ANCIENT MOUNDS, MODERN MEANINGS

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CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	LANDSCAPE	4
III.	BACKGROUND	9
IV.	EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT	15
V.	BEAR MOUND PARK	22
VI.	CONCLUSION	29
	REFERENCES	33

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I. INTRODUCTION

Students at the University of Wisconsin and other residents of Madison encounter effigy mounds on an almost daily basis as they move throughout campus and the city. Mounds can be found on Observatory Hill (see Figure 1), near the Lakeshore path, in Elmside Park, and throughout the city, Dane County, and the rest of Southern Wisconsin. But what do these mounds mean? Archaeologists can offer some explanations as to the motivation of the mounds' builders, but they cannot explain what the mounds mean today or how the function in our society.

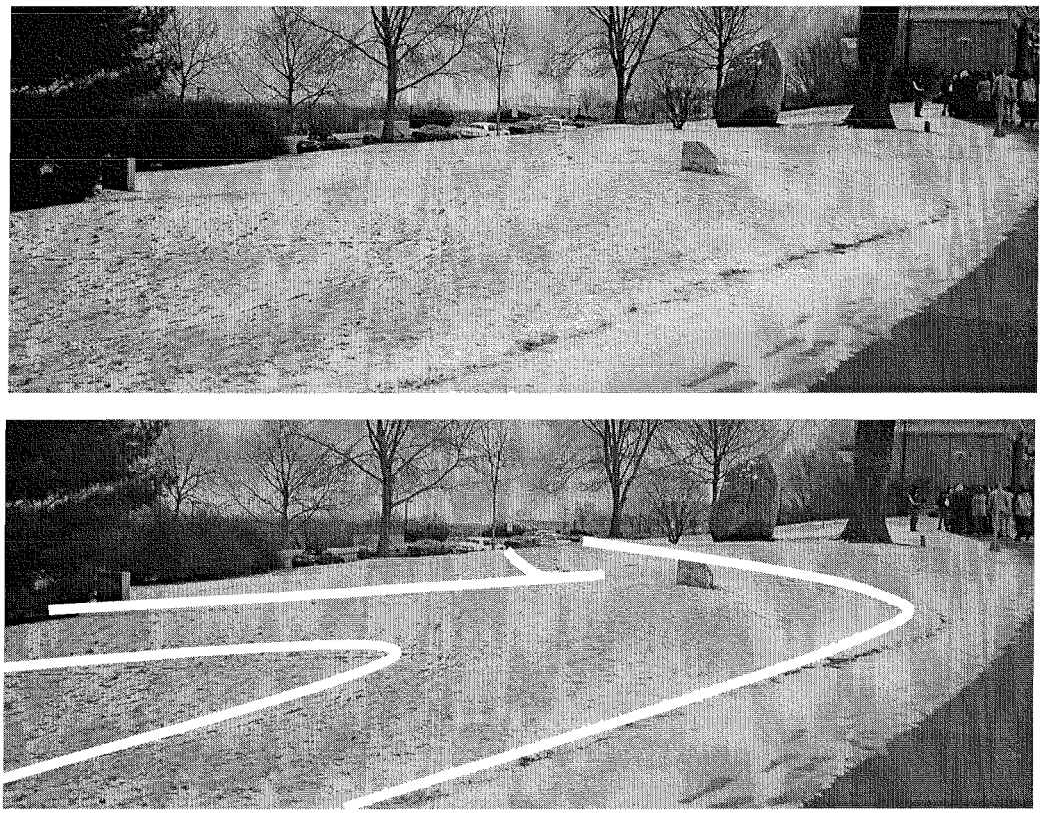

Figure 1—Bird Shaped effigy mound on UW's Observatory Hill. In the upper photo, the mound's outline has been cleared of snow. In the lower photo a line has been added to distinguish the mound from its surroundings. A stone marker protrudes from the middle of the mound.

This honors thesis begins to answer this question. I examine two effigy mound landscapes, Effigy Mounds National Monument (EMNM), and Bear Mound Park. The monument is located near McGregor, Iowa, and consists of 2,500 acres of prairie and woodland on which are situated 191 mounds and a small museum. The story presented at the EMNM, I argue, is incomplete, leaving out centuries of history. Rather than revealing the entire story of the interactions that took place when McGregor, Iowa was located on the American frontier, the monument obscures facts about the treatment of Native Americans in the area.

Bear Mound Park is a traffic circle in Madison's Vilas Avenue that covers less than an acre and contains only its namesake effigy mound. It has been owned by the city of Madison since 1930, but has been an official park for only the last five years. Community members worked with the city and Native Americans to help shape the park into what it is today. This resulted in a park that reflects its neighbors' wishes. Community activism began with opposition to the removal of trees from the circle, but quickly grew into the cooperative drafting of a master plan. Today neighbors see the park as valuable in improving their quality of life. It also is important in keeping their property values high. While the landscape reveals the cooperation and collective effort that went into its creation, it hides the fact that this was possible because the traffic circle in question is located in the Vilas Park neighborhood. Residents of the area, particularly the park's immediate neighbors, are affluent enough to devote time and resources to mount a campaign against the removal of a few trees.

The national monument and the city park are very different places. Nestled scenically on the banks of the Mississippi, the monument is a destination for visitors who want to witness beautiful autumn foliage and river vistas. Buried in the heart of a residential neighborhood, the park is an urban amenity known and used by few, but whose users have taken an active role in

shaping it. By virtue of the mounds they contain, both of these landscapes are culturally and historically significant. Examining these two cases provides an understanding of how effigy mounds function in our society. Understanding the meanings and representations of a national monument offers insight into the nation that identifies them as such. Examining the landscape of a city park will illuminate the forces at work, both social and natural, in our neighborhoods and our daily lives.

To understand these two landscapes, we need to consider both the natural and the social factors that contributed to their formation. Doing so will offer explanations of what is hidden and what is revealed, and why. In chapter II, I discuss the concept of landscape, its definitions, and how it applies to effigy mounds, and outline Don Mitchell's (1996a; 1996b; 2000) framework, which I use to analyze the national monument and the city park. In chapter III, I provide some background information about effigy mounds, before examining the monument and park in more depth in chapters IV and V, respectively. I conclude in chapter VI, noting the implications of my approach to reading landscapes and offering some recommendations.

II. LANDSCAPE

DEFINING LANDSCAPE

Landscape is a difficult term to define. It figures prominently in the fields of geography, ecology, art history, and landscape architecture, and each of these disciplines puts a distinct spin on it. Ecologists may disagree, but practitioners of the other fields might reach consensus that the landscape is an interaction between humans and the natural environment.

For the general public, the word landscape may conjure images of landscape paintings, or scenic views of unspoiled wilderness. As I will use it, landscape means neither a purely aesthetic endeavor, nor nature on its own. Rather, landscape is best thought of as an interaction between human culture and the natural world. Though nature is a part of every landscape, it is no more important that the human impacts which are also present. And, though we may appreciate a landscape aesthetically, beauty is not the only yardstick by which we may measure it (Meinig 1979).

The *Dictionary of Human Geography* begins its entry by saying landscape is a "term referring to the appearance of an area, the assemblage of objects used to produce that appearance and the area itself" (Johnson, et al. 2000: 429). Lacking from this definition is mention of the social forces that also shape landscapes. Humans build landscapes. They manipulate and rearrange the "assemblage of objects" that shapes the landscape. But this work is carried out in the context of a society, so the social forces that affect the builders also manifest themselves on the landscape. In order to gain a deep understanding of a landscape, we must examine both the natural aspects of the landscape, as well as the social forces at play. Before expanding on this point, I will situate effigy mounds in this definition of landscape.

Effigy mounds are products of nature and of human culture. The earth out of which they are made, as well as the plants that cover and surround them are natural, but people built the mounds. Building the mounds is a physical act, but one which took place within the context of a society. So the mounds are products both of labor and of social factors. Today we value effigy mounds for their scenic value. They are aesthetically pleasing, but their meanings transcend this. To understand effigy mound landscapes today, we need to look beyond their aesthetic value to their natural components and the social relations that helped shape these landscapes.

READING LANDSCAPES

Some recent literature has focused on the metaphor of "landscapes-as-texts." According to this school of thought, landscapes can easily be read to understand their meanings. The stories we tell about landscapes are important, and by examining these we can understand landscape. Don Mitchell (1996a; 1996b; 2000) has criticized this approach on two grounds. First, it does not acknowledge the social causes that underlie landscapes and the accounts we give of them. Second, the landscape-as-text approach downplays the importance of the natural aspects of a landscape. David Ley, himself a proponent of landscape-as-text, acknowledges this second critique, but suggests that it is unimportant because the landscape-as-text approach has most often been applied to urban settings (Ley 1999). Ley's rebuttal is inadequate in the case of effigy mounds. Not only are most effigy mounds not found in urban settings, but also the natural components of the landscapes add depth to the readings we can make of them. It matters that effigy mounds are, in some measure, natural. If they were not, they would not be landscapes. Also, the issues at hand would be different. The naturalness of landscapes gets tied up in the disputes that arise over them. The community activism surrounding Bear Mound Park would never have arisen if the park were not a natural place. If not for the excellent agricultural value of

the Mississippi Valley, the mounds of Effigy Mounds National Monument might never have been in danger of destruction, and perhaps would not have been preserved as a monument. The social contexts surrounding effigy mounds also matter. The human work to build the mounds as well as the rest of the landscape was done in a world filled with social relations and conflicts that affected the landscape. The landscape-as-text school cannot encompass these important aspects.

MITCHELL'S FRAMEWORK

In this honors thesis, I adopt Don Mitchell's (1996a; 1996b; 2000) framework of landscape, which allows for an accurate and in depth reading of effigy mound landscapes rather than treating them as superficial texts. Mitchell holds that we have to focus on the social factors that contribute to the formation of a landscape, noting that these are often hidden from view when visiting a landscape. In addition to being works created by humans, landscapes also do work. Since humans carry out the work of making landscapes, all of their dreams, struggles, and biases are built into the landscape.

Landscapes are not passive backdrops in front of which we play out our lives. Landscapes do work on the people who make them. And how could they not? We constantly find ourselves surrounded by a landscape. We continually react to and adjust our actions because of landscapes. Landscapes are "social agents in the further development of a place" (Mitchell 2000: 94). For example, Bear Mound Park has played an active role in the development of its surrounding neighborhood. In this way, landscapes are sites of social reproduction, that is, "they perpetuate the social institutions and relations that maintain the material conditions of life" (Mitchell 2000: 54). Because social institutions and relations are built into the landscape they are resistant to change. Thus the landscape reinforces and reproduces the social order. By failing to present the stories of Native Americans, Effigy Mounds National Monument perpetuates the

marginalization of this group that has been the norm in the United States for centuries. By contributing to high property values, Bear Mound Park perpetuates the prevailing class structure of its neighborhood.

The story told at Effigy Mounds National Monument is incomplete. A landscape-as-text analysis might conclude, as I do, that the monument marginalizes Native Americans, but that does not provide a complete understanding of the landscape. When we consider the natural factors of the landscape, including its previous position at the edge of the American frontier and the agricultural value of the area, and the social factors also present on the frontier we gain a fuller understanding of how Native Americans in the region were treated, and from whence came the representation at the monument's museum.

Textual readings we could make of Bear Mound Park would be informative, but by examining the social factors of the landscape, like community activism, and natural components of the park, we can get a better picture of what is really going on. It was a natural element—trees—that first raised the ire of neighbors and caused them to organize. To ignore this would be to miss a large part of the picture.

The landscapes of Effigy Mounds National Monument and Bear Mound Park are works, and also *do* work. The work of EMNM is to present an uncontroversial version of history. The work done by Bear Mound Park is to unite its neighborhood. Both landscapes also work to reproduce the social conditions that gave rise to them.

Methodology

I used Mitchell's (1996b; 2000) methodology as a model for my own. Mitchell's strategy is to analyze representations of landscapes, and to examine how these are contested and what they hide. Mitchell looks for inconsistencies between the way a landscape is represented or the

way it appears and the reality behind it. Mitchell compares landscape representations with facts about the underlying social structure of a place to highlight what is hidden by the representation.

This is my approach to Effigy Mounds National Monument. I critique the way the monument is represented at its small museum, comparing its displays with the reality of Northeastern Iowa's history. I visited the monument on an unseasonably warm December day and spoke with Ranger Amber Lenzendorf in addition to visiting the museum and mounds. My observations and conversation with Lenzendorf are the basis for my analysis.

Bear Mound Park has no museum offering ready-to-analyze representations. The park still fits into Mitchell's framework, however, because the social order that shaped the landscape is not immediately obvious. Eileen Thompson, who is currently chairperson of the Vilas Neighborhood Association's Bear Mound Park Committee, and was instrumental in the community's tree preservation activities, and was kind enough to speak with me about the community's history of activism surrounding the park, and to provide me with a copy of the master plan for the park. I also researched the history of public parks in Madison, and combined this information to get a full picture of the work done by the landscape of the park.

III. BACKGROUND

Effigy mounds are earthworks built by Native Americans in the Midwest during the Late Woodland Period, from 700-1100 AD. Effigy mounds are low, not more than a few feet in height, but can vary from tens to hundreds of feet in length (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Effigy Mounds are so named because they are often in the shape of animals and spirits. Not all mounds from this period are effigies. Many simple round, or conical mounds, and oblong, or linear mounds, were built and exist alongside bird- and bear-shaped mounds. Following common practice, I will use the term effigy mound to refer to all mounds built during the Late Woodland Period, both those that depict animals and those that do not.

Archaeologists have been investigating effigy mounds since the early to mid-1800s (Stevenson, et al. 1997), but the exact meaning and purpose behind the mounds is still not completely understood. The vast majority of effigy mounds that once existed were destroyed by development, especially agricultural expansion, during the 19th and 20th centuries. Laws, including the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA; passed by Congress in 1990) and Wisconsin's 1985 Burial Sites Preservation Law, protect the mounds that remain today.

WHERE ARE EFFIGY MOUNDS FOUND?

Effigy mounds are found in a limited geographic area almost entirely in southern Wisconsin and extending just over the borders of the neighboring states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois (Figure 2). This is a distinct environmental area of mixed Southern hardwood forests, oak savannas, and some prairies. The region boasts excellent water resources in the form of numerous lakes and rivers, and supports a wide variety of the plant and animal food sources on which Late Woodland peoples depended (Mallam 1980; Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000).

Within this zone, mounds are generally found on high ground, overlooking water. Often settlements were located on the shores of lakes or the banks of rivers, with mounds on nearby bluffs.

Figure 2—Map of Effigy Mound Region. After Lenzendorf (2000: 22).

Effigy mound locations commonly coincide with sources of seasonally abundant food, such as berries. The hunter-gatherers who built the mounds would return annually or seasonally to the mound site both to gather food and to perform rituals (Mallam 1980). Another locational characteristic of the mounds is that they are often found near older conical mounds dating from the Early and Middle Woodland periods. Just as modern-day people have appropriated and given

their own new meanings to effigy mound sites, the builders of the effigies did the same to earlier mounds.

Effigy mounds are found in groups ranging in size from a handful of mounds to several hundred. The largest known group is located on the banks of the Mississippi River near McGregor in northeastern Iowa. This group, which is now protected as Effigy Mounds National Monument, once contained 895 mounds (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Most mound groups consist of a combination of effigies and linear and conical mounds. In Wisconsin, approximately 900 mound groups once existed. All told, these probably contained 15,000 mounds, perhaps four fifths of which were conical or linear mounds (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000).

Who Built Effigy Mounds?

Information about the builders of the effigy mounds comes largely from excavation of mounds and other archaeological sites. Many rigorously scientific excavations were carried out, yielding much insight, but many other excavations were performed more for entertainment than for educational value. During the late 19th century opening a mound was a popular Sunday afternoon activity (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Today, excavations have virtually ceased. Law does not strictly prohibit them, but archaeologically speaking, not much more data is needed, and researchers are sensitive to the wishes of Native Americans who generally oppose excavation (Birmingham, personal communication).

The Late Woodland in Wisconsin is distinguished from earlier phases of the Woodland period by technological advancements, including the bow and arrow, by effigy mounds, which differ significantly from earlier mounds, and by the cultivation of corn. All of these indicate less mobility and a greater association with particular places. Late Woodland cultures also existed in nearby regions, but did not build effigy mounds (Stevenson, et al. 1997). There is evidence that

there may have been tension between effigy mound builders and other Late Woodland groups. The Late Woodland was also marked by dramatic social changes (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). In part, the territoriality and ties to specific locations that came with agriculture and effigy mounds may have brought on these changes.

Why Were Effigy Mounds Constructed?

The exact origins of the effigy mound tradition are unclear. During the Early (500 BC-AD 100) and Middle (100 BC – AD 500) phases of the Woodland period, earthen mounds were constructed for burial, ceremonial and territorial purposes (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Late Woodland peoples continued this practice, greatly expanding it and modifying it in striking ways. In addition to the relatively simple conical and linear mounds built in earlier times, Late Woodland mound builders constructed effigies—mounds in the shapes of animals or spirits, commonly birds, panthers, bears, turtles, and occasionally humans.

Many excavated effigy mounds contain human burials that are flexed, bundled or cremated. Occasionally grave goods accompany these burials, but items of extraordinary value have never been found (Stevenson, et al. 1997, Gartner 1999). This suggests that burial was not the only purpose served by the mounds.

Effigy mound shapes can be divided into two broad categories, those belonging to the upper world, and those of the lower world. Evidence for this division comes from cosmologies and clan structures of the Ho-Chunk and other modern native groups believed to be descended from the mound builders. The mounds are representations of the spirits that govern each world. Most upper world effigies are birds. Lower world effigies include both land and water spirits (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Among these the most common are bears, turtles, and long-tailed panthers or water spirits.

Most mound groups contain both upper and lower world effigies. According to R. Clark Mallam, the different types and combinations of effigies represented an idealized natural harmony. This natural balance was a metaphoric expression of the social harmony necessary to continue the way of life of the mound builders (Mallam 1980). For Late Woodland people to survive as hunter-gatherers, they required that both nature and society maintain a delicate balance so that the seasonal rhythms of nature and of community were not disrupted. The balance in mound groups symbolized the natural and social harmony that the builders required.

Mallam suggests that effigy mounds were sites of ongoing activity, and places of social reproduction. Ritual annual or seasonal ceremonies and gatherings at mounds would have served this purpose for mound builders. The design and selection of mounds would have represented natural balance, while community gatherings would have assured social balance.

Visitors to mounds today might not recognize them as depictions of natural harmony, but the mounds remain sites of social reproduction. Both Effigy Mounds National Monument and Bear Mound Park maintain the dominant social structures that surround them. At the monument the marginalization of Native Americans is perpetuated, while the park has been primarily an amenity for elite of Madison for more than a century.

Effigy mound builders might have felt a significant pressure to maintain or reproduce their cosmology and way of life because of the tremendous changes that were going on during the Late Woodland phase. The transformation that was beginning during this phase from a hunting-gathering lifestyle to agriculture is arguably the most revolutionary development in North America's cultural history (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). Both the effigy mound tradition and maize cultivation tied mobile groups of people more directly to particular places (Stevenson, et al. 1997). This could have led to drastic changes in settlement patterns,

economics, ideologies and social relations in the region. Populations grew, and outside groups also began to enter the area. This contact may have caused friction and warfare, and there is evidence also for the rise of tuberculosis (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). From the point of view of hunters and gatherers, the world may have been in upheaval.

As the world was slipping out of balance, effigy mounds may have been a way to restore order and harmony to the universe. The mounds were manifestations of the builders' belief systems created to help them cope with challenges. The appearance of effigy mounds is a physical manifestation on the landscape of the cultural sea-change that was going on.

All of the economic, social and technological changes going on eventually overwhelmed the effigy mound builders. After 400 years, they disappeared from the archaeological record around AD 1100. This departure coincides with a rapid transition to what is known as the Oneota tradition, which was strongly related to the Middle Mississippian groups that originated south of effigy mound territory (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000). That modern groups, like the Ho-Chunk, maintain a belief system that seems to mirror that of the mound builders is evidence that effigy builders were not simply wiped out by invading groups. But effigy mound builders lost prominence, and no more effigies were built.

IV. Effigy Mounds National Monument

Though the vast majority of effigy mounds are located in Wisconsin, it is in Iowa that the mounds get their most spectacular and national stage. Effigy Mounds National Monument is located on 2,500 acres of land on the banks of the Mississippi River in Northeastern Iowa. EMNM is operated, like all national monuments by the National Park Service (NPS), an agency of the Department of the Interior. The monument clearly exemplifies that a landscape not only is a work, but also does work. The work done by EMNM is to present an uncontroversial history of which the majority of Americans can be proud. Like other NPS endeavors, EMNM fails to give the whole story of its history. EMNM continues the maginalization of Native Americans.

The Monument

The vast majority of EMNM is accessible only by foot. Pleasant trails strung along the bluffs that overlook the Mississippi conduct visitors to the monument's main attractions, its namesake mounds. Some of the trails are strenuous, both in terrain, and in length.*

Visitors who endure these difficulties, however, are richly rewarded. Most paths skirt the boundary between prairie and woods that runs along the top of the bluffs. Hikers find themselves crossing back and forth between these two zones as the trails follow the whims of topography and of the mound builders. Mounds are most often found at the edge of the woods, or in small clearings. Often they are strung together in groups impressive in number and length. In the northern half of the monument, several trails lead visitors to the brink of the river bluffs, affording a breathtaking view of the river, made all the more majestic by the sight of a bald eagle soaring on the updrafts over the water. At some of the overlooks, as well as near some of the mounds, benches are strategically located, offering hikers a chance to rest their legs in a spot that

* The spectacular Marching Bear group, EMNM's crown jewel, requires a hike of at least four miles roundtrip, depending on which parking lot visitors set out from.

also allows contemplation and aesthetic appreciation of the mounds and river. Near some of the mounds are signs with interpretive information. These depict brown skinned people in loincloths and animal furs accompanied by text explaining how the mounds were built, or their ritual significance. Most historical and interpretive information, however, is housed at the visitor center. It is here that visitors park their cars and begin their exploration of EMNM before setting out on foot on one of the trails to the north or south.

Mound Preservation

Formed in 1921, the NPS is mandated to protect not only natural wonders, like those found in national parks such as Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite, but also historical objects (Lenzendorf 2000: 69). The land on which EMNM sits is ecologically important because of the distinct prairie and forest ecosystems that are preserved within the monument, and ecological restoration of native prairies is being carried out there (A. Lenzendorf, personal communication). Nevertheless, EMNM is preserved for its historical rather than its environmental value. That historical value is described at the visitor center's small museum. I will discuss the museum shortly, but first an examination of two important questions implicit in NPS's mandate to preserve historical resources.

The first question preservationists must ask is, which places are of enough historical import to merit protection as national monuments? Every place has history, but not everyplace is—nor should everyplace be—a national monument. Since NPS is a federal agency, one factor is a place's nation-wide importance. Other historically significant national monuments include Mount Rushmore and the Statue of Liberty. These are two of the most recognized icons of the United States. As symbols of the country, their importance extends far beyond their locations in the Black Hills of South Dakota and New York Harbor. Effigy mounds are not nearly as

recognizable as the Statue of Liberty or Mount Rushmore, but as historical resources, they are equally important, if not more so. Unlike Mount Rushmore or the Statue of Liberty, the mounds at EMNM would likely have been destroyed if they had not been protected as a national monument. In the early- to mid-20th century, preservationists became interested in protecting the mounds near McGregor because so many in the area had already been lost to agricultural development (Lenzendorf 2000). Roger Toll, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, toured the Upper Mississippi in 1931 to determine whether the area was suitable for a National Park.* His report to NPS director Horace Albright included the following statement:

> "None of the present parks nor monuments under the control of the Interior Department contain any Indian mounds of this type, and it would seem that the inclusion of an Indian Mound National Monument would add to the completeness of prehistoric remains that are protected as national monuments" (Quoted in Lenzendorf 2000: 73).

Effigy Mounds National Monument is of national importance, then, because its existence makes the country's collection of protected antiquities more complete. EMNM is the only federally owned property explicitly designed to protect effigy mounds. It is also the largest area anywhere devoted to effigy mound protection (A. Lenzendorf, personal communication).

Once it is determined that a site like EMNM is to be protected, another question must be answered: which stages of a site's history are important? Human habitation in Northeastern Iowa dates to more than 10,000 years ago. If geologic history were to be considered, the timeline would be dramatically longer. For example, the formation of the great river that the mounds overlook occurred many millennia ago. It is beyond the scope of the small museum at the monument's visitor center to record and interpret the entire history of the region in an in-depth

* In 1937 NPS recommended boundaries for the monument, but it was not officially established until 1949. The delay owed in part to World War II (Lenzendorf 2000).

manner. Since everything cannot be covered, the choices as to what is *and what is not* included in the museum are crucial.

Much of the museum explains the ways of life of pre-historic Iowans. Information about how they lived through the seasons of the year is presented along with an extensive collection of artifacts, including pots and tools. These artifacts pertain not solely to effigy mound builders, but to pre-historic Iowans of all periods. Looking at the tools, visitors can follow the progression from the Paleo-Indian through the Archaic, Woodland and Oneota periods. But there the display stops. No information is given about historic native groups that consider themselves descendents of the pre-historic groups, and whom occupied the area immediately prior to European settlement. The only mention of these groups is in a display case describing current efforts at mound preservation. This display indicates that NPS consults with tribal elders of the Ho-Chunk and Ioway nations to find out what their oral histories say about how mounds should be treated.

This reliance indicates recognition on the part of NPS of a special connection between the Ho-Chunk and Ioway and the mound builders. A statement printed on the wall at the entrance to the museum suggests, however, that all Americans today—not just the Ho-Chunk and Ioway—are the mound builders' descendents. Walking into the museum, visitors read, "We occupy the same piece of earth as those who went before us. Time is what separates us—that and vastly different worlds."* This implies that, by virtue of occupying the same space as the mound builders, we are their direct descendents. Location is given primacy over ancestry. Our being located where the mound builders were is enough to connect us to them. If we know about their world—which we can learn about in the museum by studying how they lived and what they left behind—and we know about our own vastly different world, then we can ignore the intervening

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* This quote also appears in the online museum tour on the monument's web site (http://www.nps.gov/efmo).

periods because they represent only time. This attitude results in the omission of hundreds of years of history.

THE LOST RACE MYTH

Euro-Americans have been fascinated with effigy mounds since explorers and settlers first encountered them. Understanding the mounds, however, did not come quickly or easily. During the 19th century many people believed that effigy mounds were constructed by some lost race that had been killed or displaced by the Indians. The Celts, Persians and Vikings were all suggested as possible groups responsible for the mounds (Birmingham and Eisenberg 2000; Lenzendorf 2000). In the eyes of those who believed this myth, the Native Americans that Euro-Americans encountered as the United States pushed westward were clearly inferior to the mound builders. Conveniently, this myth helped legitimate the taking of land from natives—since they had taken it from the mound builders it was not rightly theirs anyway. Believing that the Indians' claim to the land was dubious "eased the conscience of those who questioned the systematic removal of Indians from their land" (Lenzendorf 2000: 43). Today, the realization that such a distasteful and now debunked theory helped take the land on which the monument sits from the people who claim descent from the mound builders would probably make visitors uncomfortable. Perhaps that is why this story is not presented. The museum at EMNM provides no information about the decimation Native American populations and their removal of from the area. Rather, it presents a story indicating that we are all descendents of the mound builders because we are situated on that same land. Completely ignored is the question of how we today come to possess that land, because all that separates us from those mound builders is time. If we believe this story, then it seems quite natural that the government should control the area and

administer it as a national monument. Thus the status quo Native American marginalization is reproduced.

Many of EMNM's visitors are groups of school children from Wisconsin. Visiting the monument fulfills a legally mandated curriculum requirement that elementary school students learn about Native Americans (A. Lenzendorf, personal communication). Since the monument obscures the social history of the mounds, these children come away from their field trips prepared only to reproduce the social order that has marginalized Native Americans. Through its choice of how to represent the history of EMNM, NPS contributes to the reproduction of the prevailing social order.

Other NPS Projects

The landscape of EMNM is a work of human labor, both on the part of the mound builders and of those who laid out the visitor center and trails we use today. But, landscape is also a result of social processes and relations. As Mitchell points out, the landscape also does work. It presents a certain take on history that leaves out some unpleasant realities. The landscape also works to hide the contentiousness and struggle that went into its formation. This is not the only instance in which NPS has failed to present some of the distasteful truths of the histories of the places it administers.

Larner (2002) discusses many unpleasant facts about Mount Rushmore that are not dealt with at the monument. As at EMNM, the history of Native American settlement in the area is conspicuously absent from the monument's interpretive materials. Other little known facts, like sculptor Gutzon Borglum's membership in the Klu Klux Klan, are also not discussed. At the Mount Rushmore visitor center, much is made of Thomas Jefferson's famous statement that "All men are created equal." There is no discussion, however, of just who Jefferson, a slave owner,

included in his "all." The human work on the landscape of Mount Rushmore is quite obvious. But the landscape also does work. It hides the uncomfortable realities that underlie its creation and the people and history it celebrates.

Jonestown, Pennsylvania, is another place where NPS had a role in choosing how history would be presented, with the outcome that some of the more controversial points would go unreported (Mitchell 2000). Jonestown is a former steel town now struggling to redevelop. One plan initiated in the early 1990s involved NPS in creating a National Cultural Park in Jonestown that would celebrate the city's famous flood and its industrial heritage. The plans completely ignored Jonestown's history of militant labor organization. In an effort to present a façade that would be attractive to tourists and investors, there would be no mention of the strikes and violence that had marked the city's history. Due to lack of funding, the cultural park was never completed. Had these plans been brought to fruition, the result would have been yet another NPS-sponsored landscape that worked to obscure the social struggles in its background.

If we consider Effigy Mounds and Mount Rushmore National Monuments as land taken from Native Americans, or if we see Jonestown as a site of violent protest, our view of these places will be quite different. In all three cases, NPS worked to make the sites less controversial by carefully choosing which history to present, and which history to exclude. This choice is of crucial importance.

V. BEAR MOUND PARK

Bear Mound Park (Figure 3) rises out of Vilas Avenue like an island out of a river, forcing the street to split into two streams that pass either side of the park and rejoin at the opposite end. It is a surprise of a park. A classmate once told me he and his friends call it Tim Burton Park, because the sprawling trees and the shadows they cast seem to belong to the scenery of one of Burton's films, like *Sleepy Hollow*, or *The Nightmare Before Christmas.*

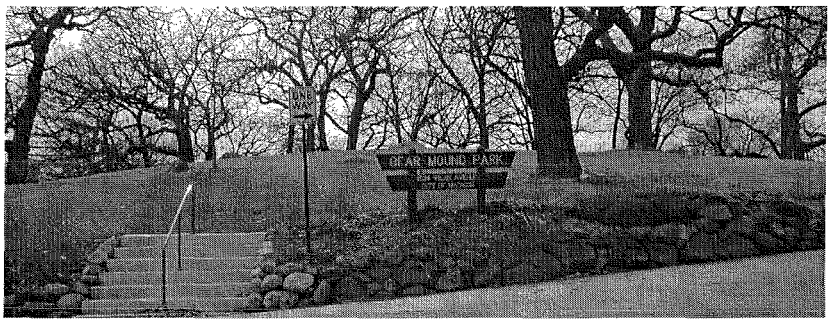

Figure 3—Bear Mound Park viewed from the East on Vilas Avenue

The mound that gives the park its name is located at the western end of the park. It is 82 feet long and 20 feet across at the widest portion of the body (Brown 1915). To the untrained eye, it is clearly some sort of animal, but the fact that it is a bear is not obvious. The bear is depicted in profile. There is an obvious head, measuring 24 feet from nose to a bump on top that may represent the bear's ears. Two legs, one representing the front pair and one the hind pair, extend perpendicularly from the body. The front leg is 16 feet long, and the rear one measures $23^1/_2$ feet (Brown 1915). Either during the original construction of Vilas Avenue or later when the street was repaired, a portion of the bear's hind leg was "amputated" (Brown 1915). Even without the missing portion of the leg, archaeologist and champion of effigy mound preservation Charles E. Brown described the mound as, "one of the finest examples of a bear effigy mound in the entire Four Lakes region" (Brown 1915). The bear was once part of a group of mounds that

included one conical and seven linear mounds (Birmingham and Rankin 1996). Of these nine, the bear and one linear mound are all that remain. The existing linear mound is located 30 yards to the southwest of the bear mound on the grounds of a private residence (Brown 1915; Halsey 1974).

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Vilas neighborhood, home to Bear Mound Park, is located on Madison's near west side (Figure 4). It is close enough to the University of Wisconsin campus that there is some student housing in the neighborhood, but of 395 single-family houses, 84.3 percent are owner occupied. The average assessed value of these houses is $203,359 (City of Madison 2003). These houses sit on quiet, tree-lined streets. The neighborhood takes its name from Henry Vilas Park, one of the finest parks in the Madison system.* Vilas Park is home to Madison's only zoo, and one of its most popular swimming beaches. Bear Mound Park, in contrast, is much less known and used. The two parks have been influenced by some of the same historical trends, But Bear Mound Park has also seen unique community activism not present at Vilas Park.

* Because of its location in Vilas Avenue, Bear Mound Park was formerly known as Vilas Circle Park. When it was granted full park status, the circle was renamed Bear Mound Park to avoid confusion with the larger Vilas Park.

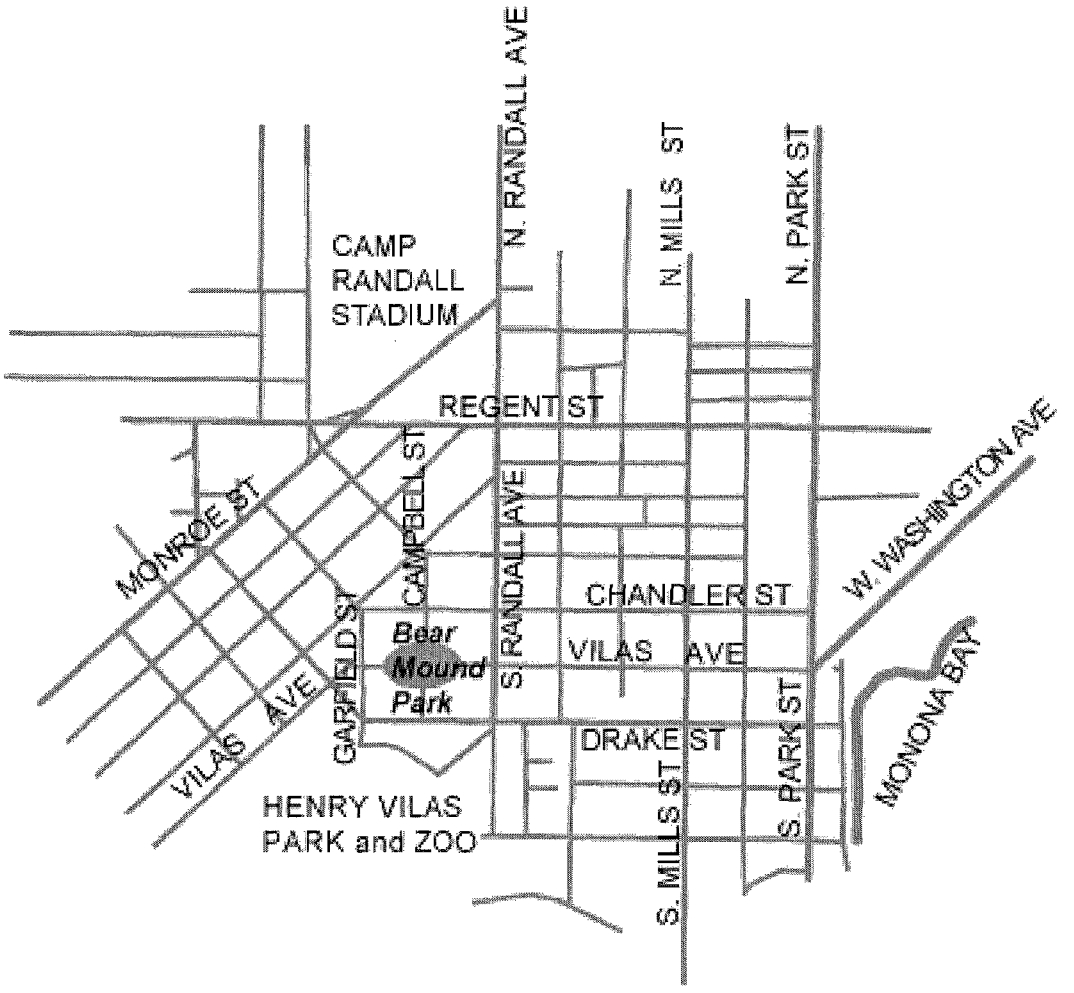

Figure 4—Map of Bear Mound Park's Location in Madison's Vilas Park neighborhood. Adapted from the City of Madison Engineering Division GeoSpatial Information/Mapping Section's detailed street map.

History

Though many nearby mounds were destroyed, the bear mound was preserved in the 1890s when Vilas Avenue was being laid out (Birmingham and Rankin 1996). Local legend holds that the path around the park was originally worn by farmers who went around the hill on the way to market. When the road was eventually paved, asphalt was laid on top of this earlier track (Schneider 1997). The resulting traffic circle has been the subject of much interest since its creation.

In 1900, the Wingra Park suburb, as the neighborhood was then known, donated the circle (then known as Washington Park because Vilas Avenue was considered an extension of West Washington Avenue) to the Madison Parks and Pleasure Drives Association (MPPDA) in order that the association might improve the grounds and protect the mound (Historic Madison, Inc. 1994).

MPPDA was formed in 1894 to promote the construction of pleasure drives for the romantic contemplation of nature. These drives, however, were an amenity only available to the elite, because only they owned the horse and buggy required to appreciate the pleasures drives, and only the wealthy could afford the $25 annual fee (Rawson 1999). MPPDA also advocated the creation of public parks as a way to edify the masses. Privately owned parks, picnic grounds and beer gardens were the only settings for outdoor recreation available to Madison's immigrant working class population. MPPDA members saw these as immoral because of the drinking, dancing and other activities that went on there (Rawson 1999). MPPDA was instrumental in the creation of Vilas, Tenney and Brittingham parks prior to the creation of a municipal parks commission. Once the commission was established, MPPDA transferred its land holdings to the city (Historic Madison, Inc. 1994). The circle on which Bear Mound Park now sits was given to the city of Madison in 1930.

From the outset, city-run parks melded the activities of private parks and pleasure drives. This holds true today. The mission statement for Bear Mound Park stipulates both the contemplation of nature that MPPDA members would have advocated as well as the picnicking that working class Madisonians of the 19th century would have wanted in an urban greenspace (Vilas Circle Park Master Plan). The plan also specifies that the park should be available for

traditional ritual and ceremonial uses. It is still utilized by Native Americans for rituals (Eileen Thompson, personal communication; Schneider 1997).

The mound has never been excavated, but a young boy from the neighborhood did some unscientific digging in 1905. Curiously poking around the center of the mound, Leslie Rowley found a sword about a foot below the surface (Brown 1915). Inscribed on the blade were the Latin phases "Pro Deo et Patria" (for God and country) and "Soli Deo Gloria" (to God alone, the glory). The sword is something of a mystery. It is probably a relic of the fur trade, and evidence of re-use of the mound for burial by later Indian groups. The sword was placed in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, but in 1915 the person who deposited the sword in the museum reclaimed it. The sword's current whereabouts are unknown (Halsey 1974).

In 1910 the Wisconsin Archaeological Society placed a carved stone marker near the mound. The marker is still present near the bear's legs (Figure 5). For the next 85 years the circle quietly existed as a pleasant picnicking destination and spot for quiet contemplation until 1995, when the circle's neighbors began to get involved in planning its future.

Figure 5—Stone Marker in Bear Mound Park

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In 1995, the circle's neighbors became involved in planning its future when the city of Madison decided to remove three dying trees from the circle. City officials believed the trees posed a liability should they fall and injure a person or damage property. Residents of the neighborhood valued the trees and saw no threat (Eileen Thompson, personal communication). Their opposition to the tree removal grew into much more in-depth involvement in the park planning process and shaped the circle into what it is today.

Community victories include the naming of the circle as an official city park. Prior to 1998 it was classified only as a traffic circle. The community also successfully preserved the three trees identified as hazards by the city. It seemed that this would not be possible until a lifelong resident of the area came forward with the memory that there used to be a mound underneath a distinctive low-hanging branch on one of the hazard trees. Ho-Chunk with whom the community had been corresponding about the park hypothesized that tree might be a marker for a burial site. The form of the branch indicated that it had been intentionally shaped when the tree was a sapling. Analysis with ground-penetrating radar confirmed the presence of a burial beneath the branch (Thompson personal communication; Schneider 1997). This confirmation sealed the victory for the neighbors. Under Wisconsin's 1985 burial sites preservation law, burial markers are afforded the same protection from disturbance as burial sites.* The dissipation of the mound beneath the marker tree is probably due to the decomposition of logs placed over the burial. The neighbor's memory and the age of the tree indicate that this burial is only 100-200 years old, significantly more recent than the bear mound. This is further evidence, along with the sword in the bear mound, of re-use of the area by historic Native groups.

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* This is the same aspect of the law that protects effigy mounds. Though not all effigies contain burials, all are classified as burial markers, and thus protected from destruction and disturbance.

After successfully saving the marker tree and other trees identified by the city as hazards, community members remained involved with the circle and helped to draft the master plan that now governs the park. Rather than being dictated by a powerful institution, as the landscape at EMNM is by NPS, at Bear Mound Park empowered community members have a say in the appearance of the landscape. One aspect of the park stipulated by community members is the small natural area on the south side of the park. This slope of the hill is managed to restore the oak savanna that once covered the entire neighborhood. The rest of the circle is mowed regularly, as are all Madison parks. This juxtaposition of "wilderness" and managed nature is a perfect example of how city run parks combine the wishes of MPPDA and the patrons of private parks. It also represents the wishes of Bear Mound Park's neighbors today.

But if the same distinctions persisted today that separated the members of MPPDA from private park patrons, Bear Mound Park's neighbors would share more in common with the former group than with the latter. Bear Mound Park's neighbors had enough resources to devote time and effort to preserving a few trees, and now to restoring the park's oak savanna. All of the restoration work in the park is carried out by neighborhood volunteers and paid for by community members.

The campaign to save the park's trees, the process of drawing up the master plan, and the ongoing restoration activities have all drawn members of the community together. The work done by Bear Mound Park is to unite its neighborhood. But the park is also a site of social reproduction. By contributing to high property values in the area, Bear Mound Park helps ensure that the socio-economic mix of the neighborhood is unlikely to change. Thus the social order that gave rise to the landscape is reproduced.

VI. Conclusion

EMNM and Bear Mound Park are two very different places that have in common the presence of effigy mounds. By examining the natural and social forces that shaped each of these landscapes we can see that in addition to *being* works, they also *do* work, and that they are sites of social reproduction.

The key natural components of the landscape of EMNM are the Mississippi River and the agricultural land that surrounds the monument. The river is one of the monument's main attractions for visitors. The richness of the farmland around EMNM is what put the mounds there in danger and gave urgency to the movement to create the monument. The key social factor is the lost race myth, which facilitated the taking of the land from the Native Americans who had lived there. Failure to accurately portray this story at the monument's museum results in the continued marginalization of Native Americans.

At Bear Mound Park, trees are the crucial natural component of the landscape. Neighbors that valued trees in the park initiated the main social force that has made the park what it is today: community activism. The social order that is reproduced by the park is the affluence of its neighborhood

EMNM fits nicely into Mitchell's framework. The parallel between EMNM and Jonestown is very strong. The motivation for providing a "sanitized version of the history" (Mitchell 2000: 97) of Jonestown is clear: doing so will allow the city to better attract tourists and investors who might be put off by a city characterized by radicalism. But what is the motivation for the representation at EMNM? McGregor, Iowa is not a de-industrialized town looking for redevelopment. NPS is certainly interested in attracting visitors to the monument, but not in the same desperate manner in which Jonestown seeks tourists. Could it be that the

representation at EMNM owes to the small size of the monument's museum? Maybe there simply was no space for a more complete story.

Perhaps a stronger parallel exists between EMNM and Mount Rushmore. These National Monuments face similar questions as to representing their history with respect to Native Americans. Unlike EMNM, Mount Rushmore recently saw the opening of a brand new expanded visitor center and museum. This goes some way in improving the representation of the monument (Larner 2002), but not far enough. It seems that NPS is simply unwilling to honestly portray the histories of Native Americans at national monuments. Perhaps this is done out of a desire to avoid controversy, and to present a history of which all Americans visiting the monuments can be proud. But since these histories marginalize Native Americans, they would not take pride in the monuments.

Bear Mound Park does not face such difficulties, perhaps because it has no museum representing its history and meanings. Another key difference is the park's neighbors. These serve as a check on the city's power and authority to shape the landscape of the park. By agitating and speaking up, community members ensured that the landscape of the park reflected their wishes as well as a complete picture of its history—including oak savanna and the marker tree in addition to the effigy mound. It is tempting to say that if EMNM had such a constituency agitating for accurate representation, then it could be a success story like Bear Mound Park. The parallel of Mount Rushmore is not hopeful. Various Native American groups have protested Mount Rushmore from time to time, including camping out on top of the monument and unfurling pro-Indian banners on Lincoln's forehead (Larner 2002). These actions, however, have not met with much success.

Also, it might be wrong to call Bear Mound Park a "success story." I have written thus far as though the neighbors of Bear Mound Park speak with a completely unified voice. Of course this is not the case. Community members each have their own opinions about the park and how it should be managed. Out of a dialogue among these voices has come a compromise or consensus position that has stood for the community. But that does not mean every community member is happy with it. Mitchell makes the point that landscape meanings and representations are always contested and struggled over. That is just as true within the Bear Mound Park neighborhood as it is between the neighborhood and the city. Furthermore, the park is a public space, open to all, not just its neighbors. Even if the park's effect on property values means that only a select group can afford to live across the street, that does not prevent less affluent individuals from utilizing and enjoying the park. My analysis has not picked up these subtleties. The only way to do so would be to conduct a very in-depth study of the community, considering all factions and their various positions. Such a project would be interesting, but is beyond the scope of this honors thesis.

Fortunately, EMNM's museum is not the only one in the United States deals with Native Americans. The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the Native American (NMAI) "actively strives to find new approaches to the study and representation of the history, materials, and cultures of Native peoples" (NMAI Web site). A new approach to the representation of the history of the native people of Northeastern Iowa is exactly what EMNM needs. A partnership of some sort between NMAI and EMNM would benefit both museums and their visitors. NMAI's already extensive collections could be made more complete by artifacts and archaeological knowledge from EMNM. The monument could likewise benefit from the input of the Smithsonian Institution's expertise and NMAI's approach to Native American history. Such

collaboration would also benefit the school children (and others) that visit to EMNM. It would provide them an opportunity to learn about the history of Native Americans in Northeastern Iowa, and they would leave the monument able to challenge the marginalization of Native Americans rather than to reproduce it.

Effigy mounds landscapes are works, and they do work. But the work they do need not be divisive, and the social conditions they reproduce need not be inequalities. Just as Bear Mound Park works to unify its neighborhood, so too could EMNM be made to work at bringing people together at a national level. If this were the case, we all would benefit, and we could more truly claim that we all are descended from the mounds' builders.

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