Choosing cremation in Missoula Montana: implications for theories on western individualism

Danielle Valentine

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CHOOSING CREMATION IN MISSOULA, MONTANA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORIES ON WESTERN
INDIVIDUALISM

by

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The use of cremation for bodily disposition has risen significantly in the last twenty years in the United States. The purpose of this paper is to examine possible explanations proposed in funeral industry literature using Missoula County, Montana as my reference. I collect statistical data and test it quantitatively against an English anthropological model. Although I hypothesize this model will work for Montana data, I conclude that it does not. I then use qualitative data collected from funeral directors, clergy, a memorial society, and citizens of Missoula County to search for alternative discourse on cremation. I conclude that although no explanation can be derived regarding disposition in this western Montana sample, issues of American individualism and its struggle with relationality are evident from my research.
Preface

The patent truth is that nobody, regardless of race, religion, or personal enlightenment, nobody knows whether or not there is an afterlife. Only the dead can say for sure, and they're not talking. -Tom Robbins in *Skinny Legs and All* (1991:345).

What happens when we die? This is a fundamental question of humankind. Different cultures attempt to deal with this uncertainty at death. Oftentimes religion provides ritual to mark this passage. Normative social structures such as law provide options for disposition. Funeral customs of bodily disposition vary from culture to culture: from placing the deceased in a large glass jar to burning in a funeral pyre, from scaffold burial to earth interment.

Although causality is discussed in many disposition studies and I address these theories in my research, my question also includes what does it *mean* when death rituals begin to change? What does it mean for people to burn instead of bury their loved ones? In the first part of this thesis I present and then test the causal theories given in the literature. I address cremation as a practice in this section. In this analysis I approach quantitative data from the positivistic perspective of the researchers I encountered in the background literature search. I hypothesize that the studies conducted by these researchers will also apply to my data from Montana.

I then, in the second section, review the discourses on cremation I collected from informants. These discourses speak to meaning, power, and narrative. In this section, I approach my informants from a Western individualist theory. I felt that the individual should be questioned on these issues and that they would provide useful discourse on cremation.
I became interested in bodily disposition, or what someone does with a body after death, because it is a universally necessary decision dealt with in culturally specific ways. In the United States, cremation has increased in frequency steadily for the past twenty years and is expected to almost double in the next twelve years (Last Rites 1997:18). Montana is already cremating at a rate of 45 percent, over twice the current national average (Cremation Statistics 1998). In 1996 in Missoula County, 65 percent of deceased residents had their bodies cremated (Vital Statistics 1997). As an anthropologist residing in this county, it is of interest to me to find out what factors influence the choice of cremation in Montana, and how people discuss those choices.
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Chapter 1:

Cremation History and Literature Review
Twentieth Century Cremation in the United States: An Introduction

Cremation in the United States is far from a passing trend. In 1975, 5% of Americans chose cremation. By 1995, the nation's cremation rate was at 21% (Cremation Surpassing 1997:38). According to projected data from the CANA (Cremation Association of North America), by the year 2010, 27.88% of Americans will choose cremation, and 37.26% of people in the Mountain states will cremate. In 1995, the actual numbers of cremations gathered from crematories and full service funeral homes indicate that the Western states (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico) are already cremating at an average rate of 36%, second only to the Pacific States (Internet Cremation).\(^1\) Compared to the 21% overall national average, cremation is much more popular in the West (See Figure 1.1).

In the study published in Mortuary Management, the CANA concluded that Montanans cremated at a rate of 45% for the year 1995 (Cremation Surpassing:1998). The Vital Statistics Bureau of Montana determined that in the same year, 58.9% of all Missoula County deceased were cremated. Subtracting from this database those bodies that were removed from the state after embalming or otherwise preparing for transport, 61.8% of Missoula county deceased were cremated. By 1996, this number rose to a rate of 67.3%, while that state of Montana averaged a 46.1% cremation rate.

Why are Missoulians cremating at nearly three times the national average? To understand the complexity of this question, I first present previous studies on this subject and examine the history of cremation. I then review the preliminary reasons for the increased choice of cremation as stated in the literature.
The History of Cremation

Man has used cremation to dispose of the dead since prehistoric times. Stone Age man cremated his dead in Northern and Eastern Europe and in the Near East. Ancient Australians cremated their dead as long as 20,000 years ago after covering the body with red ochre. Iron Age Palestinians cremated some of their dead, often placing the remains in the simple storage jars they used in daily life. Ancient Babylonians also cremated their dead. They wrapped the corpses in combustible materials and then encased them in clay coffins around which they built funeral pyres (Iserson 1994:236).

Much uncertainty surrounds the early use of cremation. According to archaeological evidence, the practice of cremation dates back to the early Stone Age, or about 3000 BCE, in Eastern Europe and the Near East (Draznin 1976:11, Cremation Statistics:1). During the late Stone Age, decorative pottery urns indicate cremation in northern Europe and western Russia (Cremation Statistics:1). Another source claims that the Slavic tribes of Dniester and Dnieper rivers may have been the first to cremate the dead (Carlson 1987:24). Other information reports cremation may have been practiced in still different areas in different times.

However, by 1000 BCE, the Greeks were definitely using cremation as a part of their burial custom. The reasons for the use of cremation reflected a belief that cremation could help ward off plague outbreaks, protect dead soldiers from defamation by the enemy on the battlefield, and release the soul to the heavens (Iserson 1994:238; Carlson 1987:24). The Greeks then buried the cremains, or ashes, in urns (ibid).

Around 600 BCE, the Romans followed the Greek custom of cremation. Both the Greeks and the Romans extensively used cremation, prompting early Christians to feel it was a pagan ritual. The Christians rejected cremation at this time as a way of differentiating themselves from paganism and polytheism; the concurrent Jewish population did not practice cremation either, but instead used 'traditional sepulcher
entombment' (Cremation Statistics:1). This penchant for burial may have influenced the change in Roman disposition practices.

There is debate regarding the transformation from cremation to burial by the Romans. According to a discussion on the Internet, classicists and historians are still engaged in this debate. One panelist writes,

> It would be very convenient to say that the coming of Christianity caused the switch from cremation to inhumation in the Roman world in late 2\textsuperscript{nd} to first half of 3\textsuperscript{rd} century or thereabouts. As discussed at length by various scholars, however, this seems not to be the case; the change occurred before Christian beliefs had that much influence (Snively 1998).

We will again address the changes the Romans experienced in a later section of this chapter. However, for now it is important to realize that change in bodily disposal cannot easily be determined.

Perhaps due to 'Constantine's Christianization of the [Roman] Empire,' burial completely replaced cremation in the Roman Empire by 400 AD (History of Cremation 1998). For the next 1500 years, burial stood as the accepted manner of bodily disposition throughout Europe, with the exception of England (ibid). In England, from 787 AD and the time of the Danish Invasion, to 1066 AD and the Battle of Hastings, cremation was the primary means of body disposal (Carlson 1987:25).

Only about a century ago did cremation resurface in Western culture (Cremation Statistics:1). Modern western cremation first started in Europe (Iserson 1994:242). In 1869 an Italian scientist named Brunetti created the first modern crematory (Carlson 1987:25). The International Medical Congress of Florence actively promoted this invention for its environmental practicality (ibid). Cremation was thought to reduce pollution and public health problems related to burial (Iserson 1994:242). Land was also
considered best used by the living. In 1872 opposition to the Catholic Church's monopoly on burial plots caused an explosion in support for cremation in Italy. Brunetti displayed his dependable cremation chamber shortly thereafter at the Vienna Exposition in 1873 (Iserson 1994:242). The expansion of cremation is often attributed to the invention of the dependable retort by Brunetti.

The late Nineteenth century saw European societies' beginning utilization of modern cremation. "Between 1887 and 1906, nearly every European country erected at least one crematorium" (Iserson 1994:243). In the 1870s, Sir Henry Thompson formed the Cremation Society of England. The first crematorium of England was built in 1879. However, the public was not legally allowed to cremate until 1884. The reason for this delay in acceptance was due to both the Anglican Church's and the English government's apprehensions in changing an entrenched custom (Iserson 1994:242). However overall, cremation was becoming more and more popular and permissible in Europe.

In Australia at the turn to the Twentieth century, a flyer supporting cremation was circulated by cremation proponents. The list indicated the following benefits of cremation: a value of land for the living rather than for the dead, an alternative to soil pollution caused by decomposing bodies, cleanliness and quickness of decomposition by fire, and reduced cost. Also, the elimination of distress of seeing an unkempt grave, dignity in decomposition by fire, elimination of danger of being buried alive, and the possibility of resting ashes in the church were additional reasons (Iserson 1994:243-245).

Convenience too was a factor. "Cremation means that one's friends are not compelled to travel long distances to figure at a dismal and distressing ceremony. They
would, of course, not be asked to be present at the actual cremation, but merely to attend a short service afterwards, in the course of which the ashes would be laid to rest" (ibid).

The history of cremation in the Western culture of the United States began with the cremation of a military officer in 1792. Colonel Henry Laurens was a member of George Washington's military staff and presiding official over the Continental Congress of 1777-1778 (Carlson 1987:26; Iserson 1994:245). Just under 100 years passed between Laurens' cremation and the fully modern cremation practices, and I did not find any mention of cremation between those events in the literature I reviewed (Carlson 1987:26). Iserson recounts that in 1873, the United States government held the first meeting to discuss the issue of cremation (1994:245). He also mentions that by 1876, Dr. Francis Julius Le Moyne built the first U.S. crematory in Washington, Pennsylvania. In this particular crematorium, only forty-two people were cremated in its existence of fourteen years (Iserson 1994:245).

By 1881, the United States Cremation Company was founded, and in 1885 the Fresh Pond Crematory in Queens, New York was built. Between 1876-1884 there were forty-one cremations nationwide, but by 1901, there were 13,000 (Iserson 1994:245). Due to an increasing popularity of cremation, the Cremation Association of America (now the CANA, or Cremation Association of North America), was founded in 1913. They justified their support of cremation as a method of disposing of dead in an aesthetic and sanitary way (Iserson 1994:246).

The Modern Cremation Process

Iserson contends that the oldest cremation technique is the pyre, used in Asia and other locations (1994:236). The body is burned atop a woodpile, and is often a social,
public event. In Western society, Iserson contrasts, cremation involves the placement of the body in a cardboard or wooden box. This box is then placed in a specialized furnace called a crematorium or retort.

Three types of cremation are currently available: direct cremation, cremation with memorial service, and all funeral arrangements (with or without embalming) with cremation substituted for burial (Iserson 1994:275). Direct cremation is the cremation of the body without ceremony, viewing, or embalming (Iserson 1994:237). Cremation with memorial service is a common practice in which the cremated body is either present or absent at a ceremony held in honor of the deceased. The third option consists of full traditional funeral arrangements, including viewing and traditional services, with cremation taking place prior to burial.

The modern cremation process is a simple affair. Lisa Carlson explains, a casket, or cremation container, is selected from a range of possibilities (1987:26-28). Only a rigid, combustible container is required to make for easy transportation of the body. These containers are usually made of wood or cardboard, while plastics or fiberglass are only allowed in certain crematories. Carlson adds that no casket with polyvinyl chloride filler and lining are allowed because they produce air-polluting particles when burnt. The lowest cost containers are labeled 'alternative containers' and are made of heavy cardboard. It is possible to rent a finely crafted casket for a viewing with a removable liner. The liner is later placed inside a cremation container for incineration.

According to Lisa Carlson, every state requires different legal obligations be met upon the decision to cremate (1987:28-29). There is legal business to attend to upon any death, but special forms may be required for cremation to take place. When a body is
arrives at a crematory four things must accompany it. First are the legal transit documents that state the body was transported in a law-abiding manner. Second, papers declaring a crematory's authorization for cremation must be present. Third, a fee is required. Finally, signatures are needed from a representative of the state's department of vital statistics or health agency, the medical examiner, and a funeral director (or whoever is administering the cremation). These signatures act as a filter by which foulplay may be determined before the physical evidence is forever destroyed through cremation. Carlson adds that many states require forty-eight hours to pass before cremation takes place to ensure any investigation into the death is complete (Carlson 1987:29).

Carlson also forewarns that some bodily preparation may be necessary before cremation can take place. Pacemakers are removed because some lithium containing models may explode with heat (1987:28-29). Pins or metal plates may also be removed. The deceased is then issued a number on a stainless steel tag that enters the cremation chamber with them, or a plastic number that stays outside the chamber. The tag is then placed with the ashes after removal.

The cremation chamber, or retort, can be arranged and fueled in many ways. Iserson contends that the Greeks used butterfat to fuel their cremations (1994:238), but today natural gas, oil, propane gas, or electricity may all be used to fuel a retort (Carlson 1987:29). Burners may be located on the sides or top of the retort, and the newer models also have burners on the bottom (Carlson 1987:29-30). The chamber is lined with fire brick to accommodate temperatures that reach 1800-2400 degrees Fahrenheit. Cremation generally takes from one to three and one-half hours, depending upon the size and
material of the casket (Carlson 1987:30). The cremains usually weigh from three to seven pounds (ibid).

After cremation has taken place, some additional processing may be required or requested. The cremains are spread on a metal tray, and an electromagnet is used to remove metal, such as fillings, from the ashes (Carlson 1987:30). The charcoal from the casket is removed. The bone fragments are put into a pulverizer to further eliminate recognizable bone.

The cremains are then placed into a temporary container and shipped to the destination desired, most often to the funeral director. The funeral director keeps the cremains to give to the family (Carlson 1987:30). Cremains may be shipped by registered mail, insured, and marked for special handling through the US Postal Service. UPS and Federal Express do not handle cremains due to a policy that states that they may not carry anything that, if lost, cannot be replaced (Carlson 1987:31).

**Explanations for the Rise of Cremation**

Funeral directors defer to CANA for their 'four primary reasons' people choose cremation. These reasons are:

1) Perception of less expense;
2) Use of less land and environmental considerations;
3) Perception of simplicity;
4) Increased options for memorialization (Cremation Statistics 1997:20).

According to Mortuary Management, the United States' mobile population and religion are additional factors considered in choosing cremation (Cremation Surpassing 1997:38). Still others say that the interest in cremation, "can be attributed to a concern about the increasing costs of earth burial and the rapid sociological/spiritual changes in the 1960s"
(McMillen 1997:54). Another assertion is that "baby boomers' love of self-expression" is at the basis of the recent rise in cremation popularity (Cremation Expansion 1997:22). Aries contends that Americans are choosing cremation as the ultimate denial of death through nullification of the body (Aries 1972). The issues I will address, in accordance with these myriad opinions, are: cost, ecology, simplicity, memorialization, spiritual changes, self-expression, and denial of death.

**Cost of Cremation**

People perceive cremation as significantly lower in cost than a traditional funeral (Cremation Statistics 1997:20). This perception is correct in some respects. According to the Funeral Management Service, very generally speaking, "cremation runs about half of a regular funeral" (Nixon 1997:25,84). In 1996, this study places the average cremation at $1,602.11. This low cost cremation includes all funerary services, cremation container, rental casket, or other container selected. Not included were urns, crematory fees, cash advances, permits, or urn vaults. The average complete burial, in contrast, including casket and service, was $4,292.97. Also according to this study, the average cremation sale only recovers 37.4% of the profit made from a complete burial. However, these figures vary widely. The total cost for a direct cremation ranged from $800 to $1,250.

In Missoula, there are many choices available in deciding upon disposition. An immediate burial, 'without any attendant rites or ceremonies', includes basic services of the funeral director, dressing, casketing, removal of remains from place of death, and transportation. This costs between $1,030 and $1,145. The cost of a casket ranges from $255-$7995. Cemetery fees are about $700, and a grave plot is about $800. A cement
grave liner is required to maintain the integrity of the cemetery landscape, and runs $395. Further expense may be incurred with long distance mileage (if applicable), a headstone, and cash advances for other services required. According to a director at a local funeral home, a burial averages about $4,000 in Missoula.

The choices associated with cremation can be both costly and confusing. Cremation can be significantly cheaper than a burial funeral with all the amenities or can be as expensive. The price of a direct cremation includes funeral director services, removal of the remains from the place of death (within 20 miles), crematory fee, processing cremains, sanitary care, and transportation of cremains. These services do not include an urn, cemetery or columbarium fees, long-distance mileage, or cash advances. Charges for a direct cremation using an alternative container are between $1,095 and $1,230. Additional cost can include an urn ($10-$1995), a rental casket for a viewing (from $695) and an upgraded cremation container ($50-$3995). With all of these auxiliary costs, cremation too can be expensive. An average cremation costs about $2300 in Missoula County, according to a local funeral home director. This includes memorial options, an urn, and a cremation container, in addition to the basic cremation package. So, although cremation can be as low as $1,095, people do not usually spend the minimum required.

According to The American Funeral Director, "The family that chooses cremation does not necessarily do so because of the price. It may be a concern for 15%-25% of consumers. The balance choose cremation based on their beliefs..." (McMillen 1997:56). Kenneth Iserson, in his book entitled Death to Dust (1994), confirms this assertion. "Interestingly, a preference for cremation instead of burial is not usually based
on . . . the desire to keep cost low" (Iserson 1994:250). It is apparent that not everyone agrees what role economic considerations play in choosing cremation. Therefore, I must be critical of an assertion that cremation is based on cost.

It is often asserted that wealthy or upwardly socially mobile persons are more likely to cremate (Edmonson 1997:50; Dempsey 1975:180; Curnette 1996). However, if the wealthy are more likely to cremate, why would economy be a concern? It will be shown by omission in Chapter 3 that not one of the people I interviewed mentioned cost as a motivational factor in choosing cremation.

Ecology

The issue of ecology, or environmental concerns, is expressed in three different ways. First, there is a perception of diminishing cemetery space (Hamilton 1997:15). The second issue is a concern of taking up land that can be better used by the living. Third is a worry about the pollution caused if one is buried after chemical embalming (Curnette 1996). An emphasis on 'earthly' or 'secular' preoccupation on the part of Americans spurred these ideas, according to Richard Gill, a cremation opponent (1996:105-118). He states that the increasing influence of secular society has made Americans cremate. The issue of religion versus secularity will be addressed a bit later, but the wedding of secularity and a concern for the earth is important to note.

Not everyone agrees that these ecological assertions are valid. One author states, "Lack of space is not a reason to choose cremation. That is just a scare tactic" (Miller 1994:26). Others disagree. The executive vice president of the International Cemetery and Funeral Association, Stephen Morgan, states, "There are not a lot of new cemeteries being built. . . I don't mean this in a pejorative way, but it's [using land for burial] not
necessarily the highest and best use of scarce resources" (Hamilton 1997:15). The issues of resource availability (cemetery space), and the 'best use' of land are arguable perceptions in relation to the rising desire for cremation.

An associated but distinct attitude toward land is apparent in emotional ties. Home, or the idea of a home, has become increasingly more abstract in the United States. According to Mortuary Management, Americans are a very mobile population (Cremation Surpassing:38). An administrator for Washington's state funeral and cemetery unit said, "People don't have strong ties to the community," especially in the Western United States (ibid). These ties are weakened by the temporary nature of our residences in these areas. "The West Coast is a new population, not like the eastern and central United States, where they have families living in one area for generations" (ibid). Ecological reasons are multiple and philosophical in nature. In Chapter Three I will uncover even more ways to consider and regard nature through interviews I conducted. However, I will say here that I believe this idea of a weakening sense of community is an oversimplification. Because a person is not a long-time resident of a community, in this sense a human community, this does not negate a sense of a larger community of nature. I feel the tie between humans and natural surrounding can bind just as tightly as those of humans to humans. One does not have to have had generational stability in one area to achieve emotional bonds to a landscape.

Simplicity and Efficiency

The issue of the simplicity in cremation is often stated but rarely qualified. Curnette relays an advantage of cremation, "A cremation and memorial service can avoid stretching to three or four days the process of visitation, funeral and cemetery burial"
(1996). From this statement, the idea of simplicity, in effect, means efficiency. Gill states, "Americans have steadily moved to reduce the degree of time and resources which they must provide the dead" (1996:107). The literature seems to agree that the trend in American funerals is toward quickness, efficiency, and convenience (Funeral Ceremony Fact Sheet 1998). However, I believe this to be an overall American trend, not one specific to disposition. One advantage of cremation is the ability to postpone services and final disposition to an agreed upon time, a more pleasant time of year (if you live in a harsh winter climate such as Montana), or to a significant date (anniversary, birthday, Father's Day, etc.). The efficiency of cremation, however, may be a bonus side-effect of the process, rather than a motivating factor, I argue. I did not find postponement of services or shipping concerns in my informants discussions on cremation. In fact, these issues did not arise at any time in my interviews.

**Memorialization**

Memorialization can mean many things. According to the Cremation Association of North America (CANA),

Memorialization is the placement of cremated remains according to the family's choice and available facilities. It may be a niche in a columbarium with space for one, two, or even an entire family. It may be interment in a single burial site, an urn garden or family lot. Others may choose scattering in specially prepared scattering gardens within designated cemetery grounds, with or without a marker or cenotaph for name plates. Some select their personal type of memorialization, such as a tree or rose bush planted in a special area. (Glossary of Cremation Terms 1998).

Monuments to the deceased are currently on the decrease. Gill states, "[the] dramatic rise in cremation [is] accompanied by a corresponding fall in the popularity of monuments; after all, the very materiality of monuments inherently contradicts the de-materiality of cremation' (1996:107). In conjunction with the lack of memorialization, rituals surrounding the end of life are also in decline (Funeral Ceremony Fact Sheet 1998).
Having detached ourselves from the importance of corporeal reality in death and the related rituals of maintenance, we also have relinquished our conceptual link to the final resting place as a site of individual and collective memory. Our means of memory are too many and too real to require the aid of monuments and the emotions they elicit. Video tape, with its illusion of reality, supplants recollection in the private as well as the public sphere (Weinel 1996:49).

Weinel states that a decreased interest in memorialization may very well be the result of increased 'means of memory' such as the common photograph, voice recording or video recording. Following this theory, the physical placement of the deceased is becoming less and less important in maintaining the memory of a loved one.⁴

However, even if memorialization is declining, this may not have anything to do with cremation. There are many memorials available to those who choose cremation. The most common selections are placing an urn in a columbarium or interring the urn in the earth (Carlson 1987:31). Some cemeteries have 'scatter gardens' with landscaped paths and flowers. Churches, sometimes, dedicate their lawn and a portion of the church's structure to cremains. Bronze plaques may be purchased from such churches to commemorate the deceased (ibid). Since all of these options are available, the lack of memorialization may not be due directly to the rise of cremation, but to an attitude of humility, as Gill stated earlier, perhaps associated with cremation. However, is it any less "memorializing" to plant a tree, build a rock cairn, or have a special spot on a riverbank to remember a life? I argue this may be intensely more personal than a stone slab on a purchased plot of land.

Spiritual Transitions

The idea of salvation of the soul and its relationship to the body change throughout time and among traditions. Although it is often stated that Constantine's Christianization of the Roman Empire by 400 AD led to the replacement of cremation
with earth burial, we have already seen how this notion may be erroneous. However, burial has traditionally been the preferred mode of disposition for most Christian faiths.

Early Christians did not cremate because it was seen as a Graeco-Roman or pagan tradition. Another reason for the Christian aversion to cremation was due to the spectacle it caused. Christians in early years were persecuted for their faith and calling attention to ritual was potentially dangerous. Later, Christians used cremation to excommunicate a member after death (Iserson 1994:275).

In 1886, the Catholic Church banned cremation. This measure was in response to the Italian anticlerical movement, stemming from the Church's monopolies on cemetery plots. According to Canon law, cremated persons could not participate in Christian burials and were thereby excommunicated (Iserson 1994:275). Because the ban on cremation was not based on theology, the Catholic Church reconsidered its position after WWII when Catholics began to increasingly cremate. In 1963, the Second Vatican Council agreed to give Christian burials to people who choose cremation with the permission of their diocese.

According to Kenneth Iserson, the Catholic Church still prefers that their members be buried (1994:275). The Code of Canon law states, "The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burial be retained, but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teachings (Cannon 1176.3)" (Frequently 1998). These laws are based on the Catholic ideology of soul and body. "Christian faith . . . is not dualistic. It is the human being as a whole who dies . . . since the soul is united to the body essentially, it must clearly have some relationship to the body after death. . . ." (Wagner 1996:143). If this soul/body connection is rejected by
the individual choosing cremation, their decision would go against the teachings of the church. The Church does not officially permit the scattering of cremains, the keeping of cremains in any place other than a cemetery, or the division of cremains into more than one container (ibid).

Also, there is a mutual accountability to the self and the community in the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic teachings frown upon excessive individualism. Decisions, even in death, should be made in a communal context, thus the Canon Laws help to preserve commonality in disposition by requiring specific ritual (Hill and Shirley 1992:119).

Non-Catholic Christian traditions, vary widely on their position regarding cremation. Protestantism is associated with individual rights and upholds the belief that no one may intervene between a person and their relationship with God (Hill and Shirley 1992:110). These ideas are common to the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Quaker traditions. Protestants support the rights "of each one of us to hold our own unique beliefs and values and to make our own choices about the things that affect our lives" (ibid). They see death as a joyful occasion and an escape from the sorrows of this world. Therefore, Iserson categorizes Lutherans as having 'no position' regarding cremation (1994:274). This concurs with the idea that every member has the authority to choose their own beliefs, and therefore, methods of disposition are not the concern of the Lutheran Church.

Kenneth Iserson relates that in 1944, the Church of England officially approved cremation and the scattering of ashes (1994:273-274). The Episcopal Church now actively supports the right to cremate. Unitarians/Universalists also strongly support cremation, while Christian Scientists do not officially hold a position. The Eastern
Orthodox churches forbid cremation, as do Muslims and some Protestants, such as the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran faith and Evangelical churches. Mormons or Latter Day Saints (LDS) feel that nothing should be done to destroy the human body; officially, the ultimate decision for disposition is left to the family of the deceased, without religious consequence, according to Iserson. As shown in Table 1.1, the state of Utah, a historically Mormon state, uses cremation very infrequently. This indicates that, although officially okay, in practice people are not breaking with tradition.

Orthodox and Conservative Judaism do not allow cremation. Judaism teaches that God owns the individual and his/her body. The body is on loan from God much like a tenant/landlord relationship (Hill 1992:124). A person does not have dominion over the body, and there are rules of upkeep regarding diet and nutrition and burial that are maintained in Judaism (Hill 1992:125). Reformed Judaism, however, allows for cremation without religious consequence (Iserson 1992:274).

At over 900 million members, the Islamic or Muslim faith is one of the largest in the world. According to Ira Lapidus, the nature of death, funeral and burial are described in the Qur'an (1996:148-154). Islam is dualistic in belief. Muslims believe that a human consists of a body and a soul. Upon death of the body, the soul lives on to be resurrected on Judgment Day. The soul/body separation at death is excruciatingly painful. The soul temporarily goes to heaven then returns to the body in the grave. Two angels then visit the soul in the grave and decide its fate. It may either rest in peace or in torture until the Day of Judgment. This is called the 'life in the grave.' According to Lapidus, the Qur'an states that the body should be washed and carried to the mosque where the men pray for the deceased. They are then put in a simple grave without a coffin and laid on their side.
to face Mecca. A flat stone is placed on the grave as a simple marker (Lapidus 1996:154). This ritual is important in determining the final fate of the soul.

Although Buddhism and Hinduism are not traditional Western beliefs, it may be useful to compare how cremation is depicted in Eastern tradition. Buddhists and Hindus traditionally cremate. Theories of why this is so range from ritual purification to release of the soul, to an expression of the anonymity of death (Iserson 1994:273). Buddhists see life and death as an unbroken continuum. Both life and death are the same, an illusion. Buddhism is 'nontheistic' and 'nonfatalistic' (Hill and Shirley 1992:130). The term for life is 'the unborn', and they call death 'the unextinguished.'

In the Hindu faith, the central concept in cosmology is the samsara, meaning transmigration or reincarnation. The body is mortal, but the soul or atman, is eternal. The soul separates from the body at death and is reborn in time into another physical body. The ultimate goal of the Hindu faith is to attain moksha, or oneness with the Universal soul and end the cycle of karma (Vatuk 1992:121). The Eastern traditions begin to show us a contrast in an essential component of religion, the relationship between the soul and the body. The nature of each faith dictates the relationship between the soul and the body and the fate of each at death.

Any omission of a particular faith or practice is unintentional. There are so many religions in the world and in America that to create an exhaustive list of religions and beliefs would be nearly impossible. However, the importance of religion in death cannot be overstated.

Since one of the claims of religion is to reconcile the fundamental contradiction between life and death in human consciousness, it would be a serious mistake to overlook the profound influence religious beliefs might have on the intellectual and emotional values of a person as he approached his own death (Hill 1992:137).
It is important to note that although people may practice a religion, they may not choose to follow its dictates at the end of life. On the converse, those who do not actively practice a religion may choose to have a religious funeral, or have rituals conducted by a member of the clergy. These issues will be addressed in the narrative interview section of this thesis; however, further study on these inconsistencies would be illuminating.

Every religion has a unique combination of beliefs, rituals, and rules. Also unique is the degree of punishment a person evokes when the traditions are broken. According to Kenneth Iserson (1994), there are five categories that are associated with a religion's position on cremation. First, cremation may be required, such as in Buddhism or Hinduism. Second, cremation may be allowed as part of religious doctrine. Third, a religion may disapprove of cremation but allow it to continue under certain circumstances without religious consequence, such as in the Catholic Church. And lastly, a religion may disallow cremation, punishing those who cremate with excommunication. Table 1.1 lists many religions in the United States and their position on cremation. This table is a reproduction of one found in Death to Dust by Kenneth Iserson (1994:274), and does not include all religions practiced. However, it does give an adequate example of the position of different religious groups in the United States.

I do not feel religious acceptance of cremation is a solid argument for rising cremation rates. I feel it is fallacious to assume that because people are allowed to do something, they will do it. I feel this too is a simplistic answer to a complex question. The question of rising cremation rates can not be answered simply showing that the practice is more acceptable. I would have to ask, which came first, religious acceptance or a steadily rising cremation rate?
Self-expression

The "baby boomers' love of self-expression" also contributes to bodily disposition choice, according to Mortuary Management magazine (Cremation Expansion 1997:22). I argue that the need to differentiate and the desire for self-expression cannot be attributed solely to the baby boomer generation. Some proposed American virtues, at least in theory, are the freedom of choice and the ability to act out as an individual without the threat of censorship. As Hervé Varenne observed in his fieldwork in the U. S., "Children [differentiate] themselves from their parents very early; indeed, that they [are] more or less expected and educated to do so. Differentiation has been institutionalized; the generation gap is a necessary by-product of the structure" (my emphasis) (1977:44). Varenne continues to say that Americans see children as, by nature, individuals with choices. The American cultural viewpoint is that, "moral decisions are a matter of individual rather than group responsibility" (Varenne 1977:57-48).

Differentiation and self-expression are taught through our institutions. This process begins at birth through the options our parents give us as children: "Do you want vanilla or chocolate ice cream?" It continues on throughout our upbringing, especially apparent during the rebellion of the teen-age years, which Varenne says are necessary to distinguish the teen as an individual (Varenne 1977:46)). Americans exhibit extremely individualistic attitudes which, according to Varenne, are a product of our social structure. However, half the equation is missing. Humans are intensely social beings with close ties to and reliance on family, friends, and community. Western society members do not decide only in regards to the self, but with regards to these external
entities. I will further discuss this point in Chapter 4. This is the major theoretical challenge given by my qualitative data to the ideas of Western individualism.

Differentiation and self-expression are at the heart of American ideology. Americans are born and raised in a world of choices that are to be made up by the individual, and these choices are (ideally) respected for their uniqueness. The Western United States has often been stereotyped as the home of the 'rugged-individual' through movies and legend. In this way, the 'cult of the individual' seems to have even stronger implications for the West through the fortitude and individualism associated with pioneering. Also, geographic isolation from the east and from neighbors in a land where ranching and homesteading spread people out by miles, further speaks of Western individualism and to reliance on some sense of community.

Denial of Death

Phillipe Aries (1994) traced belief systems in funerary practices from the eleventh-century to modern times. His focus of study was Western cultures, specifically industrial Europe and the United States. In this research, Aries concluded that the decision to cremate bodies is a manifestation of modernity (or rejection of past lifeways) and the ultimate nullification of the deceased (Aries 1974:91-100). In this way, Aries believes that Americans cremate as a part of a death denying culture, one that he sees us sharing with England. This death denying attitude can be seen in our treatment of aging (think of all the creams and pills designed to deny the process of aging), of dying (quantity of life has won over quality of life), and in the grieving process resulting from a death. "Mourning is no longer a necessary period imposed by society; it has become a morbid state which must be treated, shortened, erased . . ." (emphasis original) (Aries
These assertions suggest that Americans cremate to negate the death of their loved ones, and to get on with their lives as quickly as possible.

I argue that reducing the body to ashes and thus removing its human aesthetic form is more accepting of death than some other Western burial practices. Embalming the body and putting make-up on the corpse's face so that it appears to be sleeping rather than dead is a much more overt denial of death, in my opinion, than cremation. Cremation rids the corpse of the potential of being human by destroying the vessel through which the human experiences life.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered many historical and philosophical issues. Beginning with the potential origins of cremation in the Stone Age, to the Greeks use of cremation, and continuing to the controversial switch from cremation to burial by the Romans, we see the rise and fall of cremation in Western culture. I looked at the history of Western cremation practices starting in Italy and diffusing out to the United States. The United States has a rich history of cremation that started two-hundred years ago with a military official and brings us to today, when 21% of Americans are cremating.

I have explored many possible explanations for the increased use of cremation. The cost of cremation can range from significantly less, to substantially more than a traditional burial. The ecological arguments include fear of pollution and aversion to taking up space. Cremation is perceived to be simpler and more efficient than burial. Memorialization is no longer in great demand. Spiritual teachings have relaxed on the issue of cremation and increasingly more faiths have the option to cremate without any religious repercussion. I have argued that although self-expression and individuality are
at the heart of American culture, the relational self has been largely ignored and is just as important as the individual self. And finally, some assert that Americans attempt to negate or deny death through cremation, although I find some burial practices to be a much more overt refusal to accept death.

The list of reasons is long and often internally contradictory. If wealthy people are more apt to cremate, why would the economy of cremation be an issue? If there is plenty of cemetery space, why do people perceive that there is not? If Montana is the land of wide-open spaces, why are we concerned with the use of a small parcel of land? Why would a person whose faith dictates burial choose cremation anyway? There are a lot of questions left unanswered by the literature available on the cases for the rise of cremation.

Missoulians are cremating at a rate of about 67% (Vital Statistics 1997). What factor, or combination of factors, influences Missoulians in their decision to cremate? Why are Missoulians three-times more likely to cremate than the average American? These are questions that can best be answered by the people that live in Missoula County. Funeral directors, teachers, religious leaders and community members share their version of the story of cremation. In Chapter Three, I will see how the information reviewed in Chapter One is insufficient and often wrong in describing the rise of cremation. I will demonstrate through qualitative input from members of the Missoula community whom add much insight into ideas of individualism, self, and relationships in Western society. But first, I will test the waters of the before stated reasoning through a statistical analysis of Montana residents to see if they fit the profile depicted by the literature.
Chapter 2:

Methods and Quantitative Analysis
This chapter addresses how I chose to examine the problem of disposition choice in Missoula, Montana both qualitatively and quantitatively. I explain what methods I used for creating a questionnaire and what methods I used to conduct my interviews. I introduce my quantitative analysis as a starting point in determining if the current thoughts on cremation summarized in the previous chapter are applicable to Montanans or if some alternative explanation for disposition choice is necessary.

The Questionnaire

Making a questionnaire takes a great deal of background research and decision making on the part of the researcher. In my case the background research provided useful insight as to what may be the underlying considerations of a person in choosing cremation. I had to determine how I would solicit this information without leading my informant to the answers popularly adhered to. Also, I wished to allow the people to address other issues not specifically covered in the literature.

I began by conducting informal interviews to determine what people wanted to talk about regarding death and disposition choice. In total, I conducted seven such interviews. The informal style of interview allowed me to pose a very broad question and converse my way through the response. The question was, "What do you want done with your body when you die, and why?" The points my informants made regarding disposition were quite distinct from the rationale given in the background research.

In all the informal interviews, the issue of the soul and its relationship to the body was addressed. A common response to the above mentioned question was, "I'm not going to be here anymore, so it doesn't matter [what happens to my body]." From this
answer I knew that in my questionnaire the issue of soul/body dualism needed to be examined.

Another interesting issue that arose from these informal inquiries was of personal experiences in death, especially within the family. Spontaneously the informants would launch into stories of a family member's death and how it affected their lives. Another prevalent issue addressed concerns for the environment and for the use of land. I decided that these two issues should also be probed into further.

I used these preliminary interviews to uncover topics not directly mentioned in the literature review of Chapter One. In this way Questionnaire One in the Appendix was developed. However, I knew that I wanted to interview different members of the community. This first questionnaire was designed for interviews with "average" citizens of Missoula. However, I wanted to interview funeral directors and clergy as well. These questionnaires developed more from my background research than from informal interviews, although some of the informants suggested I ask funeral directors about some issue or another.

The questionnaire for the funeral directors, as seen in Questionnaire Two in the Appendix, I designed to extract factual and theoretical information simultaneously. These questions solicited the director's perception of the frequency and rationale of cremation, their ideas on the possible reasons for Missoula's high rate of cremation, and their experiences with cremation and burial choice. Also, I asked them about their own decision at the end of life, and the basis for that decision.

The other questionnaire I designed was for clergy. I wanted to probe into the changes churches have made regarding attitude toward cremation. Also, I wished to get
the clergy's perception of the frequency of cremation in their church, and some prospective reasons their members chose cremation or burial. The questionnaire used for clergy is found in the Appendix under Questionnaire Three. The reason for interviewing clergy is that they have a fundamental part in the funeral ritual of religiously affiliated people. This gives them a unique perspective of both knowing the deceased, consoling and discussing death with the survivors, and aiding in the spiritual transition between life and death. This questionnaire probed into the official stand of their church on cremation, if that stand had changed recently, what their church doctrine says about body and soul, and whether or not cremation affects that relationship.

In total, three separate questionnaires were made for three different types of informants: citizens, funeral directors, and clergy. I made these questionnaires knowing that they may be adapted, changed, extended, curtailed, or eliminated as needed. In the process, all of these things did eventually happen.

The Interview Methods and Techniques

The interview techniques I used began with the informal interview to develop the questionnaires. I then used these questionnaires to conduct nine semi-structured interviews. The informants ranged in age from twenty-four to seventy-three. Five were females, and four were males. There were four citizens, two members of clergy, two funeral directors, and one memorial society president interviewed. I placed advertisements in two local newspapers and received the four citizen volunteers. I telephoned the offices of the two local clergy and was granted interviews. I chose an Episcopalian priest because of the liberal bent that church is characterized for. I chose a Catholic priest to attempt to find a traditional burial element in the Missoula population.
The memorial society had an annual meeting I attended during which I requested an interview with their president. For the most part, these interviews were tape-recorded for the richness of information transcription can give. However, in the remaining cases, detailed jotter notes were taken, and the interviews were recorded quickly after their conclusion.

The method of these nine interviews was a semi-structured interview using the probe method (Bernard 1995:215). Because my interest in cremation was not limited to the questions my theory allowed me to create, the semi-structured interview allowed the informant to follow tangents related to the topic at hand. The probe method, a method used to solicit more information about a subject without interjecting much of the researcher's ideas, was particularly helpful in addressing death issues. Death can be a difficult topic to discuss. Occasionally answers were short and the informant became introspective. At these times I would ask something like, "Can you explain a bit more on what you mean by the soul?" or "Do you mind expanding on your experience at your mother's funeral?" These questions allowed the informants to express their thoughts openly without the rigidity of a formal interview. Another very useful technique was H. Russell Bernard's (1995:217) 'Uh-huh Probe.' If an informant paused, I would intently scribble notes, nodding and saying, "uh-huh." This allowed the informant to continue their thoughts with a minimum of my encouragement.

Another interview technique I used was the unstructured interview. I chose this technique to allow informants to open-up and express their ideas at their own pace, while minimizing my control over their responses (Bernard 1995:209). I used this technique in ten cases, five female and five male informants ranging in age from twenty-six to eighty-
one. In these instances, questionnaires did not seem appropriate for the situation. For example, five of these interviews came from a Sunday church coffee gathering. The setting was very social, with friends exchanging pleasantries, children playing, and people enjoying the church community. An unstructured interview was much more appropriate for this situation.

The other five interviews occurred spontaneously. Three were females and two were males. When people discovered I was doing an anthropological study in which anyone who is going to die can participate, people volunteered information when I was not fully prepared with questionnaire in hand. However, I was not about to pass up the opportunity to solicit information, so the unstructured interview was used.

In total, I conducted twenty-four interviews in Missoula County. Of those, thirteen were women and eleven were men. Ages ranged from twenty-four to eighty-one. Interviews were conducted in places of employment, people's homes, public areas, and churches. The techniques of informal, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews were used at different stages of research and for the method appropriate to the context of the interview. Although I only interviewed a very small pool of people I feel the consistency of data lends well to the theoretical discussion of Chapter four. I hesitate to draw any generalizations from this group to a larger population. These interviews are used to inform, augment, and challenge not to normalize, conclude, or generalize.

**Coding Qualitative Data**

When all these interviews were recorded, the issue of shuffling through the data was ominous, as any qualitative researcher will probably relate. Over one-hundred pages of transcription and notes needed to be analyzed. I began by using open coding
(Emerson, et al. 1995:150-152). I coded line by line, pulling out the subjects that the informant was addressing. I paid no attention to whether or how these subjects fit together, and had no overarching categories in mind. I then sifted through the notes in the margins of my data, and looked for things that could emerge into categories. I wrote initial memos to myself regarding these categories and began looking for cross-cutting themes (Emerson et al. 1995:155-156).

After discovering some themes, and selecting those I chose to address with this data, I again sorted through the data. I sub-coded, or looked for themes within themes. I wrote integrative memos linking the themes together, and expressing the contradictions that inevitably arose from probing into human behavior (Emerson et al. 1995:150-168). Finally, I reflected upon my findings and chose a theoretical framework that best explained the themes and contradictions that I gleaned from my data. I chose my theory by asking myself the question, "What is this data expressing about the larger realm of decision making?" In this way I connected my inquiry into bodily disposition choice in Missoula Montana with the overall process of decisions in America.

Quantitative Analysis

With all of the qualitative methods and techniques described, I would like to bring this inquiry back to where it started in Chapter One. In Chapter One, I relayed many popular theories in the literature today regarding what type of person chooses cremation. I decided to use quantitative techniques to test whether these assertions were, in fact, applicable in Montana, or not. The model I tested was from Cremation or Burial: Contemporary Choice in City and Village, by Peter Jupp (1993). Jupp's study "sought to explain how the funeral rites of passage -- so conservative in nature -- had changed, and
changed so swiftly" (Jupp 1993:169). He conducted structured interviews in rural and urban England to determine what influences the decision to cremate or bury the dead.

Jupp concluded that many factors contribute to the decision to cremate. "Cremation choice tends to be associated with middle-class identity, incomer status and, if there is a religious identity, adherence to a religion which accepts cremation" (Jupp 1993:186). Jupp suggests that decision to bury, "...tends to be associated with working-class identity, local roots and adherence to a religion stipulating burial" (ibid). These assertions were the points of departure for my quantitative inquiry. I hypothesized that Jupp's categories that defined the differences between people who chose burial versus cremation in England would also work in Montana.

Quantitative Materials and Methods

I devised a data set to test Jupp's model. I collected my data from December 1997 to January 1998. My source for this data was the Montana obituaries from the local Missoula County newspaper, the Missoulian. In total, I collected 178 obituaries, or cases. I used the statistical methods factor analysis and discriminant analysis in the program SPSS for Windows. I chose these two methods for their effectiveness in variables and determining covariance between variables.

There were many coding decisions I made in designing this data set. Using Jupp's model, I constructed variables for birthplace of the deceased, religious affiliation, occupation, and bodily disposition. I also denoted age and sex.

When I recorded the geographic region of birth, I used the United States census information to model my regions as Pacific, West, Midwest, South, and Northeast (State Population 1994) (see Fig. 1.1). If the person was born outside the country, I noted this
as well. Those persons born in the Western United States (insiders) were coded one, and those born elsewhere (outsiders) were coded as zero.

I also scored for the religious affiliation of the deceased. I based my scoring on a table found in *Death to Dust* by Kenneth Iserson (1991:274) (see Table 1.1). In this study, Iserson categorizes religious traditions found in the United States by their official position on cremation. The categories include disallow, disapprove, no position, allow, and require. Placement in the category of 'disallow' means that if a person cremates, he or she is no longer considered part of the church. 'Disapproval' refers to those religions that prefer burial. 'No position' reflects the ambivalence of a religion to the question of cremation. Many churches have given their approval to cremation, and people participating in these religions are classified under the heading, 'allow.' The final category of 'require' designates religions believing that cremation is necessary, such as Hindus or Buddhist.

In my data set, the higher the score in 'attitude', the more approving a religion was of cremation. Those people who did not specify a religion were placed in the category of 'no position,' or a midrange score of three. This was done because no organized religious group influenced the decision to cremate in either direction. Therefore, 'no position' reflected best the lack of hindrance or of encouragement in choosing cremation by a church.

I created the category of occupation. The scores ranged from zero to two. The lowest score indicated that the obituary did not specify an occupation for the deceased. The middle score designated a non-professional job, and a high score denoted a professional occupation. I determined professionalism by whether a position required a
college degree. I also coded bodily disposition. Buried persons scored a zero, while those cremated scored a one. Obituaries vague about the method of bodily disposition were omitted from this inquiry.

In addition to those categories I ascertained from Jupp's conclusions (1991), I also denoted sex and age for each case. I chose to code zero for male and one for female. I coded this way because David Dempsey asserted that men cremate their deceased wives far more than women cremate their husbands, why was not asserted (Dempsey 1975:179). Therefore, I felt that cremation may be associated with sex. I divided age into groups of ten years (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, etc.). Some authors assert that people who were no longer economically active, such as elderly and retired persons, choose cremation over burial (Jupp 1993:191). Still others associate cremation with the youth of today (Edmondson 1997:46). I used the category of age as an exploratory category to test these hypotheses. With the variables in place, and the cases entered, I moved to analysis.

**Results of Quantitative Inquiry**

The results of this inquiry were revealing. Factor analysis using principle component analysis produced three factors with Eigenvalues over 1. To exemplify how uninformative this data set is, my factors accounted for a total of 62 percent of the variation between individual cases (see Table 2.1). In a perfectly random data set with six variables, three factors would predict 50 percent of the variability between cases. Therefore, these factors were not predicting much more than random variability. However, they did warrant further investigation.

My first factor analysis component showed a high loading, or a score of over .5, for occupation and region of birth. These two variables were positively correlated (see
Table 2.2). Looking to my factor scores as they related to my data set, I noticed that the very low scores for factor one scored a zero for occupation, or data unknown, and frequently fell where a zero occurs for birthplace, also data unknown. Factor one indicated that where you do not find information in an obituary regarding occupation, you often do not find the place of birth.

Component two showed a high loading for sex and age (see Table 2.2). The numbers indicated that age and sex were varying in the same direction, or had a positive correlation. These loadings reflected the fact that women have a longer life expectancy than men.

My third factor showed a positive correlation between cremation and religious attitude. However, this factor only accounted for 18 percent of variance explained (see Table 2.1). What the computer noticed was a half-correlation. This half-correlation was best analyzed through a crosstab analysis.

For a crosstab analysis, I re-coded religious attitude toward cremation so religions scoring a one or two (disallow or disapprove) were re-coded to a one, while religions scoring a three or four (no position or allow) were re-coded to a zero (see Table 1.1). Of those persons who participated in a religious system that does not accept cremation or prefer burial, 79 percent chose burial (see Table 2.4). Those people were about three times more likely to bury than to be cremated. However, people adhering to religions that either do not have a preference for bodily disposition or allow cremation, 61 percent chose burial, and 39 percent chose cremation.

A half-correlation indicated that of the two bodily disposition choices, burial was somewhat predictable while cremation was not. This related to the uncertainty of the
afterlife alluded to in the quotation by Tom Robbins (1991). No one knows what happens after death. Religions offer myriad explanations of what may happen to the soul. If your religion tells you that bodily disposition affects the quality of an afterlife, you will most likely choose the option it prescribes for the best possible post-death scenario.

Would anyone consciously choose eternal damnation? For fear that harm may be incurred by choosing cremation, this choice will be avoided. On the other hand if no harm will be done by cremating, more factors are then considered in disposition choice. I address these considerations in the discussion section of this paper.

The other telling statistical test in this research was discriminant analysis. I attempted to predict bodily disposition using sex, age, region of birth, occupation, and religious attitude as predictive categories. In the classification results of this analysis, the computer only classified a total of 58 percent of the group cases correctly (see Table 2.3). This indicated that the variables chosen can not be successful in determining whether cremation has taken place or not almost half of the time. The cases appeared to be varying randomly with regard to the attributes listed.

Using both factor analysis and discriminant analysis, I discovered that the categories used by Peter Jupp (1993) in his study of cremation in England were not useful in determining bodily disposition in Montana. Given this information, I rejected my hypothesis and maintain my null hypothesis.

Discussion

A rejected hypothesis left me to explain the basis upon which Montanans chose to cremate. Some coding decisions I made affected this study. I noted previously that the coding for occupation correlated it meaninglessly with place of birth. In addition to this,
occupation may not be a clear reflection of income level or class status. Many people are under-employed, or work in positions that do not generate the money their academic credentials may lead one to suspect. Also, middle- or lower-class economic status (the divisions made by Jupp) may not be determinable from occupation. For example, some people participating in economic activities such as ranching or farming, occupations that may or may not solicit a college degree, are economically very successful. What I learned from this coding dilemma, however, is that class status is a more amorphous category than I first believed.

My coding of religious attitude introduced ambiguity. I treated all people whose obituaries mentioned participation in a Church or the presence of a member of the clergy at the funeral as members of the denomination of that Church or clergy. In hindsight, if I were to recollect my data I would delineate those persons that reported active participation in a Church from those only mentioning clergy at the funeral. The reason for this came from qualitative interviews. People suggested that family members with strong religious beliefs may ask clergy to officiate their funeral, even though they themselves are not religious. In this way, I feel I may have hindered the variable of religious attitude's ability to predict cremation by including non-members of churches as members.

Another unforeseen issue regarded who decided on burial or cremation. Does it matter who arranged the funeral? What if all the data I collected were friend or family run funerals? Maybe the family or friend did not know the disposition wishes of the deceased. Maybe persons strongly objecting to the deceased's decision did not adhere to it. The personal characteristics that Jupp asserted as guidelines for burial and cremation
may only work for funerals decided upon by the deceased. A small population also
effected this study. Had more data been collected, perhaps pattern may have arisen.
However, I feel my N was sufficient to show the pattern is not as explicit as one may read
Jupp's model to be.

On a theoretical level outside of coding decisions, was my data set doomed to
failure from the beginning question? It appears unreasonable to test findings from an
English anthropological inquiry using Americans of Montana. As Marilyn Strathern
realized in her study of English kinship, there is a "significant difference between English
and American anthropology" (1992:4). Strathern initially desired to make an English
counterpart to David Schneider's *American Kinship* (1968). She concluded, however,
"Neither seeing the English through models developed for non-Western systems, nor
seeing them through that particular cultural model of American kinship, will quite do . . ."
(ibid). Strathern believes that an analysis of a particular culture should be done within
the context of that culture. No matter how closely related, or what the common origins of
two societies are, each should be treated in its own context. However, the English study
done by Jupp made assertions that were consistent with American ideas on factors
affecting disposition practice, and should still be indicative of disposition choice.²

Peter Jupp's (1993) study of English bodily disposition described many
contributing factors for the decision to cremate or not. I used these factors to construct a
hypothesis mimicking those factors and applied it to bodily disposition in Montana. Of
these factors, I chose to test insider/outside status, occupation, and religious affiliation
using obituaries from a local Montana newspaper. I added sex and age to the data set.
None of these variables were efficient predictors of whether or not a Montanan is
cremated, nor could the variables be combined to explain the variance among cases.

Rejecting my hypothesis, I explained how an English model is theoretically not efficient for an American state through Strathern's kinship study (1992). However, the categories remained sound due to their additional American corroboration. In the next chapter I present my qualitative interviews to shed some light on why disposition can not be predicted quantitatively by the categories asserted by popular and professional literature.
Chapter 4:

Qualitative Data Analysis
In this chapter I summarize themes from qualitative interviews to shed light on the perplexing inconsistency between the background literature on cremation and the quantitative results I assessed in Chapter Two. I address interviews from funeral directors and their perceptions of why Missoula residents are cremating at such a high rate. I then discuss the perspectives revealed in an annual memorial society meeting. I divide the content of the interviews I conducted with the clergy and the citizens of Missoula into four categories: body, soul, family, and community. I show how these categories reveal more than just bodily disposition choice, but the relation of the individual to others.

**Funeral Directors**

The Department of Vital Statistics reported that in 1996, approximately sixty-four percent of Missoula County deaths resulted in cremation. However, interviews with the two major funeral home directors revealed a misperception of frequency in both directions. A funeral director from an international chain of funeral homes, Theresa, told me that in her professional opinion, sixty percent of her clientele decides to cremate. The numbers she shared with me regarding the previous month's business differed. In the month of February this funeral home serviced fifteen 'calls.' Eleven of these were cremations; two calls consisted of embalming and shipping out of state; one call was an indigent burial, and the last was a minimal burial of $1400, which Theresa described as very 'bare bones'. After sharing this information, Theresa changed her mind and said she thinks her business may be up to seventy-five percent cremation. Steve, a director from a locally owned funeral home, had a tempered perception of cremation. He stated that in Missoula he thinks more than fifty percent of people are cremated when they die.
I asked Theresa and Steve to describe to me the type of person most likely to cremate. Again, the two gave different answers. Theresa said that she makes no assumptions in her line of work because there are none to be made. She stated that there is no correlation between age, gender, sex, ethnic identity, religious affiliation, resident status, or education in bodily disposition choice in Missoula. To emphasize this point, Theresa stated that in Minnesota, where she practiced mortuary science a few years back, when they received a body in the middle of the night it was embalmed. The reason for this was that people there almost certainly were going to bury, so the funeral director could anticipate this move. However, in her experience here in Missoula that is not done. Theresa explained that there is no way of knowing who will choose what method of disposition, so she starts every job with an open mind.

Steve said that factors such as ethnic identity and sex are not so important as religion. Even still, he expected me to find that the more educated a person is, the more likely to he or she will be cremated. He gave the example a University professor his business did funeral arrangements for. He said that no one was surprised that he was cremated because he was such a highly educated man.

This funeral director also mentioned that often higher income people cremate, but he has no explanation as to why this may be true. However, in the course of the interview, he mentioned that people from Mineral County, MT almost always cremate. He conceded this even though people from this county tend to be poorer than Missoula County residents, and do not have a retort of their own. This contradiction begins to give us the window we need to understand that the perception of cremation, and the reality of cremation, can often be two wildly different things.
For example, in the literature search that I conducted many reasons for why cremation is increasing in popularity were proposed (see Chapter One). But, again, when asking the people that work in the field of mortuary science, the answers were slightly different. Theresa expressed the popularity of cremation in the United States as regional. She said that people 'back east,' meaning the Midwest, still belong to small churches that have burial yards that have been in the family for years. They are more 'traditional' and root bound.

Theresa makes some broad assumptions in her discourse. She said Missoulians are less 'needy' because they 'get more' from the environment. For example, in Minnesota it is 'no fun' to be outside being bitterly cold in the winter, and humid and buggy in the summer. Montana has a climate that allows for the enjoyment of the outdoors in every season. She said that people living in Missoula are more relaxed because nature gives them a peace of mind. Missoula's favorite pasttimes include hunting, gardening and biking. She said cremation is consistent with the lifestyle of Missoula.

People living in Missoula are private people, Theresa added. "Why would someone want an elaborate procession and casket if they spent their life building their forest home and didn't like going out in public?" A Missoulian's idea of fun often is being in the woods with a friend, maybe hunting or hiking. Cremation, according to this professional, is the logical choice for these individuals.

Steve gave the more "official" discourse regarding disposition decision. He speculated other factors influencing the decision to cremate included an increasingly mobile society, religion, and cost. In today's mobile society, this funeral director pointed out, it is often not convenient for a family to come to the place of death of a member.
Also, people may not want to leave their loved one in a place where they themselves do not plan on living for very long. Cremains are mobile. Often cremains are divided among many geographically diverse family members to do with as they please, he added. Sometimes half of the ashes are scattered, and half of the ashes buried. Steve gave the example of one client whom had half his ashes scattered over the ocean, and half buried in a national cemetery, reserved for honorably discharged military veterans and their spouses.

Steve also mentioned that the loosening of religious doctrine on the issue of cremation allows more people than ever to choose cremation. He stated that when he worked in Virginia, Catholics did not cremate because the local Diocese would not let cremains within the church for funeral services. Here in Missoula, however, cremains are allowed in the church and as a result, many Catholics cremate. He said he thinks the most staunchly opposed religions remain the Church of the Latter Day Saints (of which he himself is a member) and the Jewish faith. However, he now sees more LDS members choosing cremation than in the past, including one of his grandparents.

He said religious relaxation eased up people's attitude regarding cremation, but not fully. He noted quite astutely that obituaries often say, "At Ben's request, cremation has taken place," or, "At Ben's request, no services are being held." He said that this is a necessary part of an obituary because people do not completely, culturally, accept cremation as the norm. This deference of responsibility to the deceased is seen as necessary even in Missoula County where sixty-seven percent of people choose cremation.
Cost may also be a factor according to Steve. He acknowledged that even if you have a minimal funeral, it is still about twice the cost of cremation. [This is interesting because, remember, he said that the wealthy are more likely to cremate.] He thinks that people don't see a value in a funeral. They might, "spend $40,000 on a new car because they know they'll get to drive it around for years, but why spend a lot on a funeral when it is just over?" People in Missoula do shop around for funeral bargains, same as in Virginia. However, he added, less than ten percent of the people choose no services at all which would be the cheapest way to go. Even if additional costs can be avoided by neglecting the ritual surrounding death, this is rarely chosen.

Steve did agree with his competitor, Theresa, when he said that cremation varies by region. He said that 'culture' and religion intertwine so that it is hard to determine which affects which with regards to burial decisions. He said Hawaiians might cremate because of high premium on land, whereas Alaskans may cremate because of frozen soil. The West Coast may cremate because of high mobility, whereas Montanans may cremate for a number of reasons.

We see that the funeral directors working in a highly saturated market for cremation not only point to different reasons for choosing cremation than the literature, but also disagree between themselves on why cremation is such a popular choice in Missoula. Theresa was thoroughly convinced it was because of the love of and activeness in the outdoors, along with a consistency of a hermit-type, independent lifestyle that spawns a desire to cremate. Steve took more traditional roads to explanation citing cost, religion, and regional differences as the motivating factors to burn instead of bury. Because a consensus was elusive at this point, I moved to another group of people
to seek more, different, or corresponding answers. I went to the annual meeting of the local memorial society of Missoula.

The Memorial Society

I should hereby state the purpose of this particular memorial society. According to the organization's president, the organization was set up in the 1970s, in response to Jessica Mitford's exposé of the funeral industry (1963). The Unitarian and the Congregational Churches sprung into action by launching a memorial society in Missoula. The motivational factor was to simplify death and make it less expensive for people. When I reiterated that cost was a motivational factor, the president stated:

Well, it wasn't entirely that, it was more to just have death be more meaningful and simpler. And cremation was considered the simpler way to do it. So, at the time they started, there were no crematories, I don't think, in Missoula. We used to have to transport bodies to Great Falls [a town 169 miles from Missoula], and that was a big hassle. And it kind of discouraged people for a while joining the memorial society, . . . it specifies dignity, simplicity, and economy [the memorial society bylaws].

She continues to describe the purpose of the memorial society:

. . . as you may know, the funeral industry has gone way beyond the bounds of what people can afford. And because it is such a stressful and emotional time, they exploit people's sense of obligation in spending a lot of money on a funeral without really knowing all the ins and outs of what options there are. And last year I became the president, and I really found out the hard way, ya know, how much exploitation there really is. I'm not trying to run down the locals, because I think they are pretty ethical people, but we have two mortuaries. The one . . . [is] part of the bigger international corporation, so we negotiate with [the two], and try to keep the cost at a minimum. And also, just try to educate people about where their money is going. Things that they really don't need, or don't need to spend money on, at least.

When I went to the meeting of the memorial society, I was surprised to find a very upbeat, social setting. The members hugged and laughed with each other, caught up on all the gossip, and generally looked to be enjoying themselves. A speaker from the Missoula Demonstration Project (MDP), a local organization dedicated to the promotion of dignity and quality of life at the time of death, was invited to give a lecture. Her lecture described the numerous task forces her organization has unleashed upon Missoula
to discover ethnographically what the community wants at the end of life. She said that this countywide study aims to keep costs moderate (since the cost of death is rising at a rate of three times the cost of living) and give the opportunity for people to create their own unique funeral ceremonies.

MDP wants to develop a richness in death rituals, allowing each individual to choose for his or herself the mediums that will best comfort their families and friends. In this way, Missoula Demonstration intends to put meaning into the end of life, as well as empower the individual to feel that s/he has choices. The quality of death should not be left to the professionals, according to MDP, but reclaimed by the individual. The lecturer from MDP divulged that empowerment and removal of reliance on the funeral industry is a factor for the increasing use of cremation. As it stands, most people die in a hospital, an artificial atmosphere full of strange people, strange smells, strange sights, and strange procedures. As we have moved our places of death into the realm of professionals instead of families, we have also relinquished control of our very lives. Regaining control, according to this lecturer, is at the heart of changing death ritual. But is the freedom to choose really what dominates individual perceptions? This idea of control did resonate through much of my informant accounts of their own decisions, as I will discuss shortly.

The Citizenry

Is the MDP lecturer correct that the issue of control at the heart of cremation choice, or do the funeral directors' opinions show that they have their fingers on the pulse of their client pool? During the course of these interviews, as is common with much anthropological work, so many answers and reasons were given that I felt no pattern
existed. Indeed, looking at the particulars did lend my mind to confusion. No two answers seemed to fit together, and moreover, the answers given by one person were sometimes internally contradictory. I do not wish to resolve these contradictions but consider the relationship between conflicting discourses and patterns of practice. For example, consider this response by a 28-year-old graduate student, we'll call her Sophie. Sophie said, very bluntly, "I want to be burnt." The body should replenish the earth, and her soul will also be 'recycled.' "Ashes to ashes," she added, "Pumping your body full of chemicals and burying it so that one hundred years from now someone can dig you up and see how you looked the day you died is ridiculous." [This is especially interesting coming from an archaeologist!] Sophie also stated that it was okay to bury her if Ben, her life partner, was still alive and adamantly believed her soul would be damned if she was cremated.

We begin to see here that people's decisions to cremate are not made completely autonomously and not without contradiction. This is a far cry from the monochromatic explanations I discussed previously from the literature describing individuals' decisions to cremate based upon something as mundane as money.

The Western concept of self could lead researchers, including myself, to the search for reasons in the wrong places. Anne Becker describes this idea.

She continues by stating, "Clearly the Western self is partially misrepresented in this monolithic depiction. The very concept implies a homogeneity that simply cannot account for variations in gender, generation, geographical location, and ethnicity" (ibid). The discourses of cremation that are recorded in this thesis pose a fundamental challenge
to the notion of the Western individuated self. But how is this challenge being expressed?

There are four categories that are useful in showing the variation in contributing factors for wanting to be cremated: the body, the soul, the family, and the community. The first two categories describe the motivation from the individual's perspective. The latter two describe the social and cultural setting that also affects this decision. The last two categories are those that clearly challenge Western notions of self, as I will show shortly. The categories are not mutually exclusive. Transmutation and crossover between categories happens within a single thought, as I will demonstrate. These categories are also not exhaustive. However, these categories are useful tools in looking at my data. They place this data into a conceptual framework that reflects the richness and complexity of human mind in deciding bodily disposition.

**The Body**

The body represented different things to the different people I interviewed. Some believed the body is a vehicle for their soul to experience the world. Some believed that the body is food for the ecological system on earth. Still others believe their body is so connected with their spirit that eternal life is impossible without a corporeal being. However, most people agreed that in death the purpose of the body changes. The issues of decomposition of the body, the role of the body in ceremony, and the necessity of the body after life are the keys to understanding multiple perceptions of the body.

The thought of deterioration and decomposition of the body evokes emotional responses. Some of my informants, felt that the body was organic and the process of decomposition was natural and desirable. Other informants disagreed vehemently.
The idea of the body as food resounded in many interviews. One woman, Dana, said, "My body is a vehicle and is a manifestation of the strengths and weaknesses of my spirit. Ultimately, my body is nourishment." Another informant, Father Tom, said, "We take nourishment from the earth, and then we return to it." If a person sees his or her body as food, nourishing a place on earth where nutrients would be most appreciated, like the woods of a national forest, is often preferable to the manicured, chemically green lawns of a cemetery. The only legal way to do this is to be cremated.

I mentioned in Chapter One how cement liners are required in the city of Missoula, according to the funeral directors. Air-tight, steel-plated caskets are sold to preserve the body for a long time. However, the results are often disturbing. In March of 1998, the cover of *U. S. News and World Report* read, "Don't Die Before You Read This." In the cover story, a priest named Wasielewski was featured as a funeral industry watchdog. In that article, Wasielewski expressed his latest concern with sealed caskets sold to, "keep the elements at bay" (Horn 1998:58). These caskets, "often lead to the body's putrefaction. In the sealed environment, anaerobic bacteria devour soft tissues, producing gas that sometimes bursts the casket with a great spewing of goo" (ibid).

Although all but one of my informants had not read this article, the notion of unnatural preservation was prevalent. Dana put this notion quite well when she said, Burial is a selfish, unthankful, disrespectful practice. The Earth Mother creates us, and then we embalm and try to preserve ourselves as if to say, 'You can't have us back.' It's like people feel they have something else to do later... my body has nothing else to do. It [burial] is an arrogant practice.

One Sunday morning, in a coffee hour after a Catholic mass, I sat and discussed body disposition with five church members. The youngest of the group, Beth was approximately sixty years old. She told me a story about her experiences visiting her
mother's grave. Now living in Missoula, she traveled 2,000 miles to her hometown in Texas to visit her family. While she was there, she asked her father if she should visit her mother's grave. His response was upsetting. Beth's father had stopped visiting the grave of her mother. He said that when he was there, all he could do was think of the worms eating at her and the decay and decomposition her body was undergoing. This made him sick and unsettled. Beth decided that, after her long trip and the infrequency of her visits, she should pay her respects to her mother. She traveled to the cemetery and felt nauseous. All the thoughts her father described ran through her head. From that point forward, she has wanted to be cremated. "It's neater and quicker," she said, "Besides, the body doesn't have anything to do with the resurrection of the soul."

This issue of neatness and quickness, as well as distaste for burial, resonated through many of the stories I collected. Bill, Beth's husband, concurred with her ideas. "If the body is going to deteriorate and return to the earth anyway, why not quicker?"

Another woman at the table, Cathy, said, "No one wants to see the husk of a former person." She thought cremation was much more 'aesthetic' than 'rotting in a casket.'

This brings me to the issue of the role of the body in ceremony. The group of church participants I interviewed concluded than seeing a body was not conducive to healing, was 'sick,' and was a terrible thing for a young child to witness. Instead, they preferred to memorialize with pictures and letters. The issue of ceremony ties in with a subject I will consider a bit later, the concern for the wellness of others in one's own death. It is important to note that these issues run together in a continuous flow of ideas and attitudes. Burial distaste runs corollary to thoughts about an open-casket, others in the family, and the decomposition of bodies.
The removal of the process of decomposition is distasteful to some. As we saw in Beth's story of her mother, natural decay can also be un-aesthetic. People do not agree about whether it is worse to rot or not to rot, but their solution for the problem is equal. Cremation is the better choice.

The last idea regarding the body I will discuss has a spiritual overtone. The body was sometimes discussed by informants as necessary to the soul, and sometimes completely autonomous from the soul. The arguments varied: another body is coming with the resurrection, a body is not needed for a resurrection, or it matters not what happens to the body because, "I won't be there."

An Episcopalian rector, Father Mike, first introduced me to the first idea, that of a new body after death.

The body is like the husk on a grain of wheat. When the wheat sheds its husk, as the soul sheds the body, it goes to seed so it can grow into another body. This body the soul chooses is an unearthly form and is unrelated to the earth body. It is a resurrection of the soul and a replacement of the body.

Father Tom, the Catholic priest, adhered more closely with the notion that of the body is not of necessity for the fate of the soul. He pointed out that a soldier blown to bits by a grenade or land mine was just as likely to see the afterlife as someone embalmed and buried in tact. He felt that people are embodied spirits in heaven, as on earth. However, this heavenly body will be a transformation of the earth body into a body, "not limited to time and space the way it is now." His scripture, the Bible, gives him the story of Jesus' resurrection to corroborate this idea.

The disregard for the treatment of the body after death generally from the religiously unaffiliated. The, "I won't be here so it doesn't matter [what I decide to do with my body]." is expressed well by Julia.
In Unity [a nondenominational church], instead of saying this person has died, they say this person made their transition. And I like that concept, because we're going from one level of consciousness, or one level of being to another. And when my mother died . . . I remember looking out the window here at the sky, talking to her and saying, 'This is such a great adventure you're going on.' I mean, that's what I believe.

A bit earlier in the interview she stated, "So it's like, who cares what happens to the body? The soul is going to live on, and so why not be cremated?" This expression of disregard for the body, in favor of the detachment of the soul, was well-represented in my research.

I have taken us through many variations of the meaning of the body to the individual. Many people volunteered that the soul or spirit was most truly who they are. I approached this topic and found still more variation.

The Soul

What happens to the soul at death? Where does it go? How does this separation happen, and why? The people I interviewed were remarkably open and willing to talk about spirituality. Not everyone belonged to a religious organization. In fact, most did not. However everyone believed in a soul and had some idea on what might happen at death.

The two clergy members I interviewed had liberal, progressive interpretations of scripture. The Episcopalian teaching, according to Father Mike, suggests an immortality of the soul. Upon death, the soul separates from the earth body and returns to God. The soul is then faced with the choice of going to God or denying God. The exact meaning of heaven is open to interpretation. The Father said that some of his parish believes in pearly gates and streets made of gold. Others do not specify a physical location of the soul only that it is with God. Father Mike described his church as 'non-dogmatic.' This means that the Episcopalian faith lets its congregation make up their own minds.
regarding theology and ritual. Therefore, the Episcopalians are not judged in their bodily disposition. Besides the overarching belief that the soul returns to the "arms and love of our creator," the rest of the afterlife story is left to the individual to "build their own picture using the images they know: cities, peaceful locales, etc."

Father Tom said that Catholics believe that people on earth are embodied spirits. The Bible indicates that through the resurrection of Christ people will be embodied spirits in the afterlife. The priest does feel that some people in his parish do cremate because they do not thoroughly think through the idea of the resurrection of the body. He, however, does not deny funeral rites to people who do choose to burn instead of bury. But this is where the father's story becomes contradictory. He then stated that at root of the religious concern for bodily disposition is that a preference be held. He feels that it really does not matter what happens to the earthly body after death because of the place in heaven that will await you. To have a specific desire for your corpse is to deny the Catholic ideas of the glorification of heaven and the resurrection of the body. I think this thought refers to the issue of faith in Jesus and God. In my analysis, I see the Father saying that this faith can be challenged by the preference of disposition at death because one should feel sure that they will enter the kingdom of God and the body should not be of concern.

The members of the Catholic faith I interviewed were all in agreement that their souls would separate from their bodies at death, but that is where the talk of spirituality stopped. All of them had preferences for the treatment of their corpses. Due to the openness of discussing these attitudes within the confines of the church, I do not imagine
that any of them thought that having a preference was against the teachings of the Church.

I heard a large variety of responses from Christians on what happens to the soul at death. These ideas ranged from being an embodied spirit in the arms of God, to reincarnation of the soul on earth. Since organized religion held no consensus in its ideas of what comes next even within a church, I expected even further variation from non-Christians.

The non-Christians and new-agers, as some identified themselves, had much to say regarding their spiritual beliefs. Far from being atheists, although one informant was, their views on the soul were often well thought out, holistic perspectives that included not only humans, but often animals and plants.

One such person was Jonas. Jonas said he now practices a combination of Buddhism, voodoo, Wicca, meditation, and prayer. Raised in New Orleans and Tennessee, he was introduced to Southern Baptist faith at an early age. He soon became "wary against organized religion" when he decided that the faith was "heirarchical, patriarchal, and based on scare tactics." Now he believes that the soul is communal, not individual. Everything alive plays a part in the welfare of this communal soul. He called this the "collective unconscious." It extends to all people, the earth (which, according to Jonas, has a heartbeat and breathes), and especially plants and animals. Jonas feels that the 'soul' is then the self and not the self at the same time. He said this notion is akin to Quantum Physics which states that energy moves as particles and waves. It is two things in one. People can affect the collective unconscious through deeds: karma and chance work hand in hand to produce these actions.
Because the collective unconscious is not limited to the self, Jonas does not think there is a connection between it and the body. When we die we go through a transitional period, an opening of a door to another dimension. Reincarnation and decomposition is part of the cycle of life in this dimension, but he doesn't claim to know. "I know my answers are contradictory and paradoxical," Jonas admits. The spiritual is not within the grasps of the human mind, and though we are surrounded by it daily, it eludes us.

Another decidedly non-Christian was Dana. Dana vacillates in her spirituality. Being educated in the sciences, she sometimes feels that she'll die, and that's it. Sometimes, her biological self is her only self. However, other times she feels that the universe is a closed energy system, nothing is either lost or gained. She said she got this idea from thermodynamics. She said that when she dies, her energy (both physical and spiritual) will be converted into something else. This is her version of reincarnation. Dana said that her soul energy was 'transmutable.' "I have been told that it [the soul] is in the heart, so maybe it moves there if I think it is there. Maybe it's really in my big toe! I don't know."

I find it interesting that not only are both Jonas and Dana see their souls as inextricably linked with those of all people, but animals too (Jonas includes plants, but Dana does not). This connectedness with nature is an issue that was brought up by the funeral director, Theresa. She said that the people in Missoula have an attitude toward the environment that "feeds the spirit" and that they are more materially conservative because they "get so much from the environment." This spiritual strength coming from the earth, and from the outdoors, was reflected strongly in the non-Christian testimonies.
But what do all these notions of the spirit have to do with cremation? As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, Westerners, as do others, rely on both the self and a social and cultural setting to determine their end of life decisions contrary to popular philosophical notions of individualism. Although the ideas of the body and soul that construct the individual attitudes did not necessarily fit neatly together, they did constitute part of the reasons why a particular disposition method was okay in the informants' hearts and minds. But these were not the only considerations. As I pointed out, people in Missoula do not live in a vacuum. Other people including the family and community are considered.

The Family

According to a group of anthropologists, Americans have difficulty reconciling the needs of the individual with that of the kin group, or family. "... we are hesitant to articulate our sense that we need one another as much as we need to stand alone, for fear that if we did we would lose our independence altogether" (Bellah, et al. 1985:151). Even still, the first social group most often addressed by informants was the immediate family. I asked the local funeral directors what their perceptions of the role of the family in determining bodily disposition. Steve answered that most people have their next of kin arrange the funeral at the time of death, and it was his impression that most often the wishes of the deceased were followed. This sentiment of following the wishes of the deceased resonated with the individuals I spoke with regarding family member's deaths. Wendy described the accidental death of her brother. "My brother died in an accident and we had him cremated. And he lived in Utah and he had some land there that he loved. He was just so proud of that, and so we wanted to spread his ashes on his land."
The love her brother had for his property contributed to the decision of the family to cremate him and scatter his remains on this land.

Rita also considered her family when she decided on her method of disposition.

... my oldest son, who is nearing 50, I said that I was going to be cremated, and he said, 'Ya, but I want to see you first.' I was so surprised, I couldn't believe it, I never thought he'd want to be here and see me before they took me away ... I don't think it really matters what I think [about what to do at death]. I mean, when I'm gone, I'm gone, and that's what they [my children] do is for their own, to help them deal with their loss of their mother.

In this way, a discourse of resistance is offered to the hegemony of Western individualism. Although Westerners are indoctrinated to believe themselves to be solely agents, they readily rescind their agency to others. This may be the ultimate acceptance of death, the self-revocation of agency!

I believe that the issue of money is one that is ultimately about the well being of the family. Although the cost of a funeral was not a motivating factor for anyone to cremate (at least not admittedly), some people did bring the lower cost of cremation up as a benefit. In the United States, often what is leftover of the assets of a person is inherited by their next of kin. In this way, the less money spent on a funeral, the more that can be passed down to the beneficiaries. The desire to spend less on a funeral, therefore, might possibly be more a reflection of the desire to either leave more money to the family, or not to financially burden the survivors if they are responsible for payment of the funeral.

The issue of control also plays a role in disposition choice. Families face the difficult task of making a meaningful ceremony for the deceased. No longer are people looking for full church rites and service at death. Often, as I have previously discussed, getting away from these rites is a motivating factor. For example, Wendy's mother had a traditional Catholic funeral in Butte. Here are her thoughts on how the funeral was conducted:
It's probably to get as far away from that as I can [from the funeral industry], why I have the views I do. I mean, I know there's no getting around them [funeral directors], that they have to cremate me, my body. But they don't have any other control over me. Maybe that's my Montana spirit coming out. I'll do it!

The desire to keep a funeral on a personal level indicated a renewed control over ceremony. The women and men of the Catholic coffee discussion all agreed that with cremation and the giving of the ashes to family members, control was given to those they love. This, they hoped, would create a feeling of closure and peace for those who would actively participate in the placement of the ashes, rather than passively watch as a stranger placed 'their mother' into the ground.

Respect and control seem to be the issues when it comes to the role of the family in death. Respect of the wishes of the deceased, or the respect of the needs of the survivors, were two sentiments widely expressed in my research. Control over the amount of money spent and the actual ritual itself was also related to this issue of respect and well wishing for the remaining kin. The decision of what to do with the body at death does not only involve the self it also involves others.

The Community

Another group of people often considered, but not always explicitly, is the community at large. This community can involve friends, members of a church, the local citizenry, the country or the world as a whole. The issue of friends often walks hand in hand with issues of family, when it came to the discussion of funeral arrangements.

Beyond the people we call friends, others in the larger community are often considered. Issues concerning space, environment, and pollution are ones that affect the community as a whole, not only the deceased. A university professor, Jon, explained that he considers ecological reasons as a factor in disposition so as, "not to take up space and
to integrate into the earth." Among the people I interviewed, there was a feeling that
cemetery space is decreasing, that populations are increasing, and that land would be
better used by the living. These ideas all speak of a willingness to consider the condition
of the community after the informant's own death. Selfishness would render these issues
meaningless, but a community spirit, one which respects the well being of others, even
unknown others, after death is apparent. Wendy expressed this notion poignantly:

I think it is better to reduce the body to the smallest form you can, because there are so many
people here on earth. And I know we have wide open spaces in Montana so it's hard to think
about that, but at the same time taking up land for a cemetery seems so pointless to me. And I
think cemeteries, back when they were originally started, were a good idea. People go in there and
have picnics where their loved one was buried, but it's not like that any more.

Another issue aimed at the larger community is body donation. Three informants
wished to donate their bodies to science, one to a medical school and two to physical
anthropology. This desire to be useful after death also points to a desire to benefit the
larger community. Whether it is for students and learning, or for transplants and saving
lives, donation of one's body is a selfless, foresighted ambition that indicates reverence to
the community through the usefulness of one's body after death. Cremation shows a
regard for the community through the ideas of taking up less space, producing less
pollution (once mentioned but never as a motivational factor), and regard for land use by
the living. Other decisions in death, such as donation, further this notion of community
consideration. People are not solely "individualistic" in death and show how much we do
consider our relationships.

Although independent/interdependent or individuated/unindividuated dichotomies are helpful in
grasping primary orientations, certainly elements of both these polarities are expressed by selves
in a variety of cultural contexts. Furthermore, the experience of selfhood may not be fixed against
shifting contexts even within a particular culture (Becker 1995:3).

We see both the individualistic side of decision making, and the interdependent side,
through the discussion of body disposition in Missoula County.
Conclusion

The decision on what to do with the body after death is a complex meditation in considerations and relationships. I constructed two main categories to discuss the many aspects of life that are meditated upon in bodily disposition choice: individual and social and cultural setting. The category of the individual consisted of the body and the soul. The social and cultural settings these individuals relate to were expressed through the discussion of the family and community.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the decision to cremate is not solely based upon the positivistic characteristics mentioned in the background literature and tested in my statistical analysis. Instead, a complex web of experience and expectation mixed with respect and reverence, all combine to formulate the attitudes surrounding bodily disposition. How these contradictory attitudes will eventually manifest themselves, I feel, is unpredictable. People make decisions based upon many factors, least of which is not themselves. However, other people not only aid in the decision making, actively or passively, but may ultimately have their wishes carried out, rather than those of the deceased. The often studied paradoxes of American individualism and its struggle with community begin to come forth.

In the interviews I conducted, it was obvious to me that death and dying are meaningful to a person. Although grief and grieving may affect the decision made in the actual event of death, I chose to focus on the living and their ideas to get a perspective on how the notions of the literature play themselves out in a community seeped in cremation. Of those characteristics I tested through statistics, sex, age, region of birth,
occupation, and religious attitude, none fully examined the myriad considerations that my informants alluded to in choosing disposition.

In the end, my question was left unanswered. Why do Missoula residents cremate at three times the national average? I do not know. The interesting mosaic of topics that did surface included the body and soul, family and community, and concepts of self and individualism. It is worthwhile to note that these issues have been extensively treated in academic literature. Researchers are quick to identify the paradoxes and complexities of an individualistic society that relies so heavily on bureaucracy and patriotism (Bellah et al 1995). Agency is seen to be natural in an individual, however bureaucracy and nationalism place the agent in a normative structure, removing agency and rewarding conformity. It may just be that the rescinding of agency willfully in disposition decision by an individual is the ultimate act of community, and under the guise of the Western individualist philosophy, the ultimate acceptance of death. If to be a self is to be an agent, a resistance to the paradigm through transference of agency to a larger social arena is, in my opinion, the ultimate acceptance of death. One ceases to exist as they renounce their necessity to decide for themselves.

My study shows that these researchers are not pursuing the topic of the contradiction in individualism in vain. My informants demonstrated the difficulties of an individual/relational American in times of death. They were, in some cases, explicitly aware of their internal contradictions and the fluidity and transformation of their ideas through time.
Chapter 4:

Theoretical Framework and Conclusion
The questions addressed in this chapter are twofold. First, how does the literature reviewing the positivistic characteristics of a person likely to cremate so inadequately describe the Montana data set I tested statistically? Also, why did personal histories and relationships rise to the forefront of the motivational factors in choosing cremation in interviews but were neglected in the background research? To explain these questions, I address a notion prevalent in Western culture and theory, that of the individual.

The individualism often used to characterize Americans is a folk model characteristic of Western thought (Becker 1995:3). The term 'individual' is often thought to denote a person of egocentric motivation, one singular in thought and action.

We [Americans] believe in the dignity, indeed the sacredness of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacreligious (Bellah et al. 1985:142).

However, this notion of individualism is used to describe people so interwoven in a complexity of relationships and interactions, that life (or death) decisions are made in full consideration of them. Bellah, et al., details in *Habits of the Heart* (1985) the tensions and paradoxes that accompany the individual as it relates to the larger group in America. This relation of the individual to others is the direction my data led me in the analysis of cremation choice in Missoula County.

Hérve Varenne, author of *Americans Together* (1977), asserts that Americans are almost excessively individualistic. However, he acknowledges the key point that is reflected in my data, the notion of the individual as a relational being.

... individualism could be understood only *in the context of* their involvement with different groups of relatives or friends, different "communities." I will argue that any understanding of American culture must proceed from such a contextualization of individualism and, of course, also of conformism. The individualism of America is but one pole in a complex structure, a piece of the whole. It consists of an emphasis on the material and spiritual welfare of the individual as the constitutive element of society. But if there are no societies outside the individuals who participate in them, neither are there individuals outside of societies. This is a philosophic point, of course (though one that seems of more significance to American than European philosophers),
but is also one that structures the commonsense perceptions of the world held by my informants (emphasis original) (Varenne 1977:40).

The qualitative data I collected regarding cremation demonstrated the paradoxes and contradictions that arise when an individual wrestles with the relational self. When raised to make decisions as an autonomous agent, one eventually realizes that they live in a society. Sometimes the needs of the self vary from the needs of the society, and conflict arises. This is demonstrated in disposition studies. There is much literature on the topic of individualism and its problems in the fields of sociology and anthropology (see Bellah, et al. 1985). Short of summarizing the data on this subject, I wish to state the basic idea that my data resonates with the problems of American individualism. A person constructs his/herself as an individual while negotiating through a set of relations that have their own manner of perceiving the individual. This latter point I would like to further address

Marilyn Strathern, in *The Gender of the Gift* (1988), described the theory of individuality. She argued that in Western culture we view individuals as *single authors*, or bounded selves. These bounded selves are seen as making and acting upon decisions only in regards to the self. Using Melanesian gift exchange as her example, Strathern demonstrated how the self is not singular at all, but multiple and relational. She stated, "Persons and agents ... occupy positions defined by different vantage points. The one and the same figure is both an object of the regard of others (a person) and one who takes action as him or herself on behalf of these others (an agent)" (Strathern 1988:273-274).

This statement fits well with the ideas of Chapter Three. A person is regarded by others and therefore has to consider the family and community, while they are also an agent and must review their own feelings of body and soul. In making decisions, such as
what to do with their body after death, a person not only takes into account his or her own
wishes, but the effects of their actions upon, and the perceptions of, others. The
misperception of a person's egocentrism and isolation in action leads Jupp, and other
researchers, to search for surface personal profiles as causes for cremation. Strathern
notes this misconception stating:

Causes are single points of reference for the agent who is a pivot, an elbow combining within him
or herself multiple perspectives. But the agent reduces that multiplicity to a unity in the actions
she or he takes. Thus the agent is revealed as a single conduit, the one of a pair to whom action is

In this way, the act of cremating is misinterpreted as being the result of uncontradictory
factors. I have demonstrated in the previous chapter how many influences, sometimes
contradictory in nature, actually are present. The resulting action, although singular, has
its origin in multiplicity. Through this decision, a person determines who he or she is in
relationship to the body, soul, family, and community. By acknowledging the resistance
to a hegemony of individualism, I feel my informants are accepting a symbolic death.
That they give up agency, or that which in present Western philosophy makes a person,
means they give up life or better, they accept death.

Using text from an interview with Julia, I again demonstrate the relationships of
the individual to the social and cultural setting. Speaking about the body and the soul,
Julia stated, "So, it's like, who cares what happens to the body? The soul is going to live
on and so, why not be cremated . . . I have a donors card, I don't care if they tear up my
body, or whatever, and then cremation afterwards." She adds, "I don't believe in heaven
or hell or reincarnation, or whatever, so what happens to my body doesn't matter."

Regarding the family Julia said, " . . . I came from such a dysfunctional
background, I would do anything to not be like my parents. And if they were redneck,
right-wing Republicans, I'd be a left-wing liberal Democrat, which I am." Later Julia adds, "I'm the black sheep of the family, and maybe that's why I chose [cremation], come to think of it." Julia related how her notions of the body and soul, and her familial dysfunction colored her opinion on disposition choice.

Julia also articulated her relationship to the Missoula community. "I can see where at some point it [cremation] could become a community concern because of over population. My husband and I decided thirty years ago we'd only have two kids for zero population growth." What Julia alluded to is a desire to help the larger community by deciding a way to limit the resources she will use through cremation and zero population growth.

Through the use of just one interview, the categories I constructed begin to describe the complex web of relations that affect decisions, even for the end of life. Julia is a middle-aged woman with twenty-eight years in Missoula. She is low-income, living off of welfare and disability money from the government. She is a member of a church that allows for cremation. Given these characteristics, I statistically have shown I could not predict whether or not she would cremate. However, when she spoke of her attitudes on the soul, body, family, and community, I saw how her decision to cremate was based upon many considerations. All of these considerations together formed a good, solid basis for Julia to choose cremation. Separately each only produced a thin, flimsy piece of the larger puzzle.

What is lacking in the background literature on the subject of cremation in particular and bodily disposition in general is the extension of the self into the realm of external interactions. As Varenne (1977) noted, the issue of the differentiated self cannot
be held, philosophically, without regard for the community. This point, he says, is often more addressed in America than in Europe. Without consideration for the family and community, the academic works on bodily disposition are missing half the story. It is not just the individual who makes a decision to cremate or not, it is their life experiences, their family relations, their sense of obligation to the body and soul, and their perception of the state of the world surrounding them. All these things help to render a decision. However, as Strathern notes, only one choice can ultimately be made so the self looks to be acting in unison and without contradiction. Only through speaking with the living did I realize that death is not a solitary moment but one filled with hopes and desires, and most of all, with other people. Although people in Missoula are individuals, they do consider the desires, feelings, and love they have of others.

Conclusion

The totality of this work on bodily disposition in Missoula, Montana was an exercise in anthropological inquiry. I asked the question, why do Missoula County residents cremate at such a high rate? I never did answer that question. However, the data I collected revealed something broader. American individualism and its inherent contradictions, as expressed by Bellah, et al. (1985), are definitely apparent in disposition choice. Although I only gave a gloss overview of the literature on this subject, being much too cumbersome for this inquiry, future studies may warrant a closer review.

In the first chapter, I reviewed the literature and thoughts surrounding disposition. I traced the history of the rise of cremation from prehistoric times to the present. I acknowledge the ideas prevalent regarding the motivating factors in choosing cremation.
With these factors, I devised a data set from the Missoulian newspaper of Missoula, Montana to see if these categories held sway in a county with high rates of cremation.

Chapter Two set forth the qualitative techniques I used and the qualitative data set I constructed. I quantitatively tested the statistical data and reviewed the results. I concluded that the patterns in bodily disposition discussed in the background literature review did not emerge from my data set. This sent me to qualitatively research this question to seek a pattern.

In the third chapter, the qualitative data I collected was described and analyzed. I constructed two categories, those of the individual and the social and cultural setting, to describe the richness of responses I received in talking about death. Body, soul, family, and community were the subcategories I used to describe the fullness of the accounts I received, and to refute the 'monolithic' description of the individual in the literature review. I concluded that the individual also acts grounded in "a social milieu" (Becker 1995:2). Chapter Four wove together this qualitative data and theories already established in anthropology including the work of Varenne (1977), Bellah, et al. (1985), and Becker (1995) on American 'individualism,' and Strathern (1988) on multiple selves. My inquiry regarding bodily disposition in western Montana demonstrated the paradoxes of individualism discussed in many anthropological and sociological studies. Although we are culturally constructed in America as individuals, we are not simply autonomous.

We are someone's friend, or daughter, or colleague, or foe, or acquaintance. When decisions are made, the whole self (the friend, daughter, colleague, etc.) determines who it wants to be in relation to all of those categories. We are not one
person, a bounded self, but are many. This notion is expressed lyrically in a quote by Robert Louis Stevenson from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to the truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens (Stevens 1967:68).

The "multifarious, incongruous, and independent denizens" Stevenson believed were forthcoming have been revealed in western Montana. Just ask someone what they plan on doing with their body after they die.
Endnotes
Chapter 1: Endnotes

1 The Pacific states (Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii, and Alaska) averaged a 49.4% rate of cremation. Hawaii had the highest rate at 56%, while the lowest was Mississippi at 3%.

2 Such information includes the derivation of the word funeral, which comes from a Sanskrit work of northern India which means 'smoke' (Carlson 1987:24). Also, the Bible, passage I Samuel 31 reports the cremation of Saul (ibid).

3 A columbarium is an arrangement of niches, or small cubicles for urn placement. A columbarium can be a whole building, a room, or part of an outdoor area.

4 An alternative container is an inexpensive box made of cardboard or wood used to transport the body and burned with the body in the cremation retort.

5 Memorialization patterns in traditional burials must also be analyze to give a definitive answer to this question.

6 The reasons for this I cannot even begin to hypothesize, and would make an interesting topic for another project.

I had two deaths of infants in my life, and when I was here in Missoula, I have 5 kids, so I can't complain, but my neighbor across the street invited me over to a bridge party, to get me away from my thoughts. And I appreciated her, just because she was being loving, and she was trying to help me, but it was just shocking to me, for one thing I'm not a bridge player. I just hadn't been allowed to grieve at all, and my husband and I haven't really dealt with that at all, I, um, thought that it was a kind of trauma that happened to our family that didn't really resolve.

Chapter 2: Endnotes

1 Informants words for what I call 'soul' varied. Some examples were soul, spirit, that which is me, the essence of me, and self. I simplified these ideas by using the term soul, which I feel describes the transcendental implications of this concept.


Chapter 3: Endnotes

1 An indigent burial is a burial funded by the local government because no next of kin were located or claimed responsibility for the deceased.

2 A retort is another name for a crematory, or place in which bodies are cremated.

3 All informant names have been changed to protect their anonymity.

4 When I asked about ages, the informants either avoided the question, or made quips about it. "At my age, honey, you stop counting," one woman said. Therefore, the ages given are approximations I made.

5 Interestingly, both Jonas and Dana discussed science in their explanation of spirit. Given that the non-Christian informants were younger than those who were Christian by a minimum of 19 years, does this say something about the change of the American mindset from faith to rationalism?

6 This was the most emotional topic I covered in my questions. Many people spoke of very difficult deaths they have experienced in life, and also the possibility of death of loved ones.
Appendix
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Require</th>
<th>Buddhism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Spiritualists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churches of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregational Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episcopal Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jehovah's Witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judaism (Reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moravian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unitarian/Universalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Armenian Orthodox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mormons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plymouth Brethren</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russian Orthodox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disallow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free Presbyterian Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Orthodox/Conservative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shintoism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoroastrianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
</tr>
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*This table is a reproduction (Iserson 1994:274).*
Table 2.1  
Total Variance Explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total Eigenvalue</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.412</td>
<td>23.530</td>
<td>23.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.205</td>
<td>20.084</td>
<td>43.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>18.016</td>
<td>61.629</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2 Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>-.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cremate</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>2.279E-02</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>2.361E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.476</td>
<td>.661</td>
<td>5.463E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region at birth</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>-5.985E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.3 Classification Results for Discriminant Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group Membership</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th>Total Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By number of cases</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By percentage of cases</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58.4% of the total original grouped cases correctly classified.
Table 2.4  Reverse Attitude * Cremate Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Attitude</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>Cremation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral or Allowed</strong></td>
<td>85 (61%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discouraged or Forbidden</strong></td>
<td>31 (79%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 1.1

Cremation Statistics 1998
Questionnaire 1: Citizens

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Place of Birth
5. Years in Missoula
6. Family? Where?
7. Profession
8. Do you like Missoula? Why?
9. Do you enjoy outdoor activities? Which? How important are they to you?
10. Are you involved in any organizations?

YOURSELF

11. Do you practice a religion?
12. When does one become a member of the church? Baptism, communion?
13. What are your religious views on death? Are your personal views any different?
14. Would you prefer cremation or burial?
15. What ritual do you intend to have at death and who will be involved?
16. What happens at death? To the soul?

FAMILY

17. Has anyone in your family been cremated?
18. What relation?
19. Who decided the method of disposition?
20. How was this decision accepted by family, religion, community?

GENERAL

21. How do you think Americans view death? Other countries?
22. How do you think Montanans view death? Is it any different than other places in the country?
Questionnaire 2: Funeral Directors

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Religion:
5. Family:
6. Place of birth:
7. Length of time in Missoula:
8. What type of training do you have? Regarding cremation?
9. In your professional opinion, how often do people choose cremation?
10. What is the cost of cremation compared to burial?
11. What process do people go through when they decide to cremate?
12. Who chooses cremation most often, the deceased or other?
13. How would you characterize the people that most often cremate: young/old, male, female, ethnic group, long/short term residents, education?
14. What do people most frequently do with cremains?
15. In your career, have you seen any changes in cremation or burial practices of frequencies?
16. Do cremation rates vary by region? If so, how?
17. Why do you think there is variation from place to place?
18. What do you think are influencing factors in choosing cremation?
19. Why are these factors important?
20. Do religious considerations play a part in disposition choice?
21. Do you know any of the history of cremation in MT? Missoula?
22. What are you planning on doing with your body at death?
23. Have you made arrangements?
24. What factors do you consider important in making your decision?
25. What are some main points I should address with the question, why do MSLAs cremate? Anyone special you think I should talk to?
Questionnaire 3: Clergy

23. How is the structure of your church organized?
24. When and how does someone become a member of the church?
25. About how many people are members of your church?
26. How many people regularly attend services, of those members?
27. How would you characterize Missoula in regards to religiosity?
28. Have you ministered elsewhere in the country?
29. How does Missoula compare to those other places?
30. What is the history of cremation within your church? Has it always been allowed? If not, why? When was it allowed?
31. What are your religion's views on death?
32. What happens at death to the soul?
33. Is burial or cremation the preferred method of disposition for your religion?
34. Have you seen any changes in the frequency of cremation throughout the course of your ministry?
35. What ritual does your church perform for the deceased, funeral, graveside, last rites?
36. May cremains be present during these rituals?
37. Do you have any insight as to why Missoulians are 3 times as likely as the average Americans to cremate?
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