year, past people would know that a lunar eclipse is coming (Hawkins 1965:404). The alignments that are tracked
by Stonehenge and other monuments, allowed past people to understand their world in an organized way. By keeping track of time and predicting celestial events (solstices, equinoxes, and eclipses) past people could plan their lives and rituals accordingly (Brown 1997; Baity 1973; Hawkins 1965). In comparison, archaeoastronomers attempt to reveal alignments in order to understand which events are important to a culture.

The tracking of planets, stars and constellations is also a focus of archaeoastronomy. Studies within the framework argue that certain structures refer to the movement of planets, stars, and constellations which would suggest an importance to the people that created the structures. For instance, the Marching Bear Mound Group in Iowa with its line of bear shaped mounds is suggested to depict the movement of the constellation Ursa Major across the night sky (Cowan 1975:231).

The practice of archaeoastronomy is often criticized by other archaeologists as being inaccurate (Stout and Lewis 1998; Boutsikas and Ruggles 2011). This criticism rises from a number of reasons. One reason includes that fact that a number of structures, particularly mounds, have eroded over the centuries since their creation. Therefore, alignment measurements that are made are seen as false positives because the structure in its prime may not have aligned with the features at all (Stout and Lewis 1998; Boutsikas and Ruggles 2011). Certain assumptions are said to be made by archaeoastronomers that cannot be proved with certainty, such as corners of platform mounds extending to point that would create a near perfect alignment with the cardinal directions. There is also the argument that there are hundreds of possible celestial alignments to associate with a structure and any made could be an accidental occurrence, meaning nothing at all (Boutsikas and Ruggles 2011:59). Boutsikas and Ruggles (2011:59) argue that the various criticisms from others have resulted in further methodological
changes within archaeoastronomy. One such change is the inclusion of further context within alignment studies. For instance, the Governor’s Palace in the Mayan city of Uxmal is argued to be aligned with the southernmost rising point of the planet Venus (Boutsikas and Ruggles 2011:59). Boutsikas and Ruggles (2011:59) explain that the alignment becomes more viable when one looks at the context of the numerous depictions of Venus on the walls of the structure. The depictions support the concept that Venus was important to the people who built the Governor’s Palace and that the alignment to the planet’s southernmost rising was most likely intentional.

Cosmology

Every culture contains an intricate belief system to explain the mysteries of the world. This belief system is reflected within a variety of outlets, such as myth/lore, ritual practices, art/pottery, and architecture/landscape (Chappell 2002). However, past belief systems are difficult to understand because the people that practiced them are no longer here. To gain a glimpse of the past beliefs, archaeologists often use ethnohistoric accounts and mythology (Brown 1997:466). Through the accounts and myths, archaeologists can understand a different view of artifacts and landscape as seen within the Mississippian culture, a hierarchical structured, agricultural society dating to AD 750-AD 1500, or European contact (Butzer 1990; Knight 1986:67). Platform mounds are suggested to be a representation of the belief in the Upper and Lower realms (Chappell 2002:57; Dalan et al. 2003:61; Emerson 1997a:220). Myths and ethnohistoric accounts explain that people were thought to live in between these two realms and often caught in the middle of conflicts (Brown 1997; Chappell 2002; Dalan et al. 2003; Emerson 1997a). Since the gods lived within the Upper realms, the closer one was to the sky the easier it was to communicate with them. Therefore, platform mounds were a means to be closer to the
Upper realm gods (Chappell 2002:57; Dalan et al. 2003:61). With the study of mythology and ethnohistoric accounts come downfalls to the practice. Bruce Trigger (1982) explains that one of the criticisms surrounding this type of cosmology study is that it is completed by Euroamericans who do not truly understand the view of the Native Americans giving the accounts. Contradictions in fundamental beliefs are a part of this criticism since most Euroamericans that the New World was populated by are people that came from Asia and Europe, whether the population came across the Bering Strait or another way (Trigger 1982:6). This belief held by Euroamericans directly contradicts the Native American origin accounts that state people like the Onondaga and Seneca sprang from holes in the ground at Nundaweo (Trigger 1982:6). Thus, it is impossible for the Euroamericans to understand the cosmology of Native Americans during prehistoric and historic times because they hold differing beliefs of their own. Trigger (1982:7) states that a suggestion for a solution to this problem has been for more Native Americans to write their own history and cut out the biasing middle man altogether.

Another part of the study of cosmology is the concept that belief systems are suggested to be the driving force of social change (Jones 1999:56). For example, as the platform mounds are a means to communicate with the Upper realm gods, the people who control the access to these places hold the power to change the perception and experience of the people who don’t (Dalan et al. 2003). Ecological changes can also be the result of a belief system as discussed by G. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1976). In his study of Columbian cosmology, Reichel-Dolmatoff explains that the Tukano and other tribes in the region view the universe as something that is constantly deteriorating. Therefore, it is their responsibility to organize and fix the chaos that is resulting from this deterioration. To do so the tribes have a belief system that contains sacred animals and
plants that are only used for ritual sacrifice to restore order and asked the gods to help renew the world’s resources (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976:317).

Interpreting past belief systems through artifacts and architectural analysis is also a part of cosmological studies. Andrew Jones (1999) provides an example of such an analysis by describing similarities in food storage and architectural design between the houses and tombs of Neolithic Britain. These similarities suggest a parallel view of the realms of the living and the dead, or the belief in ancestors (Jones 1999:69). Thus death would be seen as a temporary state of sleep that would transport the deceased to the realm of the dead. Jones (1999:57) explains that artifacts and architecture are full of meaning that is bound to use social practices, which can help archaeologists interpret past beliefs. Andrew Fleming (1973) offers a similar view regarding chamber tombs in Britain as symbols for the living. Fleming (1973:178) argues that chamber tombs were not simply containers for remains and, thus, not only places for the dead. Instead, chamber tombs were built in order to gain the attention of the people living amongst them as the focus point for rituals and a way to express ceremonial beliefs regarding the dead (Fleming 1973:187).

**Phenomenology**

John Barrett (2009:276) describes phenomenology as “the investigation of how the world is given to us and thus the conditions that are necessary for consciousness.” Phenomenology is the concept that history is made out of an individual’s experience and that archaeologists look to explain the experiences of past individuals through the researchers’ own experiences (Barrett 2009; Johnson 2012). Furthermore, experiences are both conscious and subconscious making up the world through physical interactions (Tilley 1994; Johnson 2012). Phenomenologists hold that some past experiences must have been similar to what modern people experience in the
landscape. However, phenomenology rejects the concept that history is a cross-cultural process. Instead, it holds that history is cultural, context-specific, and cannot be forced into generalizations (Barrett 2009:276). Furthermore, phenomenology contends that history is a cultural construct and cannot be analyzed any other way. The past can never truly be known from the perspective of past individuals because they are subjective in nature and care should be taken not to project our own culture onto the interpretations of the past (Barrett 2009).

There are two major schools of thought within phenomenology that are the basis for further study in the field. One school is based on works by Heidegger who expressed that a space is not a particular location, but a space in which humanity dwells (Tilley 1994:13). In order for the landscape to contain any meaning at all, a space must be recognized within the human cognition. In other words, Heideggerian philosophy allows archaeologists to include sensory experiences in their studies. Human agency is an important emphasis in the Heideggerian school, and including individual interactions allows for a better understanding of past symbolism and culture (Trigger 2006:474). The second school of thought was introduced by Merleau-Ponty, which has similarities to Heidegger’s concept of space. In contrast to Heidegger’s views, Merleau-Ponty takes a dialectical approach to how humans are able to perceive and understand the landscape. For him, the human body (the object) is the mediation point to understanding the world (the subject) (Tilley 1994:14). The body is a way to relate to the world, not only in the thoughts about it, but in the consciousness of “bodily presence and bodily orientation” (Tilley 1994:14).

R. Kenneth Kirby (2008) argues that the principles of phenomenology offer solutions to the recording of oral histories. Since experiences and the understanding of the world is subjective, there is a “natural attitude,” or assumptions, that individuals use as frameworks to
interpret experiences including how they interpret the history they are recording (Kirby 2008:23). In order to get to the essence of the history one must suspend the natural attitudes to understand the experiences from a nonbiased perspective. However, Matthew Johnson (2012) argues that in practice phenomenology tends to assume an unproblematic subjectivity that it criticizes, in other words make assumptions within a study. For instance, in Andrew Fleming’s (1999:124) review of the megalithic interpretations of Tilley (1994) Fleming argues that assumptions are made regarding the importance of the megaliths location and alignment to features in the landscape. Tilley’s (1994) interpretation of cairns in Wales is that a number of them face or reference rock outcrops, springs, or the sea. However, Fleming (1999) states that Tilley assumes an importance for these features for past people and fails to acknowledge other factors in the location. One overlooked factor discussed is the destruction of cairns to use the rocks for other purposes in areas that have little of the resource. Fleming (1999:120) explains that the sample of cairns located near outcrops remain standing because they are located in the area where the resource is abundant and not necessarily as coveted as in areas where there are few rocks.

Even though phenomenology is criticized for making the assumptions that the framework attempts to remove, Johnson (2012:279) states:

“We are all phenomenologists. Few archaeologists would now deny that it is necessary to consider issues of meaning and subjectivity to achieve a full understanding of archaeological landscapes, and further that they would accept the starting point of the phenomenological tradition, namely, that understanding human experience is necessary but is not a common sense undertaking.”

**Sociopolitical Ideology**

Sociopolitical ideology is the system of views that bring about a social status quo (Pauketat 1994). Archaeologists attempt to interpret the structure of and views behind the social
organization of a culture from a range of topics in the archaeological record. This can include the elite organization of labor to build mounds, the differences seen within elite residence versus lower status people, the layout of the landscape that reminds a person of their place in society, or the study of human remains to identify an individual’s accessibility to food and medical treatment that would suggest their status. For instance, Wood, Milner, Harpending, and Weiss (1992) use bones to determine the health of individuals in a population and whether this reflects the available resources for that individual. The Wood et al. (1992) suggest that elite individuals would have access to more resources (i.e. food, medicine, shelter) and that access is reflected by the health of their remains. Individuals ranking lower in society, having less access to these resources, would have remains that reflected their malnutrition and illnesses.

Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley (1982:130) explain that sociopolitical ideology operates within a society to “secure the reproduction of relations of dominance.” To accomplish the reproduction of dominance, sub-groups of a society must turn their sectional interests (the ideas of a specific sub-group that are not held by all) into universal ideas for the society. When sectional interests are accepted by the rest of society, the group should translate these interests into the material culture of the society. Material culture will reinforce the interests in symbolic ways and, within the concept of ideology, mortuary rituals are seen as a stage for social activity that captures both the real and conceived social order of a society (Shanks and Tilley 1982:130,132). Michael Parker Pearson (1982) and Charles Cobb (2003) look at the style of artifacts associated with burials to determine what individuals meant to a society, as well as their social standing. The more lavish the burial in style and artifacts found within it, the more likely the individual was of great importance to the society that buried them.
Within landscape archaeology, social memory can play a part within the theoretical framework of sociopolitical ideology. Social memory is the physical reminder of the structure within a society, which within this thesis comes in the form of mounds. Thomas Emerson (1997a) explains that platform mounds, like at Cahokia, are a reminder to past people where they belong within society. The limited number of people who live at the summit of the platform mounds include the chief and his closest advisors. The tier below may include the priests and other nobles, creating a lower tier of noble standing. Living in the shadow of the mound would include the commoners who most likely were the ones that built the mounds. It is suggested that power is reflected in the ability to persuade people to build structures like mounds, even if it is under the pretense of completing such a task for the gods (Beck 2006; Chappell 2002; Emerson 1997; Kinnes 1975). Due to the amount of effort it takes for the creation of mounds, the political structure and social hierarchy of a culture are argued to be reflected in the number, type, and size of mounds built in an area (Kinnes 1975; Renfrew 1986; Pauketat 1994).

John Blitz and Patrick Livingood (2004) similarly argue that mounds are a symbol of elite power within a society. Instead of the mound being a visual reminder of the social hierarchy, Blitz and Livingood (2004:291) discuss how mound volume can be used to interpret the complexity of a society within the context of mound size and how it reflects the continued use of the mound or a leader’s ability to organize the labor to create the mound. Blitz and Livingood (2004) explain that by looking at the stratigraphy of a mound the number of construction phases can be determined. A higher number of phases within the mounds volume would suggest a longer duration of mound use and the accumulation of debris over time, while a smaller number of phases would suggest a quick construction that could be the result of a leader organizing a large labor force (Blitz and Livingood 2004:292-293).
Crossovers

For the purposes of this thesis, “crossovers” refer to books and articles that explicitly apply two or more theoretical frameworks to interpret the creation and use of mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America. Such studies are useful because they focus on different aspect of past life, like the beliefs or politics, working together to interpret the past. Arguments for multidisciplinary works within archaeological studies are similar for crossovers in theoretical framework studies. Sissel Schroeder (2009:175-176) explains that archaeological research questions during the 19th century were founded on the training of the purser (i.e. natural historians and geologists). Schroeder (2009:175-176) argues that archaeology has been multidisciplinary from the start because of the fact that archaeologists at that time were from a wide variety of disciplines. The information acquired from the varying research questions can then be built upon to create a well rounded understanding of the archaeological record (Schroeder 2009:181). Likewise, crossover books and articles offer work within a wide range of theoretical frameworks that provide an interpretation with multiple viewpoints of how past people lived that can be built upon over time.

For example, Alex Bayliss, Fatchna McAvoy, and Alasdair Whittle (2007) suggest that the both cosmology and sociopolitical ideology were the force behind the creation of Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, England. The strong beliefs of the community resulted in the desire to build the large monument, while it could not have been complete without a leader to organize the labor force (Bayliss et al. 2007:43-44).

Similarly, Mark Elson (1998) argues that there are situations where two theoretical frameworks are important for the understanding of the creation and uses of mounds. Looking at the function of platform mounds in the southwest United States, Elson (1998:106) finds that both
A sociopolitical ideological and cosmological viewpoint is needed to understand the full history of the mounds. Through artifact assemblage and ethnohistoric account analysis, the platform mounds in the region are revealed to be initially built for the residence of leaders in the ranked society or territorial markers for the nearby irrigation systems (Elson 1998:101). Further analysis showed that the mounds were later abandoned, but still held meaning for later generations as ancestral shrines (Elson 1998:106). Thus, platform mounds within the southwest United States hold both sociopolitical ideological and cosmological meaning for the people creating and using them.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this thesis is to focus on the practice of theoretical frameworks in the interpretation of mound creation and use in the regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America as seen within a literature sample and the overall affect the frameworks have on the understanding of mounds within that sample. By looking at literature from different frameworks, we can learn which aspects of mounds are interpreted and which are not (such as why mounds were built or used and what personal or political views/beliefs are behind their creation). No single framework is comprehensive in its interpretation of the past. Therefore, a general understanding of how each framework is applied to mounds within the regions is better for our comprehension of mound interpretations and can be then expanded into the interpretation of other landscape features. With knowledge about how mounds are interpreted, we are able to see what is missing from a full understanding of mounds, as well as which aspects result in conflicting ideas about mounds in the past.

Mounds are specific, prominent landscape figures that have been the interest of people for centuries. It takes great effort within a community and a significant amount of time to create and maintain the structures. The reasons used to explain the effort expended on mounds by communities in any region spans a wide variety of interpretational views within the literature available for review. With the focus of a single landscape figure that still consists of a large literature base within a number of theoretical views, it is possible to distinguish the effects of theoretical approaches on the resulting interpretation of data. The regions of English-speaking
Northwest Europe and North America were chosen for an investigation of mound interpretation based on my prior experience in researching the areas. With my prior research I gained knowledge of the general regional histories allowing further time to be spent focusing on landscape and mound research and a better base for the comparison of the regions. The comparison of the regional sample literature and the more prevalent theoretical framework applied to mound interpretation will be used to determine how such prevalence affects our understanding of the mound cultures within these regions. There are benefits and deficiencies to all theories and a comparison can be used to learn about both.

The Data

Resources for the investigation of mound analysis within a sample for English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America were obtained through the University of Mississippi John Williams Library. Through books, article databases, and an Interlibrary Loan system, the library offered access to a wide range of information focused on mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America. Therefore, the University library system provided ample material for a thorough understanding of each framework within a sample from the regions in question and provided the data to reveal any significant portions in framework application.

Sampling of the literature was conducted in the spring of 2012 using resources in the University of Mississippi John Williams Library. The library catalogue, JSTOR and EBSCO Host Academic Premiere were used as the search engines of key words on the topic. The key words seen in Table 1 were selected with general to more specific determinants in mind. The search began with landscape archaeology, British/Britain landscape archaeology, and North America/North American landscape archaeology to find mound studies within a general field as
a whole in the two regions of this thesis. The next set of key words (Britain Mounds and North American Mounds) were chosen to narrow down the search to include just general mound studies in the two regions. The remaining two search fields of key words (Region Specific Mounds and Region Specific Time) were the final step to narrow the key words into regional terms. In these two fields the key words entered into the search engines were preceded by their regional counterpart (i.e. Britain Long Barrows, North American Platform Mounds, Britain Neolithic Mounds, North American Archaic Mounds) in an attempt to keep the search results within the two regions of the thesis. This described general to specific strategy for the key word search was implemented in an attempt to include a variety of literature on mounds from all time periods, of all types, and of a range of cultures within English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Key Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British/Britain Landscape Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America/ American Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America/ American Archaeology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To create the sample, each key word was entered into the library catalogue, JSTOR, and EBSCO Host Academic Premiere. The first twenty-five (if available) book or article results of each key
word were entered into the sample database. As the key word search was conducted, repeat books and articles that appeared during the sampling were excluded from the first twenty-five and the next result would be used instead in hopes of providing the study with a larger sample size.

Once the initial sample database was created from the first twenty-five books and articles resulting in each key word search, summaries and abstracts were read to determine a book’s or article’s relevance to the thesis topic. To be included within the sample database, books and articles were required to contain a discussion of mound creation and use in Britain and Ireland or North America. Irrelevant books and articles were removed from the database. The remaining 98 (33 English-speaking Northwest European and 65 North American) books and articles were reviewed to determine a theoretical viewpoint and how mounds were interpreted. Appendix I provides the results of the sampling process.

The discussion chapter of this thesis (Chapter 6) will explore the differences identified within the sample data. Primarily, the study is meant to identify differences in the usage of theoretical frameworks between the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples in mound interpretation and how these differences have affected regional interpretations of mounds as seen in the sample. As a result of the sampling strategy the regional samples (33 English-speaking Northwest European and 65 North Americans), as well as the samples sizes for the theoretical frameworks in the regions (See Tables 2 and 3) were skewed. Due to the skewed sample sizes for the regions, chi-square tests were conducted to determine the significance of the differences observed within the sample. Since many of the observed values within the sample are less than 5, a Fisher’s Exact test was conducted on the frameworks between regions to determine significant differences.
As with all studies, biases occur. It should be noted that the skewed sample sizes for the regions within this thesis are most likely the result of the sampling strategy used for the data collection, as well as the limitations of data coming from the resources of a sole university library. Though the John Williams Library has an extensive range of resources to sample from (including article databases, books, and an interlibrary loan system), it is still a single library. Therefore, the sample data is limited to what is available through this library system. It is likely that the larger North American mounds sample size is the result of the John Williams Library being located at the University of Mississippi in the United States. Future studies on this topic could be conducted to include other libraries and resources to determine if the results remain the same.
CHAPTER 4: STUDIES IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING NORTHWEST EUROPE

Mounds are an intriguing aspect of human history. They make up a considerable part of the landscape around us. Due to the presence of mounds, many have tried to explain what they meant to those in the past and why they were created in the first place. There are various theories that are used within landscape archaeology and each theory, in turn, offers interpretations of what the landscape means. A total of 33 books and articles compose the literature sample for English-speaking Northwest Europe including Britain and Ireland (Table 2; also see Appendix I for sample categorizations). The sample literature focused on mound analysis in English-speaking Northwest Europe has been reviewed and categorized by the primary theoretical framework applied to the interpretation of mounds.

Figure 2: Sites discussed within this chapter

This chapter provides the reader with examples on how the theoretical frameworks of archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers are applied to interpret the mounds of English-speaking Northwest Europe as seen within the sample
literature reviewed. In no way are these examples the sole interpretation of the mounds discussed within this chapter, instead they include only one perspective as seen within the books and articles of the sample. The examples provided within this chapter were chosen because they exhibit the characteristics of the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 and their practice within the region.

Table 2: English-speaking Northwest Europe Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Number of Books</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
<th>Total Number of Samples</th>
<th>Percentage in Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaeoastronomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical Ideology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossover</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Archaeoastronomy**

A total of two (6.06%) books and articles within the English-speaking Northwest Europe sample were categorized as archaeoastronomy (Table 2 and Appendix I). Archaeoastronomy focuses on the placement of mounds or monuments in the landscape in relation to the sky, such as the stars, sun, moon and celestial events. In the context of this framework, mounds are often seen as ways for ancient people to observe the sky (Scarre 1998; Westwood 1987; Cooney 2000). Though archaeoastronomy can be used to interpret the belief systems reflected in English-speaking Northwest Europe’s mounds, the main focus is on what aspects of the sun, moon, and stars were important enough to align the mounds (Baity 1973:390). Therefore,
mounds would provide insight into the aspects of the sky that was considered important to past cultures, but not the reasons why they were so important. For instance, the placement of Newgrange (Figure 3) suggests the importance of the midwinter sun to ancient people of Ireland. Within the landscape, Newgrange is an impressive sight to look at. At first, Newgrange, the river, and the land in between are shrouded in darkness. As the midwinter sun rises above the horizon, the two features become lighter and more significant in the rest of the landscape (Cooney 2000:157).

Figure 3: Aerial view of Newgrange (Right) and Knowth (Left).

Newgrange is also impressive on midwinter from within the passage tomb. Just above the entrance to the tomb is an opening known as the roof-box. The double spirals and lozenges decorated stones were skillfully aligned with the winter solstice sunrise, which illuminates the passage way with brilliant effects (Scarre 1998:124; Westwood 1987:42). Similarly, the passage tomb at Knowth (Figure 3) faces the rising and setting suns of the equinoxes (Cooney 2000:157). With the information of specific sun alignments in mind, arguments were made that passage tombs in Ireland were used to follow the major events of the year by marking the movements of
the sun (Cooney 2000:157). Some have gone further by suggesting that places like Newgrange are some of the largest and oldest sundials in the world (Westwood 1987:42). At any rate, the movement of the sun appears to be important to the ancient people of Ireland.

**Cosmology**

There are many ideas about what mounds could have meant to the past people of English-speaking Northwest Europe. A common way of looking for answers, however, has been to look at local mythology, which is an area of research in cosmology. Cosmology can range from mythology surrounding places of importance to religious views that helped past people explain the world around them. Within the English-speaking Northwest Europe literature sample, 14 (42.42%) were categorized as cosmology (Table 2 and Appendix I).

From myths, a glimpse of the past is gained through an understanding of how monuments in the landscape were sometimes seen by people. One such case of how a glimpse into the past works is within the mythological tales surrounding Newgrange (Figure 4), also referred to as Bru na Boinne (O'Kelly 1982: p.43). One myth from the *Book of Invasions*, a mythical origins and history of Ireland, declares that Newgrange is the home of the Tuath De Danann, the people of the goddess Danu (Mac Uistin 1999: p.97). The Tuath De Danann invaded Ireland, conquering the Fir Blog who had been there for centuries (Mac Uistin 1999: p.97). In turn, the Tuath De Danann were later conquered by the Milesians, a Celtic people, circa 2000 BC. At this time, they chose to live within underground tombs like Newgrange (Mac Uistin 1999: p.98). These myths eventually led to the ideas of enchanted and fairy folk living in these places as well (Mac Uistin 1999: p.103). The enchanted and fairy folk beings were said to have the ability to intrude on human life whenever they pleased, which brought about many superstitious fears of places like Newgrange (Mac Uistin 1999: p.103).
Other myths focused on who was buried within the mounds. One well known myth from the Fenian Cycle that focuses on the concept of famous burials is “The Hunt for Diarmaid and Grainne;” a tale of love where Grainne and Diarmaid run away together and are protected by the god and foster father of Diarmaid, Aonghus (Mac Uistin 1999: p.98-99). Years went by and the two lovers lived in peace for a time before Diarmaid was severely injured while out hunting. He died from the wounds and was taken by Aonghus to be buried at Newgrange (Mac Uistin 1999: p.99).

Figure 4: Newgrange passage tomb (Cooney 2000:216).

Outside of mythology, mounds are sometimes viewed as places of ritual significance or places that allowed past people to practice their beliefs. As suggested by Scarre (1998:123) the chevrons, meanders, and spirals found at Newgrange are similar to those seen in a hallucinogenic drug trance. Studies have shown that the chevron, meander, and spiral symbols can be caused by the human neural system under such trance-like circumstances (Scarre 1998: p.123). Many think that the designs at Newgrange were inspired by possible ritual practices.
The Ancestors

Within the cosmological framework many of the English-speaking Northwest Europe sample included the ancestors as are a part of the belief system. Though the belief in the ancestors can be sociopolitical ideological as discussed later in this chapter, the books and articles categorized within cosmology primarily interpret the ancestors as a part of the belief system that is the driving force that results in a mound’s creation and use. The ancestors are the spirits of the deceased kin of a community and are treated with great respect (Hingley 1996). Therefore the places associated with the dead become sacred and important aspects for communicating beliefs to the world. The beliefs would then be seen as the force behind the desire to manipulate the landscape. Pollard and Reynolds (2002) suggests that status distinctions were not based simply on birthright, and the building of mounds was not the result of the elite members of society coercing others into action. If distinction of status was based on other factors than birthright, support would be lost if one tried to forcefully make followers do something (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:121). Therefore, Pollard and Reynolds (2002:121) argues that the mounds of the region during the Neolithic and Bronze Age were built because of the strength of people’s beliefs. Within the concept of strong beliefs, Parker Pearson (1982) contends that mortuary remains should be interpreted within the ritual practices surrounding mounds.

Parker Pearson (1982:101) argues that ritual communication is often thought to create “static time,” where the past is used to reinforce the ideas of the present. Within the ancestors approach of cosmology, ritual communication is accomplished by the respect for and honoring of the dead and may have been a reason for the building of long and round barrows by past people during Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain and Ireland (Parker Pearson 1982:101). More
specifically, Barrett (1994:52) suggests that the mounds of the Neolithic may have been the result of how people saw the “transformation from life to death and by the ways in which that understanding engaged with the physical realities of their contemporary, acculturated world.” In this way, mounds could be seen as a place for the deceased’s rite of passage into the ancestral realm (Edmonds 1999:60). Neolithic long barrows are setup to reflect a communal rite of passage with the focus on these places being the home of the ancestors (Barrett 1994). The mounds are oblong in shape with an opening at one end leading into a stone passageway and chamber rooms to either side (Edmonds 1999). The bodies or bones of the deceased are placed within the chambers of the long barrows as a way to remember the person who passed away from the living. Later, the bones may be reordered, broken, or removed to signify the passage into the other realm (Edmonds 1999:61). The disarticulation of bones could also represent the “collective bonds of kinship” for the community, which would bring people together in the ancestral realm as well as the living.

As mentioned before, some long barrows do not contain remains. Some researchers, like Edmonds (1999), focus on the concept that the ties between the living and the ancestors are strong. Edmonds (1999:61) argues that places like Beckhampton and South Street held prior significant histories associate with the land. By constructing long barrows in important places, the meaningful past of the land is transferred to the monument creating a connection between history and landscape. Furthermore, mounds are structures that appear to withstand time and survive several generations (Edmonds 1999:61).

In some ways, the concept of surviving time is seen in later use of the Neolithic monuments. The chamber cairns of Neolithic Orkney, Scotland provide an example. Hingley (1996) discusses the reuse of cairns in Orkney by Iron Age people. At Howe, the bones of
Neolithic remains were removed and possibly deposited somewhere else at the site. Over time, deposits of pottery, peat ash, and animal bones from the Iron Age filled the cairn chambers (Hingley 1996:234). Another insight into the continued significance of the chamber cairns are the Iron Age buildings just outside the entrances of some cairns. Hingley (1996) suggests that Iron Age structures built at the entryway of chamber cairns were possibly used to control the access to the ancestors, since the Howe site has such a structure outside the entrance of the chamber cairn. The chamber of the cairn was hollowed, creating a “basement” type structure for the roundhouse built on top of the mound (Hingley 1996:238).

Though there was a gradual switch to the predominant use of the round barrow in the Bronze Age, the significance of the ancestors was not lost to past people. Round barrows are circular in shape, contain one or more burials, and the stone chamber of the long barrows are no longer present (Barrett 1994). Barrett, Bradley, and Green (1991:123) point out the debate surrounding the shift from long barrow to round barrow. Some researchers, like Renfrew (1986) and Shanks and Tilley (1982), suggest that the shift was primarily about the transition from communal view of society to the individual and a ranked social order. On the contrary, others make the argument that it was merely the burial rites that were changed and not the beliefs (Barrett et al. 1991:124). There are round barrows in the landscape that contain multiple burials, which are interpreted to represent the genealogy of a kin group (Barrett 1994:123). The initial burial was usually dug into the ground and a low mound built over it. The mound would then be re-opened to bury the next deceased person in the kin group and the mound built up on top of the new burial. As time went on, the genealogy become further removed from the initial burial until the mound is finally capped off (Barrett 1994:123). West Overton G6b provides an example for this idea of interpreting round barrows as the genealogy of a kin group. The West Overton round
Barrow contained a total of 12 burials of adults and children that were placed in the mound over time until the final construction was conducted (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:133). The Amesbury Barrow G71 is another example of the interpretation of mounds as the genealogy of a kin group. Within mound G71, there is an initial grave pit that was covered by a low chalk mound (Barrett 1994:127). It was later re-opened for another burial, the mound built up, and rings of a fence line were built around the mound. Mound G71 was then capped with chalk and shows evidence of being used as a platform for cremation pyres. The cremations were buried high within the mound structure (Barrett 1994:127). A final capping of turf stack was built over the round barrow, though the ditch on the southeast side was still used for some cremation and inhumation burials. It is suggested by Barrett (1994:127) that as the burials in the mound become more removed, so does the lineage of the people. There may also be a mythological distancing of the genealogy by the time cremations and inhumations were being placed in the ditches. By burying the deceased near the mounds of deities or legendary heroes, that person’s lineage origin is tied to these great members of the culture (Barrett 1994:127).

In addition to the ritual significance focused on the deceased, long and round barrows carry an importance for the living as well. Mounds of any time are interpreted as a place to acknowledge personal loss and ties of kinship (Edmonds 1999:62). Due to the personal ties, Barrett (1994) and Edmonds (1999) argue that the responsibilities of the dead are transferred to the living and the living have ritual responsibilities to ensure the dead are sent on their way to the ancestral realm. The ritual responsibility is conducted within long or round barrows and allows the living to let go of their grief to rejoin the rest of society. For instance, in West Kennet Long Barrow (Figure 5), the participant would enter the chambers as a mourner to place the body
within the barrow for passage into the ancestral realm (Barrett 1994:58). Once the mourner emerges from the chambers, the person rejoins the community and the living (Barrett 1994:58).

Figure 5: West Kennet Long Barrow.

A similar interpretation of the responsibility of the living is seen in round barrow burials of the Bronze Age. Pollard and Reynolds (2002:130) claim that round barrows were built as a way to commemorate the individual and their family into the landscape, but could also been used to show one’s social identity and grief. The Bronze Age round barrow at Hemp Knoll contains the dug in grave of an adult male, which Barrett (1994:63) interprets as the deceased’s removal from the living community. An ox-hide cloak was place over the grave as it was filled in and the cloak is suggested to signify the casting off of the mourner’s role and return to the community (Barrett 1994:63). The grave was then marked by a low chalk mound that was later enlarged by turf and chalk; placing the memory of the man into the landscape for all to see (Barrett 1994:63).

**Phenomenology**

Eight (24.24%) books and articles in the English-speaking Northwest Europe literature sample were categorized as phenomenology, which is concerned with how humans experience the world around them in conscious and subconscious ways (Table 2 and Appendix I). The theoretical framework focuses on the way the natural and manipulated landscape creates
particular experiences for the individual. In phenomenology the landscape is important to understanding what past people experienced and understood about their world consciously and subconsciously not just within the belief system as seen in cosmology but within the events, politics, natural resources, and particular flow entwined within the landscape as well. As seen in many of the articles in the sample, placement is an important factor in achieving a particular experience for the individual and the group.

The importance of placement is seen within Neolithic mounds in Britain. Though many of them are known to have had human remains in them at some point, there are other mounds that have been left empty (Barrett 1994:56). These empty mounds (like at Beckhampton, South Street, and Dorset Cursus) are not fully understood, but they do show an importance in the process of building a mound. As Barrett (1994:57) states, “Construction was contingent upon the way people occupied the landscape, giving the areas of pasture above the valleys a more local and specific significance.”

The Neolithic long barrows (oblong mounds with stone chambers inside) that follow along the Dorset Cursus are an example of the importance of placement in the manipulated landscape. The Dorset Cursus is a steep-sided, flat bottomed ditch that runs along a ridge in southwest England (Barrett et al 1991:43). Long barrows follow along the 1.2 meter deep ditch, many of which have no human remains within them. It has been suggested that the mounds were built with the intention of drawing the landscape’s focus to the impressive cursus. Furthermore, some of the long barrows align with the ends of the ditch which brings even more attention to these areas (Barrett et al 1991:43).

Bronze Age round barrows (circular mounds containing one or more burials) also show some patterning, though not as distinct as that of the long barrows in Dorset. Unlike long
barrows that are usually found along ridge and hilltops, round barrows cover a wide topographic setting (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:131). Many round barrows are found on valley sides or valley bottoms, but more importantly they are often found in groups. The groups of mounds are referred to as round barrow cemeteries, which includes places like Windmill Hill, Overton Hill, and Shepherd’s Shore (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:130). In addition, it has been suggested that round barrow cemeteries were used as a way for Bronze Age people to emphasize the earlier landscape. Some round barrow groups have been claimed to “circle” the location of Neolithic monuments (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:131). The particular placement of barrows would not only reiterate the importance of the landscape of earlier times, but also offer symbolic boundaries to create sacred areas.

The flow of the landscape and how people move through it is sometimes dependent on the placement of important pieces of that landscape. The ability to see (or not see) a piece of the manipulated landscape is a part of that flow (Sims 2009). Silbury Hill provides an example of how the flow of landscape works. As the largest man-made mound in Britain, Silbury Hill stands at a height of approximately 40 meters. It was created in stages of chalk, gravel, soil, turf, and clay between 2900 BC and 2350 BC (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:119). Silbury Hill is surrounded by a quarry ditch that is six meters deep and has a flat platform on top (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:119-121). Various views of the impressive hill can be seen from the surrounding landscape. For example, West Kennet Avenue offers one view of Silbury Hill. West Kennet Avenue (Figure 6) is a Neolithic pathway that runs from the large standing stone circle of Avebury east to the Sanctuary, the site of the remains for six concentric circles of standing timber poles (Sims 2009:392). From the end of West Kennet Avenue at the Sanctuary, one can see the top of Silbury Hill in a notch on the western horizon (Sims 2009:397). Beckhampton
Avenue (Figure 6), another Neolithic pathway running west from Avebury, provides a few more views of Silbury Hill along its route (Sims 2009). However, the entire ancient pathway is not known and more views of Silbury Hill many have been present for past people. Along the portions of Beckhampton Avenue that are known Silbury Hill can be seen protruding above the eastern horizon at Fox Covert, the possible end point of the avenue (Sims 2009:397). Also, where Beckhampton Avenue crosses River Winterborne, the summit of Silbury Hill is in line with the southern horizon (Sims 2009:397). The rest of the lengths of these two avenues are suggested to purposely obstruct the view of Silbury, which is an idea that is discussed by Sims (2009) when looking at the views of the hill from the two stone circles within the larger outer stone ring of Avebury (Figure 7). From the northern inner circle at Avebury, known as the Cove, Silbury Hill can be seen above Waden Hill. However, it is suggested that the view of Silbury Hill was meant to be obstructed from the inner circle because within the three quadrangular stones in the center of the Cove the view of Silbury is, in fact, blocked from an individual’s line of sight. Instead, the opening faces the featureless northeastern horizon (Sims 2009:398). In contrast, the southern inner circle of Avebury has a clear view of Silbury Hill over the

Figure 6: Avebury and surrounding sites; 2) Fox Covert 3) Beckhampton Avenue 5) Winterborne River crossing 9) West Kennet Avenue 10) The Sanctuary (Sims 2009:392).
northwestern edge of Waden Hill from the center. The view is obstructed from an individual’s line of sight gradually when walking from the northern stones counter-clockwise to the completely blocked view by stone 102 in the south (Sims 2009:400).

An additional discussion on using the landscape to provide a particular experience for the individual is provided by Cummings, Jones and Watson (2002). They argue that mounds of southwest Wales are built to fit within the landscape in a particular way, which is asymmetrically (Cummings et al 2002:61). From the asymmetrical organization of the landscape, an individual experiences the landscape in a certain way. Cummings, Jones, and Watson (2002) contend that mounds are used as a transition point in the flow of the landscape. For instance, Ffostyll North is a cairn with two chambers aligned east to west on the long axis, which creates an asymmetrical view in the landscape where the northern horizon is rising and closes off any further views of the landscape beyond, while the southern horizon is wide and open to the view of the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons (Cummings et al 2002:61). The same idea is seen at Ffostyll South, though its long axis is aligned roughly north to south. To the left the view is restricted with a small glimpse of Brecon Beacons (Cummings et al 2002:61). To the right, a person’s
view is wide and expansive. From the different orientation of the mounds, Cumming, Jones, and Watson (2002) suggest that the asymmetry of the landscape was more important to past people than the orientation of the mounds to particular directions. The asymmetry would be an expression of past beliefs within the landscape, which would provide an individual with an experience that coincided with the belief in mounds as a transition point from life to death (Cummings et al. 2002). They continue their argument by discussing the asymmetry found within the cairns as well. For example, the entrance of Ty Isaf has a pillar shaped stone on the left and a slab or lozenge shaped stone to the right. Furthermore, at Ty Illtyd the roof to the left is flat-topped; while on the right the roof is hog-backed (Cummings et al. 2002:63). It is possible that the asymmetry of the cairns is a representation of the natural world, which is seen as chaotic, unorganized and uneven. The mounds would be a transition point from the symmetrical and organized world of the living to the symmetrical and organized world of the dead. By disarticulating the bones within the cairn once the soul has left one reintegrates into the substance of the asymmetrical world (Cummings et al. 2002:67).

**Sociopolitical Ideology**

The theoretical framework of sociopolitical ideology consists of eight (24.24%) books and articles of the literature in English-speaking Northwest European mounds studies reviewed for this thesis (Table 2 and Appendix I). Sociopolitical ideology approaches the interpretation of mounds based on the political structuring of societies. The political structuring and social ranking of the people within a culture is also important in understanding what the landscape means. Though it may not be a direct translation, many researchers feel that the manipulation of landscape provides a look into the social stratification of past societies (Shanks and Tilley 1982; Renfrew 1986; Parker Pearson 1982). Shanks and Tilley (1982:130) explain that sociopolitical
ideology is a means for a society to “secure the reproduction of relations of dominance,” which is accomplished through the turning of sectional interests (the ideas of a specific sub-group that are not held by all) of sub-groups into the universal ideas for the society. Once the sectional interests are accepted by the entire society, the group can translate these interests into the material culture of the society and reinforce the ideas in a symbolic way. Mortuary rituals are seen as a stage for social activity that captures both the real and conceived social order of a society (Shanks and Tilley 1982:130,132). Therefore, many attempt to link mortuary practices of past cultures with their social organization. As Parker Pearson (1982:99) explains, burials of individuals (style of interment and types of grave goods included) are viewed as representations of that person’s social identity and position within society. Information about individuals and their grave goods can be compared amongst each other and a social hierarchy can be established for that particular culture (Parker Pearson 1982:99).

A few sociopolitical ideological samples included the ancestors within the interpretation of mounds in the region. The sociopolitical ideological interpretation primarily sees the ancestors as a driving force within the social structure, instead of the belief system as the ancestors in the cosmology sample. This view of the ancestors explains that the proximity, either in life or death, of a person to the ancestors could signify their social standing. For instance, by placing the remains of a person within the barrows it shows that they are important enough to become a part of that ancestral realm and reproduces that importance to their living kin (Edmonds 1999:63; Shanks and Tilley 1982:151). The living with proximity to the ancestors would know the histories of the mounds, which would give them the right to mediate with the ancestors seen by the people during rituals throughout the year (Edmonds 1999:64). The concept of authoritative figures holding control over the access to the ancestors suggests that communal
bonds as seen in long barrows were possibly untrue. Instead, some argue that the people that held control of ancestral access had the opportunity to conceal the differences between groups within the long barrows (Edmonds 1999:63).

Barrett, Bradley, and Green (1991:122) explain that the transition from Neolithic long barrows to Bronze Age round barrows became a focal point regarding the emergence of ranked societies in ancient Britain and Ireland, as well as the individual. There are various interpretations offered to explain why the change of mound shape has occurred. The gradual shift could have been a result of forgotten traditions that were changed ever so slightly by participants over time (Barrett et al 1991:122). With traditional changes, monuments of world views would be reinvented and reworked to fit properly (Edmonds 1999:135). Another explanation is the migration of new people and new ideas from continental Europe (Edmonds 1999:67). No matter the reason for the shift, the respect of the ancestors is still seen as an important aspect of mound building in English-speaking Northwest Europe. Furthermore, the shift is argued to reveal a growing authority of the mediator and an increasing gap between the elite and common class.

An example of how the shift to round barrows is interpreted as the emergence of social ranking is the Bronze Age mound, Manton Barrow in Wiltshire (Pollard and Reynolds 2002). The Manton Barrow burial contains an adult female wrapped in cloth and placed in a crouched position on the ground surface (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:134). The woman had grave goods placed at her head and feet, including a gold bound amber disc, bi-conical shale bead with gold bands, a bronze knife-dagger with an amber pommel, a shale bead necklace, bronze awls, and two accessory vessels (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:134). It is suggested that the style of burial
and the goods that are associated with the woman reflect her social standing within her community.

The round barrow of Hemp Knoll, in Wiltshire also provides an example of possible social ranking and focus on the individual in Bronze Age Britain (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:133). The Hemp Knoll mound contains the burial of an adult male in a pit grave and a wooden coffin. On the ground surface, the remains of a child were buried adjacent to the man (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:133). Like the woman at Manton Barrow, the man was buried with a variety of grave goods including a worn greenstone, an archer’s wrist guard, a broken bone toggle, and a new beaker (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:133). There was also an ox hide placed above the man’s burial and a roe deer antler to the side, which could reflect an idealized image of the role the deceased play in society. Perhaps the man was buried with these items to represent his success as a hunter (Pollard and Reynolds 2002:133).

Social standing is not only found within the creation of burial mounds, but within other types of mound building as well. In this way, elites can create themselves from the “realization of these projects” and their control over the sacred places (Barrett 1994:29). As Barrett (1994:31-32) states:

“Once again, the labour of construction, extensively organized and competent in its skills, contributed towards the possibility of a ceremonial presencing of an elite. That possibility allowed for moments when a relatively few people were, quite literally, elevated and placed beyond reach, but in full view of those who had given them the means to occupy that position.”

For instance, Silbury Hill (Figure 8), at approximately 40 meters high and 2.1 hectares at the base, would have taken three million labor hours to build (Barrett 1994:29). Though the man-made mound is thought to be a continuous building project, its phases would have taken decades to finish. The purpose behind such an undertaking is not known, but Silbury Hill creates a very
powerful affect on the landscape. It is possible that the mound was simply meant to be an impressive platform with a top diameter of 30.5 meters (Barrett 1994:30). Standing atop Silbury Hill not only allowed for people to be seen, but also heard clearly for some distance by the others below.

![Image: Silbury Hill](image1)

**Figure 8: Silbury Hill**

The building of barrows is just as important to study, though not as many work hours go into their creation. Cooney (2000:152) contends that the phases of mounds reflect the social complexity of the society building them. The social complexity is seen in the effort it would take to create the particular phase of a mound and the amount of coercion from the elite it would take for the mound phase to become reality. As a mound becomes larger or more elaborate, so does the effort it would take to create the mound. Cooney (2000:152) argues that as the effort for the building of a mound increases, the influence of the elite becomes stronger. As an example, Cooney (2000:153) discusses that Newgrange and the surrounding mounds were built in phases between 3350 BC and 2900 BC. In the first phase, small mounds of 15 meter in diameter with a simple chamber design were common. By the end of the second phase, the diameters grew to as large as 36 meters and the chambers became more elaborate with roof slots and lintelled passages (Cooney 2000:156). Finally, in the third phase, mounds reach diameters of 85 to 90
meters. During the third phase, mounds were at their most elaborate with complex forms and incorporation of symbolism. The later mound creations became the social foci of culture and were visible for all to see, as well as a reminder of the social order (Cooney 2000:156).

Crossovers

A very small sample of one (3.03%) article within the English-speaking Northwest Europe literature reviewed was categorized as a crossover (Table 2 and Appendix I). For the purposes of this thesis, crossover books and articles are characterized by their explicit use of two or more theoretical frameworks within the mound interpretation. The one crossover article, “The world recreated: redating Silbury Hill in its monumental landscape,” uses samples of animal bone, red deer antlers, and buried turf blocks from the 1968-1969 and 2000-2001 excavations to test the previously accepted dates of Silbury Hill (Bayliss et al. 2007). Once the redating processes are completed, Bayliss et al. (2007:40-42) discuss two models of interpretation for the possible dates. These two models offer each side of the debate regarding whether Silbury Hill was built over a long span of time or within a short period. Bayliss et al. (2007:42) prefer their first model, which argues for a longer building period, due to the dates acquired from red deer antlers that consistently date later than model two would suggest for Silbury Hill’s age. Model one dates the primary mound between 2415-2190 cal BC or 2335-2235 cal BC, while the chalk mound was dated to 2125-2075 cal BC or 2055-1915 cal BC or 2035-1950 cal BC (Figure 9; Bayliss et al. 2007:40-41). Within model one the construction period for Silbury Hill would have spanned over a large amount of time, between 140-435 years or 220-365 years (Bayliss et al. 2007:41). With the dates of model one in mind, Bayliss et al. (2007:43) continue their interpretation of Silbury Hill by applying cosmology and sociopolitical ideology to the probable forces driving the laborers to continue work on the monument. The authors argue that to have a
nearly steady work force, seen at Silbury Hill by the lack of turflines indicating work hiatuses, there would need to be a great communal desire to build a place of devotion and pilgrimage. However, the work force would need to be organized and charismatic individuals could then take advantage of the available propaganda of completing the widely accepted undertaking to gain followers (Bayliss et al. 2007:43). What is stressed within this article is that cosmology and sociopolitical ideology work together in bringing meaning to the creation and use of Silbury Hill and that, “it is not possible to keep the social, conceptual and spiritual dimensions of the monumental mound apart” (Bayliss et al. 2007:44).

Figure 9: Construction phases of Silbury Hill (Bayliss et al. 2007:29)

**Summary**

Mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe are often seen as places of great mystery. There are various speculations regarding the meaning of mounds seen within the various theoretical frameworks used to interpret them. This chapter has provided the reader with regional example studies that discuss mounds within the characteristics of the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2. These examples were used with the intension of the reader gaining a better understanding of how the theoretical frameworks are applied to mound
interpretations in the region and how the literature sample was categorized within this thesis. The literature sample for English-speaking Northwest Europe totaled 33 books and articles, categorized within the frameworks of archaeoastronomy (2), cosmology (14), phenomenology (8), sociopolitical ideology (8), and crossover (1). As seen in Table 2 the highest percentage of English-speaking Northwest Europe sample falls within the framework of cosmology at 42.42% with phenomenology and sociopolitical ideology the next highest at 24.24%. Books and articles that fall within archaeoastronomy (6.06%) and crossovers (3.03%) have a very small representation within the reviewed sample literature. Further discussion on the differences seen within this sample and a comparison of the differences seen within the North American sample will be in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 5: STUDIES IN NORTH AMERICA

Like the mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe, interpretations in North America are set in the context of varying theoretical frameworks. These frameworks were also reviewed to the fullest extent of the available literature of North American mound analysis within the context of the sample acquired from the University of Mississippi’s John Williams Library. Each of the interpretations offers a different insight to a particular aspect of past life. A total of 65 books and articles compose the Native American literature sample and were categorized within the theoretical frameworks of archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers (Table 3; see Appendix I for sample categorizations).

Figure 10: Sites discussed within this chapter
This chapter provides the reader with examples on how the theoretical frameworks are applied to interpret the mounds of North America as seen within the sample literature reviewed. The examples provided within this chapter were chosen because they exhibit the characteristics of the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2. In no way are these examples the sole interpretation of the mounds discussed within this chapter, instead they include only one perspective as seen within the books and articles of the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Number of Books</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
<th>Total Number in Sample</th>
<th>Percentage in Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaeoastronomy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical Ideaology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossovers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Archaeoastronomy**

The archaeoastronomy framework within the North American literature sample consists of two (3.08%) books and articles (Table 3 and Appendix I). The focus of the framework in North America is to align mounds with celestial bodies and the cardinal directions. From alignments with celestial bodies and cardinal directions, archaeoastronomy studies can be used to reveal the importance of certain alignments to a culture.

The cardinal directions are thought to hold some importance in past North American cultures and can be seen within the many mounds sites that are organized according to the cardinal directions. The North Plaza at Cahokia, for instance, is surrounded by four mounds that
take up a post at each of the cardinal directions. There are also seven mounds that are aligned on the north-south line, while eight others are found on the east-west line (Chappell 2002:52).

Stout and Lewis (1998) offer their own alignment study on the Adams site in western Kentucky. They found that the possible ramp on the eastern side of Mound A is a north to south alignment that travels through the central plaza to the center of Mound B. The same alignment pattern was recognized between Mounds C and D, as well (Stout and Lewis 1998:166). Apart from the cardinal directions, many of the mounds at the Adams site and the central plaza are aligned with the summer solstice sunrise.

The significance of mound alignments to the cardinal directions or the solstice sun may never be fully understood, especially since many alignments to cardinal directions are off many several degrees. Stout and Lewis (1998:165) suggest the possibility that instead of the alignments being based on the cardinal directions they were reproductions of the SECC circle and cross motif. There is also the possibility that mound placement is simply the result of topography and better proximity to bodies of water (Stout and Lewis 1998:170). For instance, Cahokia is situated between the Mississippi, Illinois, Missouri, Kaskaskia, and Meramec rivers, a region that is often referred to as the land of five rivers (Chappell 2002:18). Due to this position within the floodplain, Cahokia is the source of great waterway routes for trade and a place for water birds to migrate.

Another aspect of archaeoastronomy studies includes the meaning of mounds in respect to how past Native Americans viewed constellations. Thaddeus Cowan’s (1975) study of the earthworks and effigy mounds of Ohio and Wisconsin is an example of constellations being used to interpret the landscape. To support his concept that the effigy earthworks and mounds are reproductions of constellation, Cowan contends that their large size and direction are important.
The size of the earthworks and mounds is interpreted as the Native Americans’ perceived size and copy of the constellations. The earthworks and effigy mounds are often built on hilltops or ridges and face skyward, which place them within a symbolic sky (Cowan 1975:218-219).

Cowan’s interpretation begins by explaining that the Native American views of constellations are different from how we see them. On one hand, many individual stars are known as specific characters and figures within their myths. The stars within Ursa Minor retell the story of a small child leading a lost hunting party home (Cowan 1975:220). On the other hand, some stars are seen as a group, like how the Milky Way is known as the pathway of the dead (Cowan 1975:221). Within the views of individual or group stars, earthworks and mounds play the mythological roles on the landscape for people to remember and seen all year long. The 400 meters long Serpent Mound effigy in Adams County, Ohio is an example of storytelling in the landscape and provides viewers with a reminder of two possible stories. First, the Serpent Mound is seen “swallowing” an egg. The egg is thought to represent Polaris, while the Serpent is representative of Ursa Minor and the coiling of the Serpent is the movement of the constellation around Polaris (Cowan 1975:228). The second possibility is that the Serpent Mound plays out various lunar eclipse legends (Cowan 1975:229).

Another example Cowan uses to discuss storytelling in the landscape is the Marching Bear Group in Iowa (Figure 11 and 12). The arching procession of the bear effigy mounds is suggested to represent the movement of Ursa Major around Polaris during the summer months (Cowan 1975:231). In addition to the arching placement of the bears, the bird mounds positioned above the bears at each end of the arch are seen as the constellation Cygnus appearance in the sky (Cowan 1975:231).
Cosmology

Cosmology provides a different understanding of the mounds in North America and consists of 26 (40%) books and articles within the reviewed sample literature (Table 3 and Appendix I). Within the theoretical framework, the organization, and sometimes the shape, of mounds are key factors. In cosmology, the organization of mounds is a reminder of society’s place in the world, as well as a person’s place within the society (Chappell 2002:56). The key within this framework is that it is a way for people to explain the world around them and mounds are a way to remember and practice beliefs on a daily basis. Mounds can then be used to reproduce the worldly order, which may explain the levels of construction seen in many mounds. Most importantly, mounds within cosmological interpretations reflect the belief of the people who created them.

One example of the beliefs that are possibly translated into mounds is the Mississippian’s (AD 750- AD 1500) separation of the world into the Upper World and the Lower World (Butzer 1990; Emerson 1997a; Chappell 2002). The human world is found in between the two and can become chaotic if the two are not kept apart (Emerson 1997a:220). Nonetheless, Chappell explains that height was still a metaphor for power and association with the celestial world.
Thus, elites were often connected with the mounds as a reminder of the world order, imbuing into society the appropriate place of each person (Chappell 2002:57; Lewis et al. 1998:17). It could also provide elites with a form of divine right for ruling over the people because of the leader’s closeness to the Upper World gods. Dalan et al. furthers the argument that height reflected power by explaining the dominating effect Monk’s Mound has on the landscape. The mound reaches a height of 30 meters and encompasses 17 acres (Dalan et al. 2003:61). More interestingly, a voice on Monk’s Mound can be heard clearly in the gathering area of the Grand Plaza, which suggests the importance of elite speakers, as well as the connection they had with Cahokian belief systems.

The symbolism of mounds is also discussed within the context of historical myths. Knight (1989) provides insight into how mounds could have been perceived by prehistoric people by looking at historic myths that explain the reasons for the presence of mounds. For example, the Cherokee myths portray mounds to be hollow structures that were used to hide their warriors. Once the enemies were within reach the warriors would jump out of the mounds and the surprise attack would assure victory (Knight 1989:280). Similarly, Frances Densmore (1928) recounts the Winnebago history of effigy mounds near Galesville, Wisconsin as refuges during times of war. In Densmore’s (1928:730) account, a man’s dream animal told him to build a mound in its likeness to hide in during times of danger. An open space inside the mound is meant for the storage of food for long stays and the entrance is concealed from anyone other than those who the dream animal is meant to protect (Densmore 1928:730).

Furthermore, the Muskogee origin myths sometimes referred to platform mounds as the “navel of the earth,” or the place where the ancestors were able to come to the realm of the living. Mounds are also the place where the dead are returned to the earth, completing the cycle
of life (Knight 1989:280). Other times the Muskogee referred to mounds as “earth islands,” which was applied to square mounds that portrayed the Muskogee’s view of the earth, which was flat, square, and dropped on all four sides (Knight 1989:287).

In addition to myths, the actual organization of mounds on the landscape could offer an explanation of the Mississippian’s belief in a quadripartite universe (Emerson 1997a:223). Many cosmological studies have focused on the organization of mounds, particularly focusing on the cardinal directions. Within the context of specific organization, mounds in North America are sometimes referred to as a “cosmogram,” or the beliefs of a culture that are written into the landscape using particular alignments and shaping (Chappell 2002:55).

Burial mounds provide an example of the importance of the meaning behind cardinal direction alignments. James Brown discusses the submound 1 burials of Mound 72 at Cahokia. He explains that the burials are an expression of collective identity that focuses on the importance of community actions and not the elite (Brown 2006:205). The placement of the dead are seen as purposeful and a performance as specific heroes and deities. The dead “enact a cosmic cycle of rebirth and death and a struggle of the procreative life force associated with daylight and Morning Star against the life-takers associated with nighttime” (Brown 2006:209). In this way, the focus is on human life and not just the elite. A similar idea is seen in four headless burials interred side by side at Dickson Mound. Brown suggests that the cardinal directions placement could represent the wholeness of a community, while the headless burials are a matter of ritual identity being transferred from the deceased to the living (Brown 2006:206-207).

Lastly, mounds can be interpreted as the result of ritual activity. Rebecca Saunders and Michael Russo (2011) discuss the Middle Archaic exploitation of shellfish in Florida. Saunders
and Russo (2011:38) argue that shellfish in the region would have been more accessible and contain more nutritional value than previously believed, which resulted in shellfish being a major part of the Archaic diet along with terrestrial animals. Since shellfish were accessible to the people living near estuaries in Florida, the appearance of shell rings (like those seen at Oxeye Island site and St. Joseph Reed Shell Ring) was a topic of interest. Shell rings are most often “C”, “U”, or “8” shaped structures containing whole and broken shells, fishbone, and pottery within the fill (Saunders and Russo 2011:44). Rarely, these structures are complete circles or contain lithic debris and the plaza of the shell ring, or the center, is clear of artifacts entirely.

The function of shell rings is debated, but Saunders and Russo (2011:48) argue that the structures are the first evidence of population nucleation and large-scale ceremonialism and feasting. The authors explain that their argument for ceremonial feasting is based on the presence of large, whole, and clean oyster shell valves that are deposited in large piles quickly and not an accumulation of daily life. This ceremonial feasting would have been cooperative and a means to celebrate the beliefs of the group (Saunders and Russo 2011: 48).

Phenomenology

A total of two (3.08%) books and articles were categorized as phenomenology with the sample literature for North America (Table 3 and Appendix I). Whereas cosmology and archaeoastronomy focus on the order of the supernatural and natural world and sociopolitical ideology focuses on the social order, phenomenology looks at an amalgamation of the three by focusing on the experience an individual has from being within the landscape (Emerson 1997b:191; Wesson 1998:105). Cameron Wesson (1998:105) explains that this is a good approach to take when interpreting mounds since the primary construction is existential and the mound can be used in other ways later on in life. Knight agrees by stating that platform mounds
are an “expression of an entire culture complex” that carries specific behavioral meanings for leader and followers (Knight 1997:231). Wesson (1998:94) adds:

“By structuring architecture and social spaces as replicas of culturally specific cosmological ordering systems, a culture translates abstract notions of social, political, and historical order into physical forms.”

To explain the phenomenological concept, Wesson discusses the organization of the 29 mounds at Moundville. The arrangement is suggested to follow the relative status of kin groups which would uphold the ideology of the culture along with ritual objects associated with the elite (Emerson 1997b:192; Wesson 1998:118). By Phase II/III of Moundville (AD 1300-1450) SECC symbolism was introduced and a connection of the elite to the supernatural realm, which was then incorporated into elitist ideology (Wesson 1998:118-119). In addition, Wesson suggests that the people of Moundville saw it as a metaphor for the center of the world and sacred landscape. However, the out migration of Moundville raises the question of why people would want to leave the center of the world. An answer could be that followers were tired of the elites that the followers went in search of a new world center and sacred landscape (Wesson 1998:119).

Another phenomenological approach for North American mounds is discussed by Sarah Sherwood and Tristram Kidder within the context of Poverty Point (ca. 3600-3000 cal BP), Shiloh Mounds (ca. 900-400 cal BP), and Cahokia (ca. 1000-600 cal BP) (Sherwood and Kidder 2011:70). The authors argue for the study of mounds as artifacts that reflect planning, preparation, and cultural choices. Sherwood and Kidder (2011:72) explain that mounds are complex structures that incorporate social, mythological, historical, and political meaning. Therefore, by studying mounds as artifacts the experience desired by the construction of a mound should be reflected in the choices made during the preparation of the site and the
materials used. Sherwood and Kidder (2011:73) contend that nearly all mound sites show evidence of site preparation, which would suggest a conscious choosing of the location possibly in relation to other features in the landscape. For instance, Mound A at Poverty Point was built over a one to two meter depression that was cleared of the surrounding wetland vegetation (Sherwood and Kidder 2011:73). In addition to choosing a location, the materials used during construction are not random either. Sherwood and Kidder (2011:74) explain that certain sediments are sought after for the construction of a mound based on color and texture. Such as the red sediment seen at Shiloh Mounds that had to be mined to approximately two meters below the surface from adjacent drainages. There is also the mixing of two or more soils to achieve a specific color or texture as seen at Poverty Point, Shiloh Mounds, and Cahokia (Sherwood and Kidder 2011: 74). One of the main points that Sherwood and Kidder (2011:83) are trying to make is that the construction of mounds “is not a random act; instead, it required planning, from the selection and design of the worksite, the selection of soils/sediments for use to their preparation, emplacement and compaction.” Since mounds are not all the same, by studying the choices made in location and material use, the experiences desired from the building of a mound can possibly be determined.

**Sociopolitical Ideology**

Thirty-four (52.31%) books and articles of the North American mound analysis literature reviewed for this thesis were focused on the theoretical approach of sociopolitical ideology (Table 3 and Appendix I). In the framework of sociopolitical ideology, the political structure and social hierarchy of a culture are argued to be reflected in the number, type, and size of mounds built in an area. As Timothy Pauketat (1994:14) explains, ideology is the system of
views that bring about a social status quo. Therefore, the sociopolitical ideology framework seeks to explain what kind powers are behind the construction of mounds.

Robin Beck Jr. (2006) suggests that mound building activities for Mississippian communities are a resulting sign of competition to gain followers for the lifestyle’s labor intensive ways. The argument is based on the placement of mounds in the Cahokia area, where Cahokia, East St. Louis, St. Louis, and Pulcher exhibit their own “nucleated communities” with large mounds and connecting plazas (Beck 2006:27; Daniel-Hartung 1981:106). Each of these areas also maintained their own surrounding mortuary mounds as seen in Big Mound (St. Louis), Cemetery Mound (East St. Louis), and Powell and Rattlesnake mounds at Cahokia (Beck 2006:27). The mound and plaza structures would have required a large labor pool for the initial building, as well as any maintenance the mounds would need in the years to come (Dalan 1997:99). Sally Chappell (2002:63) offers a basic calculation of how much effort it would take to complete the initial building of Monks Mound (Figure 13) at Cahokia.

She explains that if baskets carried 1.5 cubic feet of soil (approximately 50 pounds) then it would take 14,666,666 basket loads to construct Monks Mound. With the basket load number in mind, it would take 30 people carrying eight baskets each day for 167 years to complete their task.
Chappell notes that platform mounds were likely built in stages, but nonetheless the breakdown of such a task still comes across as daunting. Along with the labor required to build mounds, communities would also have to continue with their daily activities in order to survive.

Knowledge of the effort it would take and the cooperation needed to create such wonders as the mounds in North America has resulted in a variety of studies focusing on past politics and social ideas. One of the more common views on mound construction is the idea that the amount of time it took to build a mound and the size of the mound is equal to the gain of more power by the ruling class (Cobb 2003:65). Even if mounds were built in stages, the span of time in which the mound was built could be interpreted as the type of power utilized by elites and how well it was used to create the large earthenworks. For example, Cobb (2003:71-72) argues that mounds built gradually over time were the result of a less forceful hold or manipulative power of the elite over their people. In contrast, mounds that were built in stages over short periods of time were the result of a more coercive power by the elites. Furthermore, the number of mounds within a site reveals the scale of power of the elite over the surrounding region (Cobb 2003:67). A higher number of mounds might be indicative of a wider periphery of power; a concept that is often applied to studies of Cahokia, where over 100 mounds have been identified, the majority of which are platform mounds for public buildings or elite residency (Butzer 1990:35). The mounds would have portrayed the power of the elite to the common people on a daily basis; they would have acted as a reminder of a person’s place within their own political world. As Cobb (2003:69) states:

“At many sites, large platform mounds simultaneously manifested overt and covert powers of display. On the one hand, they flaunted the symbolic authority of those who resided on their summits, and, on the other hand, mound-top palisades masked the activities of those very same elites.”
Cobb explains later that not only do residential and public structure mounds indicate some level of power within the mound builder groups, so do burial mounds by demonstrating possible social statuses of individuals in the groups. It has long been thought that the number and nature of artifacts found within a burial equals a person’s status within their society (Cobb 2003:72). Cobb (2003) suggests that high status burial objects could include items in the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC). These objects have recurring themes, motifs, and iconography, but are not considered to be all encompassing views of the belief system (Cobb 2003:74). Most importantly, SECC objects are often seen as a view into the elite power hold. However, there are new ideas regarding artifacts within burial mounds. Cobb (2003:73) explains within the prestige-goods model that ritually significant goods are acquired by a society through various forms of trade. The SECC items are then distributed amongst the group of that elite to gain loyalty, labor, and a surplus from production. In this way, the significant artifacts, seen as high status items, are found in lower status burials. Cobb also expresses the concern for the reuse of burial objects, as seen at Spiro (Figure 14)(Cobb 2003:77). In the context of the prestige-goods model and the reuse of artifacts, it is now understood that the claims of high status burials are to be made with great care.

Figure 14: Spiro Mounds
In conjunction with ideas of elite power, Emerson (1997a) offers a furthering explanation for the internal organization of Cahokia. He contends that the rise of elites is the result of consensual acceptance of the elites. Elitism would also include the shared perception of community health. Through these concepts, groups formed unity, as well as an alienation of the elite with their occupation of sacred landscape (Emerson 1997a:13-14). Pauketat (1994) agrees with the concept of consensual acceptance. He explains that there are many subgroups in the ideology of a society. It is through a consensus of the community that one subgroup of ideas becomes dominate over the others (Pauketat 1994:15). However, the other subgroups are still present in a society and can later be the cause for change (Pauketat 1994:16). Additionally, Emerson (1997a:26) believes that material culture reflects political ideas (as well as other aspects) of society and is an active participant in the creation of history. Material cultures have three ways of communicating information, including communications within the common media of perception, the sensory experience of an individual, or the “cognitive presuppositions.” Emerson continues by explaining that material culture is also structured in these forms of communication and the structure can be seen within the archaeological records as specific patterns and can reveal social and ideological views (Emerson 1997a:27-28).

Social Memory

As seen with the ancestors in the English-speaking Northwest European cosmology literature, the concept of social memory was seen within a significant portion of the North American literature sample categorized as sociopolitical ideology. Specifically, social memory is a part of the sociopolitical ideology framework that explains how society remembers and forgets and how that is reflected within the landscape. Wesson (1998) and Wilson (2010)
content that past ideas can be translated from the landscape within the context of Moundville. Like Emerson, Wesson (1998:94) suggests that a sacred landscape, such as Moundville, is the result of political gain by elite groups in a culture. At Moundville, there are 29 earthen mounds that are aligned with different aspects of symbolic importance to the inhabitants of the region. For example, the largest of the mounds is situated on the northern edge of the plaza (Wilson 2010:8). As in Cahokia, the mounds as Moundville were reserved for the use of the elite groups in the community and show a sign of solidarity within the culture for such an undertaking to be completed (Butzer 1990; Emerson 1997a; Wilson 2010). Another example of sociopolitical ideological based landscaping is seen within Wilson’s description of later cemeteries at Moundville. Wilson (2010:12-13) explains that there is evidence of cemeteries being created on earlier Mississippian residences, which may provide a social meaning of continuity with the earth and life. The inscribed memories of past people would have reminded the living of their ancestors, as well as past events. In this way, the space becomes and continuously gains meaning for past people.

Apart from the similarities of land use that reflect elite power and social memory, Wilson (2010) suggests that Moundville shows signs of selective forgetting by the community. As the land gains meaning for a culture, especially in the context of mounds or other architectural landscape, there is a constant reminder of the past for all. The only way to start a fresh memory in this case is to remove that meaning from the land. Therefore, Wilson suggests that the evident destruction of two pre-existing mounds at Moundville represent selective forgetting by the community. The destruction of the pre-existing mounds occurred during the initial construction of the now existing Moundville circa AD 1200 (Wilson 2010:8). There are various reasons why
the destruction may have occurred, but Wilson contends that it clearly shows a retranslation of social memory onto the landscape.

Rudolph (1984) and Hally (1996) offer studies that fit within Wilson’s concept of selective forgetting, though their studies look more at an explanation for the stages of mound construction than mound destruction (Rudolph 1984; Hally 1996). The true reason behind the stages in mound building is unknown, but there are many ideas about what could be the cause for such actions. Some reasons include fires or accidents, part of communal ceremonies, symbolic burial of the mound, or the succession of a chief (Hally 1996:95-96). However, both Rudolph (1984) and Hally (1996) argue that stages in mound construction are a result of changes within sociopolitical views of a culture. As Rudolph (1984:40) states:

“A public building, whether it is a temple, a council chamber, a charnel house, or a chief’s residence, is built to house specific social, political, and economic activities. Its design reflects the roles and perquisites of those who have access to the building, and its construction is related to the amount of time and energy that the society expends within the public domain.”

By creating a new stage of an important piece of the landscape, society can then translate their new ideas into the world around them like they had before. Several suggest that the staging of mound building is representative of the cycling of chiefdoms where a new phase would be built when a new chief took over (Cobb 2003:77; Hally 1996:92; Rudolph 1984:42). Furthermore, Rudolph provides the idea that mound stages are the result of a change in what groups, or the number, of people are allowed within that particular public space. As seen within Rudolph’s earth lodge to platform mound transition study, lodges were for all types of public gathering and some other smaller group meetings. When earth lodges were replaced by platform mounds the people allowed within these areas were restricted to the elite class (Rudolph 1984:33, 42). Hally offers one more possibility for the staging occurrence within the context of chiefdom collapse.
When collapse takes place, the following society would breakdown and disperses into the surrounding chiefdoms (Hally 1996:115-116).

In order to offer some light on the three sociopolitical reasons for mound construction in stages, Hally recommends that one should look at the artifacts within the stratigraphy of the mound in question. The artifacts can be used to determine the period of construction (pottery types) and the period of use (refuse analysis) (Hally 1996:102-103). In his northern Georgia study, Hally found that the construction and use episodes spanned a period of 75 to 100 years (Hally 1996:112). The finding supports Hally’s (1996) claim of a cycling chiefdom, where a new elite succeeds to chiefdom after the death of the chief. The succession of a new chief is seen within the construction of a new layer of the chiefly mound that represents a fresh start for the new chief (Hally 1996:125). Furthermore, he contends that mounds in northern Georgia followed lineages and with the loss of a chiefly lineage a mound would be abandoned. Therefore, a new mound and new lineage would be accepted by the culture (Hally 1996:115).

A final sociopolitical ideological interpretation of mounds in North America is explained by Gartner through Late Woodland effigy mounds in Wisconsin. Many of the effigy mounds in Wisconsin do not contain burials within them and the mounds that do have burials contain few

Figure 15: Bear effigy mound at Effigy Mound National Monument Park
associated grave goods (Gartner 1999:677). It is Gartner’s suggestion that effigy mounds (Figure 15) were used more as a social reference to territorial boundaries in the form of clan totems (Gartner 1999:677). The most common of effigy mound shapes are bears, panthers, and thunderbirds. Furthermore, 80 percent of bear effigies are found within one area while 90 percent of panther effigies are found in the other with very little crossover (Gartner 1999:680). Due to the fact that many of the effigy mounds are empty and found in particular regions, it is believed that effigies are important structures used to reiterate boundaries and myths for a society. Where the crossover of effigies exist, a territorial take over may have occurred (Gartner 1999:680). In the end, like the other mounds discussed in this section, effigy mounds were a reminder to past people about where they belonged in the world.

**Crossovers**

The North American sample consisted of one book (1.53%) that was categorized as a crossover, which is a very small representation of the framework. For the purpose of this thesis, a crossover book or article explicitly applies two or more theoretical frameworks for mound interpretations. The one sample in North America is Mark Elson’s (1998) *Expanding the View of Hohokam Platform Mounds: An Ethnographic Perspective*. Elson (1998) looks at the use of platform mounds by the Hohokam within the Tonto Basin in Arizona. The Hohokam culture (AD 700-AD 1450) is contemporary to the Mississippian culture of the Southeast and is known for the use of irrigation system, red-on-buff ceramics, and monumental building (Bayman 2001). Within the discussion of the platform mounds in the Tonto Basin, Elson argues that the function of a mound will lead to the underlying meaning, which can be difficult since mounds that appear identical may have different functions (Elson 1998:92-93). Therefore, an archaeologist must look to the context of artifact assemblages on, in, and surrounding a mound. By analyzing the
artifact assemblage, as well as ethnohistoric accounts when possible, the function of mounds can be determined (Elson 1998:92-93). However, Elson (1998) states that the function of a mound may change over the generations of use, which would then change the meaning and significance that surrounds the mound. For example, Elson (1998:106) begins by arguing that he believed platform mounds in the southwest were solely used as uninhabited, ceremonial structures. Throughout his research of the region’s mound assemblage, the function of many platform mounds was determined to start as either the residence for the leaders in ranked societies or territorial markers for nearby irrigation systems (Elson 1998:101). Elson (1998:106) found that the initial functions of the mounds were eventually abandoned, but the mounds continued to hold meaning for the society as ancestral shrines generations later. With this shift of function the meaning of a mound would change from sociopolitical ideological to cosmological within the society using it, but both are considered a part of the mound’s history. Thus, both of the theoretical frameworks (sociopolitical ideology and cosmology) are important pieces in understanding the meaning of the mound as a whole (Elson 1998:106).

Summary

Although the studies conducted in various regions of North America are only a few of the many landscape projects, they provide much insight as to how mounds are treated in interpretations. This chapter has provided the reader with examples of regional studies that discuss mounds within the characteristics of the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2. These examples were used with the intension of the reader gaining a better understanding of how the theoretical frameworks are applied to mound interpretations in the region and how the literature sample was categorized within this thesis. The literature sample for North America totaled 65 books and articles, categorized within the frameworks of archaeoastronomy (2),
cosmology (26), phenomenology (2), sociopolitical ideology (34), and crossovers (1). As seen in Table 3 the highest percentage of North American sample falls within the framework of sociopolitical ideology at 52.31% with cosmology the next highest at 40%. Books and articles that fall within archaeoastronomy (3.08%), phenomenology (3.08%) and crossovers (1.53%) have a very small representation within the reviewed sample literature. Further discussion on the differences seen within this sample and a comparison of the differences seen within the English-speaking Northwest Europe sample will be in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter of this thesis provides the reader with the results obtained and conclusions made from the data tested. As stated in Chapter 3, the data for this thesis was sampled from the material available at the John Williams Library, Interlibrary Loan System, and the articles databases JSTOR and EbscoHost Academic Premiere at the University of Mississippi. To begin, the initial sample data was acquired through key word searches in the John Williams Library catalogue, JSTOR, and EbscoHost Academic Premiere (See Table 1, p. 25 for key words searched). The abstracts of the initial sample data were reviewed for relevance to mound interpretation. Books and articles that did not focus primarily on the interpretation of mound creation and use were excluded from the sample data. The remaining sample data was obtained for full review to determine the theoretical framework applied for the mound interpretation. Any books or articles that were not directly available through the John Williams Library, JSTOR, or EbscoHost Academic Premiere were acquired from the University of Mississippi Interlibrary Loan System.

Within the two regions, five main theoretical frameworks were used to categorize the sample data on mound interpretation. The five frameworks included archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers because these frameworks encompassed the theoretical characteristics applied to the mound interpretations in the sample data. A description of each framework is provided in Chapter 2 and examples of their application are given within both English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America in
Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. In summary, archaeoastronomy is the study of ancient cultures and their knowledge of the sky, as seen in Thaddeus Cowan’s (1975) discussion on the Marching Bear Mound Group in Iowa. Cowan (1975) suggests that the mound group matches the constellation Ursa Major’s movement around Polaris, with the bird mounds at the ends of the bear mound procession representing the position of the constellation Cyrus. In English-speaking Northwest Europe archaeoastronomy was seen within G. Cooney’s (2000) and Chris Scarre’s (1998) discussion on Newgrange’s alignment with the midwinter sunrise. During the sunrise on this day, the roof-box above the entrance of Newgrange aligns with the sun and allows light to illuminate the passageway. Cosmology is focused on the belief systems of cultures and their appearance within the archaeological record. For example, Hingley (1996) and Pollard and Reynolds (2002) interpret mounds in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain as places for the ancestors. Therefore, mounds are constructed as a result of a community’s need to build a representation of their belief to strengthen it and provide a sacred place for communicating with deceased kin. In North America, the platform mounds of the Mississippian’s were viewed as the middle point between the Upper World and Lower World and were used as a way to communicate with the gods to keep peace within all of the worlds (Butzer 1990; Emerson 1997a; Chappell 2002). Phenomenology is concerned with the overall experience humans have with the landscape and how monuments like mounds are built to emphasize certain experiences. John Barrett et al. (1991) states that importance of the placement of mounds is supported by the lack of human remains found within many of the ones located along the Dorset Cursus in Southwest England. Instead of mounds having the main purpose of places for burial, mounds along the Dorset Cursus were built to focus an individual’s attention on a particular feature of the landscape, which in this case are the cursus. Additionally, Sarah Sherwood and Tristram Kidder
(2011) suggest that the building of mounds is not a random act, but one of considerable planning. This planning would include the preparation of the location site and the choosing of the material used to build the structure. All of these choices would be used to create a particular experience for the individuals who were in the presence of the mound. Sociopolitical ideology focuses on the social structure of a culture and how that is reflected in the archaeological record. For instance, Cobb (2003) and Butzer (1990) contend that the platform mounds like those seen at Cahokia and Moundville are the result of elite manipulation of their followers. With the extraordinary amount of labor required to construct platform mounds, not only are followers influenced by their leaders to become laborers but also reminded of their status on a daily basis upon the mound’s completion. Burial mounds offer examples of sociopolitical ideology as well. As seen in the discussion of Manton Barrow and Hemp Knoll round barrows in Wiltshire. Pollard and Reynolds (2002) suggest that the mound itself, as well as the artifacts associated with the burial reflect the individual’s status and role within society. Lastly, crossovers are the books and articles that explicitly used two or more theoretical framework for the interpretation of mounds. Within this thesis that included only two studies, one in each region sample. Bayliss et al. (2007) and Elson (1998) both used sociopolitical ideology and cosmology to explain the meaning of the mounds they studied. Bayliss et al. (2007) argued that Silbury Hill was build primarily for cosmological reasons, but could not have been accomplished without the organization of labor by a leader. Elson (1998) suggests that the functions of the platform mounds in the southwest United States resulted in a shift in meaning from the sociopolitical ideological elite residence and territorial markers for irrigation systems to the cosmological ancestral shrines once the mounds were abandoned. In both studies, sociopolitical ideology and cosmology are important in understanding the history of mounds.
Results

The final sample data totaled 98 books and articles on mound interpretation. Of the 98 books and articles, 33 are focused on the mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe and 65 are focused on the mounds in North America. The skewed results are mostly likely due to the sample strategy used to acquire the literature and the use of a single library system within the United States. Table 4 lists the number of books and articles that fall within each of the five frameworks (archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology, and crossovers) in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America. In the English-speaking Northwest Europe sample, of the 33 books and articles, 2 (6.06%) are archaeoastronomy, 14 (42.42%) are cosmology, 8 (24.24%) are phenomenology, and 8 (24.24%) are sociopolitical ideology. In the North American sample, of the 65 books and articles, 2 (3.08%) are archaeoastronomy, 26 (40.00%) are cosmology, 2 (3.08%) are phenomenology, and 34 (52.31%) are sociopolitical ideology. Both English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America are represented by 1 sample categorized as crossovers (3.03% in English-speaking Northwest Europe and 1.53% in North America). These were categorized as crossovers due to their discussion of mounds within two or more of the theoretical frameworks. Percentages of the samples reveal differences in usage of the theoretical frameworks within the two regions.

As seen in Figure 16, the English-speaking Northwest European sample contains a higher percentage of books and articles within phenomenology, while the North American sample contains a higher percentage within sociopolitical ideology. Furthermore, both regional samples show a nearly equal usage of cosmology, but a very small representation of archaeoastronomy and any type of crossover frameworks within the regional samples.
Table 4: Counts and Percentages of Data Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeoastronomy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmology</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42.42</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical Ideology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossover</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Comparison of sample percentages

Due to the fact that the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples were so skewed, chi-square tests were conducted on the data in order to determine the significance of the differences seen between the regional samples in Figure 16. Since some of the sample sizes within the frameworks equaled less than five, a Fisher’s Exact test was used to ensure the accuracy in the significant differences seen within the data compared. Significant
differences are seen within comparisons resulting in a p-value of 0.05 or less. Table 5 provides the reader with the resulting p-values of the tests between the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples. The observed results of the chi-square testing further supports the differences noted in Figure 16 between the application of phenomenology and sociopolitical ideology in the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples. Thus, even though the sample sizes between the regions are skewed, there is still a significant difference between phenomenology and sociopolitical ideology in application to mound interpretations within the regional samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America Comparison P-Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archaeoastronomy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cosmology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phenomenology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociopolitical Ideology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crossover</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

Agreeing upon a way to interpret mounds has always been difficult. As seen throughout this thesis, there are a number of ways to do so. More specifically within a sample of literature on mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America, five different theoretical frameworks were used to categorize the books and articles. These frameworks include archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, sociopolitical ideology and crossovers. The purpose of this thesis was to reveal any use of one theoretical framework over other in the
regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe (including Britain and Ireland) and North America and determine the effects this prevalence would have on the regional interpretation of mounds as seen within the sample.

**Regional Differences Observed**

As seen within the comparison of the English-speaking Northwest European and North American sample data, the two regions appear to be similar in theoretical framework usage with the exception of phenomenology and sociopolitical ideology (Figure 16 and Table 5). The English-speaking Northwest Europe sample is represented by a significantly higher number of phenomenology interpretations than the North American sample, while the opposite occurs for sociopolitical ideology interpretations. This difference suggests that the English-speaking Northwest European sample is more of a phenomenological view of mounds, while the North American sample is more sociopolitical ideological.

Of further interest is the significant lack of representation for archaeoastronomy and crossover interpretations in both the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples there. The underrepresentation of archaeoastronomy may be due to a question of accuracy within such studies. Stout and Lewis (1998) discuss how interpretations of an archaeoastronomy study are disregarded due to measurements of mounds being stretched to questionable lengths. For example, one of archaeoastronomy’s focuses is on the alignment of mounds with the cardinal directions, sunsets, sunrises, and the moon’s cycle (Baity 1973). Due to erosion over time or the use of crude tools during construction, measurements to verify these alignments are slightly off by degrees (Stout and Lewis 1998). The inaccuracies of such measurements have made the framework somewhat controversial, but an argument can be made for the importance of the studies by continued identification of possible alignments such as
Chappell’s (2002) discussion of Cahokia’s North Plaza alignment to the cardinal direction, Scarre’s (1998) discussion on Newgrange’s view box that aligns with the rising midwinter sun, or Cowan’s (1975) interpretation of the Marching Bear Mound Group as the tracking of Ursa Major around Polaris. Boutsika and Ruggles (2011:59) argue that archaeoastronomy studies can be strengthened by the context within which alignments seen, such as the depiction of Venus on the Governor’s Palace in the Mayan city of Uxmal suggesting the planet’s cultural significance and the plausibility of the temple’s alignment to it. These studies and more contend that past societies had not only the knowledge to build incredible monuments, but also the workings of the sky above them. With a continued interest in what past people knew about the sky, its cycle, and the importance of this knowledge in a society, accuracy of measurements can improve.

Another lack in theoretical usage is observed in the North American sample’s underrepresentation of phenomenology interpretations. The framework’s underrepresentation may be due to its relative newness in the field (Darvill 2008). Also, many key proponents of phenomenology are Europe archaeologists, such as Christopher Tilley, Julian Thomas, Barbara Bender, and Mark Edmonds (Brück 2005; Darvill 2008; Johnson 2012). Furthermore, North America’s underrepresentation of phenomenology could be explained through the explanation for the region’s overrepresentation of sociopolitical ideology. Criticisms have been made in regards to phenomenology and other post-modern concepts in archaeology, such as its belief in the existence of biasing assumptions and that interpretations are subjective because a research cannot be fully rid of these assumptions (Johnson 2012). With the development of Lewis Binford’s “New Archaeology,” North American archaeology has had a strong focus on archaeology as an objective science through collecting data and making hypotheses about the past (Binford 1962). The past can then be known through scientific excavations and collection
of data. The “New Archaeology” has also provided the template for Cultural Resource Management (CRM) within North America, which provides archaeological surveys in areas prior to road and other types of construction. Clients of CRM archaeologists require quantitative evidence of archaeological sites with their project areas, which does not always involve cosmological, archaeoastronomical, or phenomenological interpretation. However, these factors do not negate its importance in mound interpretation. Phenomenology focuses on the flow of landscape and the individual’s experience within it (Tilley 1994). English-speaking Northwest European studies (Chapter 4) offer examples like Silbury Hill’s appearance on the horizon of other monuments in the surrounding area and the asymmetrical construction of cairns in southwest Wales (Sims 2009; Cummings et al. 2002). Both suggest an intentional construction in order to achieve a particular experience for an individual when they move with or view the landscape. North American studies (Chapter 5) do include phenomenological interpretations like Cameron Wesson’s (1998) discussion on the organization of the 29 mounds at Moundville. Wesson (1998:118-119) suggests that the arrangement to represent the elitist kin groups, elite connection to the supernatural realm, and the recognition of Moundville as the center of the world. An individual would gain this knowledge either consciously or subconsciously on a daily basis while moving within the Moundville landscape. Further study on mound arrangements within the landscape is needed in North America to identify and interpret the importance of a particular arrangement to an individual and society.

A final noted underrepresentation in the English-speaking Northwest European and North American samples is revealed by the crossovers of the samples. Crossover studies of mounds are few in number within this sample, but equally important to an overall understanding of mounds. It is likely that the underrepresentation of crossovers in the sample is due to the fact that articles
make up a majority of the two regions (See Tables 2 and 3). Whereas articles are shorter and often focus on one specific aspect of a topic, books provide the space necessary to take a more holistic approach and include more than one theoretical framework within the interpretation of a mound. Within the sample data of this thesis, two crossover studies were identified. In the English-speaking Northwest Europe sample, the crossover included Alex Bayliss, Fachtna McAvoy, and Alasdair Whittle’s (2007) article, *The world recreated: redating Silbury Hill in its monumental landscape*. In the article, Bayliss *et al.* (2007:43) argue that:

“Social explanations have tended to dominate interpretative discussion of Silbury Hill, but the great monumental undertaking was both a social fact and an expression of cosmology and worldview.”

Bayliss *et al.* (2007) continue to explain that an accurate chronology of the construction of the monument can be used to interpret the meaning of the mound. With an extended length of time for the construction of Silbury Hill (spanning generations), strong leadership would be needed to organize, mobilize and avoid contestation of the laboring people to create a place of importance to a community. However, a strong devotion and belief in the creation would also be needed for its completion (Bayliss 2007:43-44). Therefore a leader could use his ability to organize the activity of construction and eventual completion of a monument like Silbury Hill as propaganda for his right to be in power. Furthermore, any gaps in the construction sequence could be interpreted as a time where arguments and contestation of a leader’s ability occurred (Bayliss 2007:44).

Within the North American sample, Mark Elson (1998) contends in *Expanding the View of Hohokam Platform Mounds: An Ethnographic Perspective*, that the function of a mound will lead to a meaning. Identifying function can be difficult since many mounds in North America
are “identical in appearance” and other sources of information, such as artifact assemblages on or around mounds, are required to complete such an interpretation (Elson 1998:92-93). The function of a mound may also change over the generations of a community, which would change the meaning and significance of a mound. Even with these difficulties, Elson (1998) argues that an understanding of mounds can be achieved from artifact and ethnohistoric analysis. For instance, Elson (1998:106) states that he believed platform mounds in the southwest to be “largely uninhabited ceremonial features.” Upon research of the region’s mound assemblage, Elson (1998:101;106) found that many platform mounds were the result of ranked societies for the residence of leader or irrigation systems, eventually being abandoned after their use to become ancestral shrines for later generations. Thus, the meaning of a mound would change from a sociopolitical ideological view to cosmological one. Even so, both of these theoretical views are a part of the mound history and its meaning as a whole (Elson 1998:106).

The importance of the effect a crossover interpretation has on a region’s understanding of mounds can be seen in the cohesion of differing theoretical frameworks to provide a more rounded interpretation in these two studies. Bayliss et al. (2007:44) state that it “is not possible to keep the social, conceptual and spiritual dimensions of the monumental mound apart.” A mound can hold many meanings to a society, much like the United States flag holds a variety of meaning for people today. Mounds are symbols that can be explained within the theoretical frameworks of archaeoastronomy, cosmology, phenomenology, and sociopolitical ideology easily, but by exploring how these individual interpretations interact with each other could bring a different understanding of mounds all together.
Conclusion

In conclusion, there is still much to debate on how mounds should be interpreted. This thesis has provided the reader with a regional exploration of mound interpretation within a sample of literature. The analysis of the English-speaking Northwest European and North American data samples that were categorized into five theoretical frameworks was conducted to identify significant differences in their prevalence in application. The interesting results of the analysis were the significant differences seen between the usage of phenomenology and sociopolitical ideology, as well as the lack of representation of archaeoastronomy and crossover interpretations. The higher number of phenomenology samples in English-speaking Northwest Europe, the higher number of sociopolitical ideology samples in North America, and the underrepresentation of archaeoastronomy and crossover in both regions suggest that both regional understandings of mounds are incomplete. Phenomenology is still a relatively new field in archaeological interpretation, which may be a reason for its lack of use in North American studies. However, studies in the English-speaking Northwest European sample offer an argument for its importance in mound interpretation since individuals will always experience the landscape whether through a community’s meaning of a mound, an individual’s history with a particular place, or how the landscape in constructed to focus the flow of attention on to certain points of importance. Though archaeoastronomy is often considered inaccurate, the repeated notice of alignments in monuments to aspects of the sky has brought the acknowledgement of its importance to further mound interpretation. Lastly, not only is it important to study mounds within all theoretical frameworks and not allow one to overpower the others in application, it is also important to conduct studies with the idea of how these frameworks interact and develop a meaning together. It is likely that the strict categorization of the theoretical frameworks may
have resulted in some books and articles with crossover qualities were put into one category or another. It is common knowledge that different aspects of life often have interdependent roles within a culture. For instance, Mississippian people often believed their elites to be gods which would result in the cosmology of the culture to become part of the sociopolitical ideology.

It is still my personal belief that crossover studies are where future mound studies should focus. No one theoretical framework is correct above the others when interpreting mounds because they tend to focus on one aspect of past life (belief systems, social structure, or celestial alignments). Though there are cultures that have interconnected aspects of life, further inclusion of other aspects can be done. Since, as Bayliss et al. states, “it is not possible to keep the social, conceptual and spiritual dimensions” separate, focus should turn to how the dimensions work together to create the mounds as past people viewed them.

**Further Research**

As with every study, this thesis has its own limitations and openings for further research. Most important, the thesis is limited by the fact that it is comprised of my own observations of the literature available to me. Though the resources available from the J.D. Williams Library at the University of Mississippi were extensive, it does not contain the entirety of the landscape archaeology literature on mounds in English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America. As in the other fields of archaeology, the information is just too large for one study to review everything. I completed this thesis to the best of my abilities with the resources available via books, article databases, and the Interlibrary Loan System. However, even the way databases are set up or searched result in a bias within the study. My use of certain terms while using the library resources would give me articles in a particular order, or not at all. Therefore, more than one study concerning theories in mounds interpretations for English-speaking Northwest Europe
and North America should be completed. If the results of this thesis continue to repeat, then the concepts discussed within the study become more supported in the archaeological community. With a supported argument concerning dominant theoretical positions in mound interpretations, discussions on how to remedy the situation can occur on a more regular basis and perhaps a more encompassing interpretation of mounds can be made.

Also, this thesis focuses solely on the regions of English-speaking Northwest Europe and North America. There are other regions in the world that have mounds that should be analyzed in a similar way as this thesis provides. For example, continental Europe has a large number of mounds that are being interpreted within various theoretical frameworks. By analyzing the interpretations of mounds in continental Europe similar to the analysis completed within this thesis, any overrepresentation or underrepresentation in the application of theories can be revealed for the region and a comparison with other regions would offer ways to counter the dominance. In a similar way, it is important to expand the concept of this thesis to other aspects of the landscape, such as stone circles, hillforts, or even agricultural fields. Theory affects all parts of archaeological studies, which means landscape archaeology is no different from other sub-fields in that respect. Landscape is a presence in many aspects of past, present, and future lives and should be looked at from different perspectives. No single theory encompasses all of the aspects of life, which means theories need to work together to provide a broader, fuller understanding of the meaning of the landscape for people.
REFERENCES CITED
REFERENCES CITED

Anschuetz, Kurt F., Richard H. Wilshusen, and Cherie L. Scheik

Ashmore, Wendy and Chelsea Blackmore

Ashmore, W. and A. B. Knapp (Eds.)

Bailey, Geoff
2007 “Time perspectives, palimpsests and the archaeology of time.” In Journal of Anthropolological Archaeology. 26:198-223

Baity, Elizabeth Chesley

Barrett, John C.


Barrett, J., R. Bradley, and M. Green

Bayliss, Alex, Fachtna McAvoy, and Alasdair Whittle

Bayman, James M.

Beck Jr., Robin A.

Binford, Lewis
1962 “Archaeology as Anthropology.” In American Antiquity. 28(2):217-225


Blitz, John H. and Patrick Livingood
2004 “Sociopolitical implications of Mississippian mound volume.” In American Antiquity. 69:291-301

Boutsikas, Efrosyni and Clive Ruggles

Bradley, Richard

Brown, James


Brück, Joanna
2005 “Experiencing the past? The development of phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory.” In Archaeological Dialogues. 12(1):45-72

Butzer, K.W.
Chappell, Sally A., William R. Iseminger, and John E. Kelly  

Cobb, Charles R.  

Cooney, G.  

Cowan, Thaddeus M.  

Cummings, V., A. Jones, and A. Watson  

Dalan, Rinita A.  


Daniel-Hartung, Ann L.  

Darvill, Timothy  
2008 “Pathways to a Panoramic Past: A Brief History of European Landscape Archaeology.” In *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*, edited by Bruno David and Julian Thomas, pp.60-76. Left Coast Press, Inc., Walnut Creek, CA.

David, Bruno and Julian Thomas (Editors)  
2008 *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*. Left Coast Press, Inc., Walnut Creek, CA.

Densmore, Frances  
Edmonds, M.  
1999  Ancestral Geographies of the Neolithic: Landscape, Monuments and Memory.  
Routledge, London.

Elson, Mark D.  
The University of Arizona Press.  Tucson, AZ.

Emerson, Thomas E.  
1997a Cahokia and the Archaeology of Power.  
University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL.

1997b “Cahokia Elite Ideology and the Mississippian Cosmos.”  In Cahokia: Domination and 
Ideology in the Mississippian World edited by Timothy Pauketat and Thomas E. 
Emerson.  University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE.

Encyclopedia Britannica  

Fleming, Andrew  
1973  “Tombs for the Living.”  In Man.  8(2):177-193

18(2):119-125

Gartner, W.G.  
1999  “Late Woodland landscapes of Wisconsin: Ridged fields, effigy mounds and 
territoriality.”  In Antiquity.  73:671-683.

Geiryn, Thomas  
2000  “A Space for Place in Sociology.”  In Annual Review of Sociology. 26:464-496

Haag, William G.  

Hally, David J.  
1996  “Platform Mound Construction and the Instability of Mississippian Chiefdoms.”  In 
Political Structure and Change in the Prehistoric Southeastern United States, edited by J. 

Harn, Alan D.  
1980 The Prehistory of Dickson Mounds: The Dickson Excavations.  
The State of Illinois Museum.
Hawkins, Gerald
1965 “Sun, Moon, Men, and Stones.” In American Scientist. 53(4):391-408

Hillier, Bill and Julienne Hanson

Hingley, Richard

Johnson, Matthew


2012 “Phenomenological Approaches in Landscape Archaeology.” In Annual Review of Anthropology. 41:269-284

Jones, Andrew
1999 “The World on a Plate: Ceramics, Food Technology, and Cosmology in Neolithic Orkney.” In World Archaeology. 31(1):55-77


Kavasch, E. Barrie

Kinnes, I.
1975 “Monumental function in British Neolithic burial practices.” In World Archaeology. 7:16-29

Kirby, R. Kenneth

Knight, Vernon James, Jr.

Lawhead, Stephen

Lewis, R. Barry, Charles Stout, and Cameron B. Wesson

Lucas, Gavin

Mac Uistin, Liam.

Marillier, Juliet

McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms (Editors)

Merriam-Webster

Nowakowski, Jacqueline A.

O’Kelly, Claire

Parker Pearson, Michael
Patterson, Thomas
2008 “A Brief History of Landscape Archaeology in the Americas.” In Handbook of Landscape Archaeology, edited by Bruno David and Julian Thomas, p.77-84. Left Coast Press, Inc., Walnut Creek, CA.

Pauketat, Timothy R.
1994 The Ascent of Chiefs: Cahokia and Mississippian Politics in Native North America. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL.

Philip’s Encyclopedia

Pollard, J. and A. Reynolds

Reichel-Dolmatoff, G.

Renfrew, Colin

Roberts, B.K.

Rodning, Christopher

Rubertone, Patricia
2008 “Engaging Monuments, Memories, and Archaeology.” In Archaeologies of Placemaking: Monuments, Memories, and Engagement in Native North America. Left Coast Press, Inc. Walnut Creek, CA.

Rudolph, James L.

Russo, Michael
Saunders, Rebecca and Michael Russo

Scarre, Chris.

Schiffer, Michael


Schroeder, Sissel
2009 “Thinking About a Public and Multidisciplinary Archaeology.” In Reviews in Anthropology. 38:166-194

Shanks, Michael and Christopher Tilley

Sherwood, Sarah C. and Tristram R. Kidder

Sims, Lionel
2009 “Entering, and returning from, the underworld: reconstituting Silbury Hill by combining a quantified landscape phenomenology with archaeoastronomy.” In Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. 15:386-408.

Steponaitis, Vincas P.

Stout, Charles and R. Barry Lewis

Theler, James L. and Robert F. Boszhardt
2003 Twelve Millennia: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Valley. University of Iowa Press. Iowa City, IA.
Thom, Alexander

Tilley, Christopher Y.
1994 *A Phenomenology of Landscape*. Berg Publishers, Providence, RI.


Trigger, Bruce


Wagner, P.L.

Wesson, Cameron B.

Westwood, Jennifer.

Willey, Gordon R.

Wilson, Gregory D.

Wood, James W., George R. Milner, Henry C. Harpending, and Kenneth M. Weiss
APPENDIX I
English-speaking Northwest Europe

Archaeoastronomy

Watkins, Alfred


Cosmology

Bayliss, Alex, Don Benson, Dawn Galer, Louise Humphrey, Lesley McFadyen, and Alasdair Whittle

Davis, Simon and Sebastian Payne

Edmonds, Mark

Fox, Sir Cyril

Jones, Andy M.

Keys, David

Maddrell, Avril

Peters, Frances
Piggott, Stuart

Smith, Martin

Thomas, Julian

Whittle, Alasdair, Alistair Barclay, Alex Bayliss, Lesley McFadyen, Rick Schulting, and Michael Wysocki

Whittle, Alasdair, Alex Bayliss, and Michael Wysocki

Wysocki, Michael, Alex Bayliss, and Alasdair Whittle

**Phenomenology**

Field, David

Llobera, Marcos

Phillips, Tim
Owoc, Mary Ann

Richards, Colin

Thomas, Julian

Tilley, Christopher

Watson, Aaron

*Socio-Political Ideology*

Balter, Michael

Barrett, John C.

Bradley, Richard and Elise Fraser

Darvill, T. C.

Davidson, Hilda R. Ellis
Kinnes, Ian

Last, Jonathan

Williams, Stephen

Crossover

Bayliss, Alex, Fachtna McAvoy, and Alasdair Whittle

North America

Archaeoastronomy

Clark, John E.

Hively, Ray and Robert Horn

Cosmology

Betts, Collin

Byers, A. Martin
Chappell, Sally A., William R. Iseminger, and John E. Kelly  

Claassen, Cheryl  
2010 *Feasting with Shellfish in the Southern Ohio Valley: Archaic Sacred Sites and Rituals.* The University of Tennessee Press. Knoxville, TN.

DeBoer, Warren  

Densmore, Frances  

Dunham, Gary H., Debra L. Gold, and Jeffrey L. Hantman  

Griffin, James B., Richard E. Flanders, and Paul F. Titterington  

Hally, David J. and Mark Williams  

Holt, Julie Zimmermann  

Kennedy, Roger G.  

Knight, Jr., Vernon James  
Korp, Maureen
Lewiston, NY.

Lacquement, Cameron H.
341-354.

Lepper, Bradley T.
2010  “The Ceremonial Landscape of the Newark Earthworks and the Raccoon Creek Valley.”
In *Hopewell Settlement Patterns, Subsistence, and Symbolic Landscapes*, edited by A.

Mainfort Jr., Robert C.
1988  “Middle Woodland Ceremonialism at Pinson Mounds, Tennessee.”  In *American

1988  “Pinson Mounds: Internal Chronology and External Relationships.”  In *Middle Woodland
Settlement and Ceremonialism in the Mid-South and Lower Mississippi Valley*, edited by
Robert C. Mainfort, Jr.  Proceedings of the 1984 Mid-South Archaeological Conference,
Pinson Mounds, Tennessee- June 1984.  Mississippi Department of Archives and History.
Jackson, MS.

Mann, Rob
2005  “Intruding on the Past: The Reuse of Ancient Earthen Mounds by Native Americans.”  In

Miller, Jay
2001  “Instilling the Earth: Explaining Mounds.”  In *American Indian Culture and Research

Mills, William C.
1922  “Exploration of the Mound City Group, Ross County, Ohio.”  In *American

Saunders, Joe W., Rofle D. Mandel, C. Garth Sampson, Charles M. Allen, E. Thurman Allen,
Daniel A. Bush, James K. Feathers, Kristen J. Gremillion, C. T. Hallmark, H. Edwin Jackson,
Jay K. Johnson, Reca Jones, Roger T. Saucier, Gary L. Stringer and Malcolm F. Vidrine
2005  “Watson Brake, a Middle Archaic Mound Complex in Northeast Louisiana.”  In

Saunders, Rebecca and Michael Russo
2011  “Coastal shell middens in Florida: A view from the Archaic period.”  In *Quaternary
Sears, William H.

Thompson, Victor D. and Thomas J. Pluckhahn

Van Nest, Julieann, Douglas K. Charles, Jane E. Buikstra, and David L. Asch

Wyman, Jeffries

Phenomenology

Byers, A. Martin

Sherwood, Sarah C. and Tristram R. Kidder

Socio-Political Ideology

Anderson, David G.

Bernardini, Wesley

Blitz, John H.
2008 Moundville. The University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL.
Blitz, John H. and Patrick Livingood

Boudreaux III, Edmond A.

Cobb, Charles R.

Cobb, Charles R. and Adam King

Craig, Douglas B., James P. Holmlund, and Jeffrey J. Clark

Crothers, George M.

Dalan, Rinita


Emerson, Thomas E.
1997a *Cahokia and the Archaeology of Power*. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL.

Gibson, Jon L.  

Green, William and Roland L. Rodell  

Grimstead, Deanna N. and Frank E. Bayham  

Hammerstedt, Scott W.  

Hodges, Glenn  

King, Adam  

Knight Jr., Vernon James  


2010 Mound Excavations at Moundville: Architecture, Elites, and Social Order. The University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL.

Koerner, Shannon D., Lynne P. Sullivan, and Bobby R. Braly  

Livingood, Patrick C.  
2010 Mississippian Polity and Politics on the Gulf Coastal Plain: A View from the Pearl River, Mississippi. The University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL.
Mehrer, Mark W.  
Northern Illinois University Press.  Dekalb, IL.

Pauketat, Timothy R.  

Peebles, Christopher S.  
Society for American Archaeology.

Rice, Glen and Charles Redman  
1993  “Platform Mounds of the Arizona Desert: An Experiment in Organizational Complexity.”  

Rodning, Christopher B. and David G. Moore  

SnyDer, J. F.  
University of Illinois Press.

University of Illinois Press.

Vogel, Gregory, Marvin Kay, and Louis Vogele, Jr.  

Wesler, Kit W.  
2001  *Excavations at Wickliffe Mounds.*  
The University of Alabama Press.  Tuscaloosa, AL.

Whiting Young, Biloine and Melvin L. Fowler  
2000  *Cahokia: The Great Native American Metropolis.*  
The University of Illinois.  Urbana and Chicago, IL.
Crossovers

Elson, Mark D.
VITA

JENNIFER RICH

EDUCATION

B.S. Archaeology, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, May 2009

PAST EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Employment Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2011-Present</td>
<td>Wisconsin Historical Society: Crew Leader Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010- August 2010</td>
<td>Wisconsin Historical Society: Field Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2007- May 2009</td>
<td>UW-La Crosse Sociology/Archaeology Department: Student Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2007-May 2009</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center: Office Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 08/09- August 08/09</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center: Field Crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2005-May 2007</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center: Laboratory Aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>