A RHETORICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN REMAINS DISPLAY IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS: AN ECOTRIANGLE OF PUBLICS, OBJECTS, AND PLACE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major Program:
Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture

November 2021

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this ***disquisition*** complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This research approaches archaeological human remains in museum collections from a rhetorical perspective. Instead of joining the body of scholarship in museum studies that focuses on the process of curatorial interpretation, this project applies public memory studies to explore what happens to curatorial interpretation when it goes out into the world and is taken up in public circulated discourse. With a focus on publics, the moment of knowledge construction when visitors approach a display of human remains in a museum is captured and analyzed through the lenses of new materialism, rhetoric in situ, and public memory studies. Each lens represents the chosen approach to each of the three elements that converge at the moment of knowledge construction – publics, objects, and place – which are grouped together as a triangle of interrelated dynamics all working in a situationally-contingent rhetorical ecology of other factors and influences. Thus, the dynamic inseparable trio of publics, objects, and place are coined the "ecotriangle." For museum studies, rhetoric's foundational work can provide critical perspective into the nature of communication and meaning-making that happens when publics meet human remains in a museum space. In order to explore the ecotriangular relationship of publics, objects, and place with an interdisciplinary approach, this project begins by interrogating the implicit assumptions within the defitions of terms like "public" and "object" then develops collaborative definitions from the scholarship in rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies. The particular case of human remains challenges most scholarships' definitions of object. Yet as this research reveals, human remains as case study help develop and refine the approach to objects, materiality, interpretation, and museum display when challenged to inclusively frame such a case instead of treat human remains as an exception or outlier to scholarship on objects. Exploring the ecotriangle as a heuristic model for conceptualization of interrelational dynamics in knowledge

construction extends current scholarship in rhetoric, especially rhetoric in situ and rhetorical ecology, and also reinforces existing interdisciplinary bridges between the fields of rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies.

CONTENT WARNING: THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS DISCUSSION AND IMAGES OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is humbling to find out how many people rally to your call and you realize that you walk amongst greatness and call them friends.

To my Committee – Mary McCall, Emily Wicktor, Richard Rothaus, Bradley Benton, and program director Adam Goldwyn –Thank you for your guidance and services over these years listening to me talk about gruesome stuff of nightmares.

To Jelena Bekvalac and Hedley Swain – two greats in their field whom I knew only by being a fangirl of their work from afar but who responded to my cold-calls and offered their wisdom and insight for this project.

To my advisors past who have taken that mantle to mean a pact for life that does not end with the program or degree: Mary Beaudry, Tim Schadla-Hall, and Dean Sully.

To Tim Schadla-Hall – an advisor-turned-mentor who has never stopped being an active inspirational part of my life, career, academic journey, and a beloved friend.

To W. Raymond Wood – who thought this PhD in rhetoric was a good idea when few others in archaeology did. You have been here since the beginning at my first field project at Fort Clark back in another century. I am grateful for over 20 years of friendship and wisdom shared with me and wish you could be here to see me see it through. Map it. Pull it.

To Mary Beaudry – I was there in her hard times and she stepped up for mine. Her advisory style was to treat me like a respected colleague and salty old friend who could take harsh truths so long as they came with a fine Orkney scotch to help it all go down. I valued her input as I shaped this research and now I miss her voice but can hear it in the publications I continue to turn to.

DEDICATION

To my mom: who made it happen with her support, coffee deliveries, grandma sleepover nights, and reminding me of who I already was before I started.

To those who supported me in the journey but left this mortal coil before it was done – Ray Wood, Mary Beaudry, and my father Jack Watts – your marks fixed indelibly on my life and this work.

To my rain-or-shine-or-hurricane friends – Amanda Joy, Krista, Hannah, Becky, Mike, Camille, and Ben – the tacos, curated memes, and generosity with peer reviews kept me moving forward.

To Omar Sultan – Your Excellency, you trusted me to be by your side to argue with ministry diplomats, dine with presidents, and when a lute can be found in Kabul. It seems I don't usually have to do much to make you proud, which only makes me more dedicated to the task.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO PUBLICS, OBJECTS, AND PLACE

Walking into a museum can be a special experience where visitors connect with objects from the past. In a case where human remains are on display, this meeting amplifies the human connection. Early in my archaeology career while working in Egypt for the first time, I took my day off from excavating on the Giza Plateau to visit the Cairo museum (National Museum of Egyptian Civilization). I had heard about the Royal Mummy Hall and was excited to see the famous pharaohs on display. Crowds of foreign tourists and boisterous Egyptian school children filled the main galleries of the museum, which made the reverent silence observed by visitors in the mummy room so striking. As I approached the mummy of pharaoh Rameses II, I felt a mix of excitement to meet a historical figure of such significance, professional curiosity for the mummification techniques, and a respectful deference to the noble stature whose features were preserved so recognizably on his face. The mixture of emotions and thoughts blurred the lines between object and person. For museum professionals, encouraging engagement means understanding what makes some museum experiences so special. The experience happens in the moment of convergence between people and historic objects in the museum space. For rhetoricians, this convergence represents acts of meaning-making and communication. While public communication, meaning-making, memory, and museums are represented individually in scholarship within rhetoric, the question of "what about human remains?" has not been fully explored. For museum studies, rhetoric's foundational work can provide critical perspective into the nature of communication and meaning-making that happens when the public meets objects in a museum space.

This research approaches archaeological human remains in museum collections from a rhetorical perspective. Through public memory studies, new materialism, and rhetoric *in situ*,

rhetorical scholarship offers insight into ambiguities and assumptions inherent in the interpretation and display of human remains. Reciprocally, case studies from archaeology offer rhetoric a novel territory for exploration, shared methods, and perspectives. This project is situated in rhetorical scholarship though the work aims to resonate with archaeological and museum scholarship. This project intends to be one small example of how a relationship between the disciplines can continue to grow through interconnected scholarship.

Best practice for human remains display continuously progresses as more institutions develop new exhibits and each is in turn critiqued or modeled. Such methods of growth through collective experience create a wonderful reference base but may overlook opportunities to interrogate the assumptions made when displays are marked as "good" or "bad" examples of ethical best practice. This dissertation steps back from the ethical conversations to explicate some of the underlying assumptions about how bodies are approached in the museum context. As an initial foray into approaching human remains from a rhetorical perspective, this research focuses on the relationship between human remains and a sense of place that can be achieved through interpretive display. By focusing on the rhetorical construction of this relationship in the models chosen for case studies, there is an opportunity to recognize and articulate some of the implicit assumptions or choices being made in that construction of knowledge.

Interdisciplinary scholarship has the strength of bringing novel perspectives to a mutually interesting topic yet also brings with it complications when shared lexical terms have discipline-specific nuances to their meanings. Before delving into the analysis, preperatory rhetorical work is needed for basic terms required for this research to bring them into interdisciplinary stasis. For example, even at the most general introduction to this research, the terms "place" and "object" at first seem innocuously straightforward, belying tacit ambiguities within and between the

disciplines of rhetoric, museum studies, and archaeology. In archaeology, place means the original burial environment where the objects are archaeologically excavated in context. In museum studies, place also means the museum space where the visiting public interface with the objects on display. In both archaeology and museums, human remains are part of collections, given object numbers, and function as research and display components like other objects. However, human remains are are not "made" or "used" by the source culture like other objects that fit disciplinary definitions of objects (Caple 2-5) – are they called objects because there simply isn't a better term to use? In archaeology and museums, functionally-developed terminology refers to human remains as objects in the collection while they do not meet the definition of object in either of those fields. Such issues raise questions about how to approach even talking about human remains in museum collections are important as part of the investigation into tacit assumptions on the subject. Rather than introduce new language, this research takes time to connect parallels and build upon the commonly used terms already in circulation across the relevant disciplines. Once enough working language has been established, the relationship between human remains and place in public memory can be explored. The questions posed are:

- What does it mean to understand archaeological human remains as "objects"?
- How can an analysis of human remains contribute to scholarship in rhetoric about public memory in museums and places of public memory? What is the relationship between the concept of "place" and human remains?
- How can scholarship on place in rhetoric inform and/or contextualize the approach to interpretation of archaeological human remains in museum display? How can this

relationship be expressed to the public through archaeological and museum interpretation?

Relationships are at the core of these questions. Before the relationship between publics, objects, and place can be explored, there is work to be done comparing disciplinary definitions and uses to come to a joint consensus on the meaning of public, objects, and place. Human remains are simultaneously archaeological material objects and also represent a human life with thoughts, ideas, and cultural values because they once were a living human. This post-human status complicates the meaning-making process because there is always a sense that there is an important voice absent from the process if the remains themselves are not part of that equation. The remains are removed from one place, the archaeological site, and moved to another place, the museum, which complicates the nature of place in this relationship through the act of displacement. Using scholarship from the disciplines of archaeology, museum studies, and rhetoric that address the loci of publics, objects, and place individually, this project will approach the triangular relationship between publics, objects, and place within the specific rhetorical ecology of an exhibition (see Figure 1). As a shorthand, the term "ecotriangle" is used to refer to the triangular relationship between publics, objects, and place within a given rhetorical ecology.

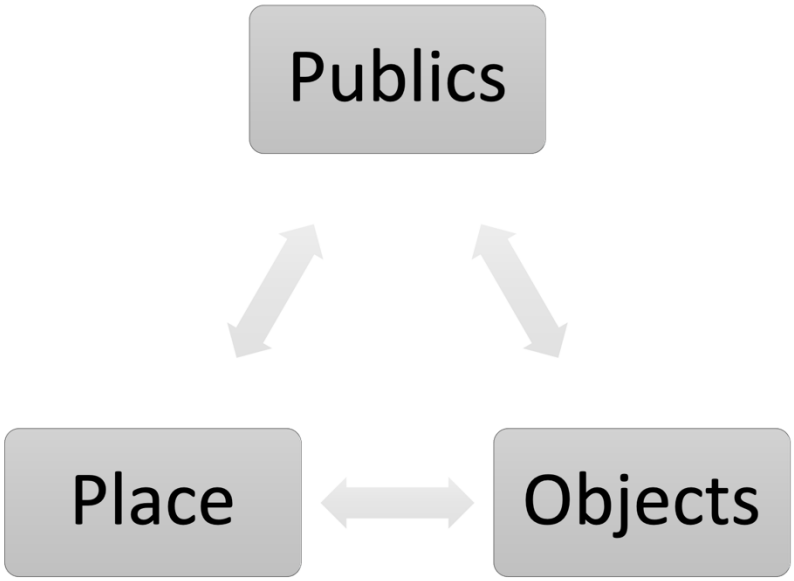

Figure 1: The ecotriangle: conceptualizing the interrelation of publics, objects, and place.

The ecotriangle representatively abbreviates the bundled interdisciplinary understanding developed herein of publics, objects, and place in a dyanic relationship along with the context in which the ecotriangle is situated. Theories and concepts on public memory, new materialism, and rhetoric *in situ* fill in a semblance of organized structure to the shape by explicating relationship connections. The ecotriangle also brings movement and flux to the nodes, their relationships, and external factors contextualizing the relationships. The ecotriangle bonds the three nodes of publics, objects, and place in an inseparable-yet-fluid relationship and positions it in an equally-fluctuating environment populated by the other factors that act on the relationship.

Both rhetoric and archaeology have investment in understanding the relationship, tensions, and interplay of publics, place, and material objects. This research brings together a body of scholarship that connects segments of the ecotriangle to see what each can offer to the whole system of the three nodes at once (see Figure 1). Treating all three as a relational ecotriangle expresses their interrelated contingent bond by considering how the third affects the other two when it is not explicitly expressed, or as one of the case studies demonstrates, not

physically present. This research pools lenses to piece together connections between all three nodes, then looks at what happens when one node is removed. The ecotriangle endures. One chosen case study argues that even when one node is not explicitly present it is still exerting forces on the other two nodes, proving their inextricable entanglement.

As demonstrated in the body of scholarship from rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies, the relationships between publics and place or objects and place are of overlapping interest. Rather than considering each element independently, the ecotriangle productively fuses the interdisciplinary scholarship to assert that publics, objects, and place behave more as three forces enmeshed in a contingent relationship. Museum studies would benefit from a deep rhetorical exploration of place in human remains interpretation that borrows from archaeology's work on context-reliant analysis. Yet further, museum displays imply a public audience, so who is the public and how are they part of this relationship? Taken together, the existing scholarship already hints at a connection of all three.

Once the interdisciplinary connotations and denotations of some foundational vocabulary have been meliorated, those terms are employed to explore the research questions through two chosen case studies. Grounded in real instances of human remains display, case study analyses test the application of the terminology developed herein and provide a productive aproach to the relational dynamics as curatorial interpretations are taken up by the public. The case study method also allows for a reflective analysis of the relationship between curatorial intentions of official institutional interpretation and the vernacular responses to the display by the public, closing the disconnect between ideal goals and actual outcomes. The comparison between official and vernacular forms of discourse in the meaning-making process expresses the

relationship and may provide insight into the nature of the public as an active contributing force to objects and place.

An ideal case study would offer practical demonstration of the relationship of publics, objects, and place. The use of museum exhibitions for case studies supports the focus on public engagement in a foundational capacity. Since exhibition interpretation scholarship values those same ecotriangular forces, this work directly supports existing scholarship to develop how exhibitions can engage in exciting, innovative ways. The inspiration for these research questions began with a memorable exhibition experience when I visited the galleries of The Wellcome Collection in 2008. The Wellcome Collection in London brought archaeological place into the museum when interpreting human remains in the 2008 exhibition, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones," which will serve as the basis of the first case study.

For the second case study, select episodes from a documentary series, *Medieval Dead*, highlight human remains through battlefield archaeology investigations, productively challenging the developing language for an "exhibition." The choice of a documentary series represents an encapsulated exhibition and an ongoing public experience that exceeds the geographic boundaries of the institution, while narrowing to the 45-minute broadcast session as a microcosm of exhibition. A documentary also broadens the concept of a public exhibition to include an international audience with asynchronous experiences. This case study allows for focused analysis of the curatorial choices in presenting the human remains since there is only one view presented that is limited by the medium of film. In this case, the curatorial choices are fixed which provides a consistent public engagement experience, allowing this research to narrow in on the relationship between curatorial choices and the public display.

This research intends to invigorate conversations about human remains in museum collections by offering a unique interdisciplinary approach to the tacit assumptions applied to their display and interpretation. The intent is to contribute to scholarship through exploration of a topic that requires a complex and nuanced approach where additional tools to articulate layered meanings are necessary for refining best practice standards. Human remains will always be part of the archaeological record and thus be a part of museum collections, though they do not neatly fit any current categorization. Best practice can only benefit from developing and refining an articulate approach to interpretation, which can begin with interdisciplinary queries such as this.

Common Ground Between Ethics and Rhetoric

Before the relationship between publics, objects, and place can be explored, each must be understood within the framework of this research. As such, the literature review works to define and situate each of these three anchor concepts within an interdisciplinary convergence of rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies. Starting with the node of publics, a definition of both "public" and "rhetoric" from rhetoric scholarship establish a baseline upon which scholarship from archaeology on can be situated. Public archaeology is a specialism that represents a fairly recent turn toward public engagement in archaeology which helps to further contextualize the importance of public rhetoric scholarship in current archaeological conversations. Next, scholarship from rhetoric and archaeology work together to reconcile using the term "object" to describe human remains in museum collections. The main ethical conversations in archaeology and museum practice are highlighted in the discussion of objects to summarize how human remains are being addressed in disciplinary scholarship. Further, ethical questions present an opportunity to establish how these debates could benefit from stepping back to better identify tacit assumptions about the nature of human remains in museum collections as well as the

importance of place. Ethical conversations on human remains display from museum studies are presented to situate this research as operating outside of these debates while still serving the major overarching issues, specifically place, displacement, object agency, and consent. As the exploration of publics and objects develop, place is central to understanding both. Place has disparate definitions amongst the scholarship of museum studies, rhetoric, and archaeology with the closest convergence developing between rhetoric *in situ* and archaeology which in turn offers a productive way to revisit the concept of place in museum studies.

As part of developing interdisciplinary definitions to approach the case studies for the benefit of archaeology and museum practice, this work also considers how studying human remains offers new realm of inquiry for rhetorical scholarship and gives back to the applied rhetorical lenses through this interdisciplinary work. A rhetorical approach to human remains may clarify foundational assumptions in the overarching ethical discussions through enhanced understanding of the meaning-making process and the relationship between publics, objects, and place. The disciplinary threads are introduced as they are woven together so that by the end of this chapter, archaeologists and rhetoricians alike will find the methodology and research legible in its blended approach.

A note at this point, that it may appear much more streamlined to connect rhetoric with museum studies and omit archaeological scholarship as an unnecessary addition to the discussion of human remains in museum display, which I would strongly argue against. The through-point that connects remains to place and continues to be responsible for the remains becoming objects in museum collections is the discipline of archaeology, thus inseparable from the relationship. Archaeology discovers, interprets, and continues to be a stakeholder in the human remains that move from excavations to museum collections (Watts). Archaeology is inextricably fused to any

understanding of the remains as well as any study of relationships that include those remains. Since deep interdisciplinary ties already exist between archaeology and museums studies, as well as developing ties between archaeology and rhetoric, archaeology keys into the interdisciplinary project with museum studies and rhetoric as essential for establishing the language to approach human remains herein.

Before exploring the value of rhetoric to the fields of archaeology and museum studies on the matter of human remains, it is important to first establish the need for such outside lenses which are evident in the ethical debates surrounding human remains in museum collections. From the following summary of the major ethical debates, issues of mutual interest with rhetorical scholarship are evident, including public memory, object agency, place and displacement. While this research does not comment directly on these ethical discussions, the pre-ethical foundation that is developed in this research has the potential to provide a heuristic for understanding the basic elements and interactions upon which the ethical conversations operate.

Place and displacement are a central theme in ethical scholarship on human remains. The largest body of scholarly debates about human remains center around the ethics of study and display of indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand, and the Americas that are housed in collections around the world displaced from their country or culture of origin (Day; Marselis; Overholtzer and Argueta; Paul; Simpson). While these types of collections must focus attention on issues of colonialism in their collections, these considerations do not necessarily apply to all collections in the same way. For example, remains that stay local in a heritage museum or within some determined borders of a place may still have layers of colonialism and displacement built by the history of that place. This complication of place can be seen in all of the case study places

where there is a tension that both unifies people who share a place but also divides them through the layers of colonialism, oppression, and displacement that have shaped that place. From a rhetorical perspective, these ethical considerations of foreign institutions, repatriation, and turbulent local histories have a strong relationship to the importance of a sense of original place, displacement, and belonging that are a focus of public memory studies.

While indigenous peoples and postcolonial ethical conversations do not necessarily apply to all types of collections, these discourses highlight a central concern of place. Even with the example of the Museum of London's collection of archaeologically-excavated remains from within the city, the act of excavation is an act of displacement from the burial environment. Public sentiment on the importance of place is central to public perception and support – central to many concurrent social issues – which all in turn have an impact on the public discourse interpretation of museum displays. Places of origin and displacement are the mean, median, and mode issues in this largest ethical debate surrounding human remains (Mullins; Paul; Jones and Whitaker; Chippendale). As such, the removal from original place applies to all archaeologically-excavated human remains in museum collections to some degree. Thus, while cultural or social issues may differ in the overarching ethical debates, the sense of place is important for all displaced remains, which adds value and urgency to establish relationships with *in situ* archaeological context and maintaining a sense of place for displaced remains through interpretation.

The second major focus of debate in ethics of human remains display is that of time – how old or recent is ethically acceptable for human remains display. As Swain points out, "ancient" is an easy category for a collection in this regard which is strongly associated with archaeological finds (95). But where is the dividing mark on that thread when it reaches closer to

the present? Medical research collections, both modern and historic, are often the focus of this debate, though entertainment exhibitions like "Body Worlds" in recent decades have been central to these ethical conversations as well (Barilan; Gorsevsky et al; Komori). As human remains ethics has experienced first-hand, time is measured more by sense of feeling than any other factor in public memory (Zelizer). Casual acquisition of recently-deceased remains for research collections has exploded controversy and public abhorrence, such as the past three decades of acknowledging and returning the children's remains from the Alder Hey hospital research in the UK (Swain). In May of 2021, The Penn Museum in Philadelphia, USA, issued a series of apologies to the city, the African American community, and families of the deceased when it came to public attention that the museum has kept remains from the 1985 MOVE house fire in their collection for research ("Towards a Respectful Resolution"). These modern examples indicate that tensions are connected to living memory in a collective grieving process and outrage surrounding the lack of consent by family members. Public memory via public discourse is at the center of this debate, driving much of the ethical scholarship's understanding for where the line may fall for suitably old or too recent for a given public. Public memory studies offer a valuable resource for understanding how sense of feeling operates as a powerful and dynamic factor in public discourse.

Associated with the element of time, the recently-deceased bring forward ethical conversations on consent, the third major focus of debate in museum studies. In medical collections, and fore-fronted by the Alder Hey hospital and Penn Museum, issues of consent of the person whose remains are in a collection lead debates for these types of collections. Consent is at its core an issue of agency, which is a central question in this research to the nature of human remains as objects with agency from a post-humanist theoretical understanding. While it

is often impossible to know the explicit wishes of the deceased, especially ancient or archaeological finds, there is still a need to acknowledge concerns over dignity and respect of the remains in ethical considerations. Issues of respect and consent denote an under-developed grey area in the scholarship that points toward object agency. In order to refine this area of discussion, post-humanist theories such as new materialism contribute a structure to the approach of object agency.

Museum studies scholarship has active debates on the specific issue of qualifying the ethic of respect into practice with contentious progress. Authors like Tiffany Jenkins work to develop practical standards for an ethic of respect based on her Marxist social and political commentary (*Contesting Human Remains*; "Dead Bodies: The Changing Treatment;" "Who Are We to Decide?"). Jenkins equates "respect" with the objective rejection of sentimental motivations in favor of scientific value, which translates to restricting public access, leading other scholars to call her views "Victorian" in their antiquated rejection of public discourse (O'Neill 361). The debates point to the same factors of publics, sentiment, where Jenkins makes solid points about the power of these factors (Svanberg). Jenkins' analyses of the human remains debates recognize the power of public sentiment but frame it as a value rather than recognizing its role in the larger shape of public discourse.However where ethical debates in museum studies are meandering through polarized opinions conflated with modern socio-political leanings, my research offers the structured approach of established rhetorical concepts to explicate *how* sentiment and discourse influence public disocurse rather than placing judgements on the value of forces within the rhetorical ecology. Rhetoric offers a more refined observational architecture on which these debates can continue with greater capacity to articulate their points.

So much of the language used to discuss human remains is imperfect and vague, a cue that these sophisticated ethical debates are operating out of stasis. Imprecise or under-defined language exacerbates potential miscommunication where scholarly arguments are unable to resolve or even properly articulate complex issues. What does it mean to refer to human remains as objects? How does "respect" mean in the ethical tenants versus in practice? While this project is not contributing directly to any of the ethical debates on human remains in museum collections, the attention to terms in order to communicate the main research agenda can model an approach to resolving stasis discord and communication stalemates.

Attention to language and assumptions in these debates serves to clarify instead of overwrite the approach to human remains in scholarship. Rather than seek to assert changes to practices or prescribe new models, the focus of this research is to explicate current practices in museums and archaeology. Exploring the relationship between human remains display and a sense of place through rhetorical lenses, this research intends to contribute new perspectives to the existing scholarship on display of human remains in archaeology and museum studies.

The Ecotriangle: Publics, Objects, and Place

Conversations surrounding the display of human remains could benefit by stepping back from ethical issues to better understand the processes at work in the rhetorical construction of knowledge when interpreting and displaying human remains in a museum setting. While there exists an understanding of cultural and social contexts as part of the considerations for ethical display, a rhetorical approach to the meaning-making process intends to articulate many of those tacit assumptions related to cultural and social contexts. Since public display invites public discourse, the position of public memory studies can offer insight into how interpretive display choices are taken up by the publics. Equally, the particular case study of human remains display

offers new, or certainly less-trodden, ground for public rhetorics to explore in scholarship on public memory and place in the context of museums.

The ecotriangle is a figurative device that allows scholarship on the independent nodes and segmented connections between publics, objects, and place to merge in an interrelational framework. In this chapter, the nodes of publics, objects, and place are each addressed in turn to develop interdisciplinary definitions and contexts. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks applied in this research are mentioned in basic terms to signpost their connections but will be further developed next in Chapter 2 on methodology. The focus of this section is to establish how publics are plural, human remains can be considered objects, and place is more plastic than implied by its physical materiality.

Public(s)

The word "public" is often used as a fixed noun that does not prompt definition, referring to not-private or, perhaps more often in academic scholarship, not-professional. Warner works to challenge assumptions in the definition of "public" as an idea that is purely a cultural form, "a kind of practical fiction" (Warner 8). In this sense, the public has never nor will ever exist, so addressing the public as a fixed entity of generality is an unproductive way to consider an audience for communication. Yet, the public as a generalized entity is often referred to as who one is or is not writing for as a scholar, researcher, and author. The shortcomings to the reduction of a generalized public, such as the assumption that journalists write for the public while scholars do not, are expressed in extensive scholarship on audience in the field of composition studies (Ede and Lunsford; Long; Smith). Rather, the communicative relationship can be framed that no one is ever really addressing "the public" but rather addressing one or several "publics" that can be sub-defined through commonalities of participation in the varieties of public discourses. As

such, the divide between the scholar and the public dissolves, since the scholar is also a member of many publics, shifting focus from a static constituency to the actual act of participation in discourse.

Dividing the notion of the public – one static entity across time and space – into many publics offers more precise terminology while exploring rhetorical discourses. Museums can understand the public to which they are communicating for a display as those who visit the display or become part of the discourse that circulates about the display. For me and subsequently this research, the two key elements of defining a public are discourse circulation and place. A museum display is read or seen, thus taken up, by a number of people who then talk about the display, share information, re-interpret, revise, reject, or recirculate what they saw and read with other people, which in turn brings in new members to the public of this display as they participate in the discourse. A public doesn't exist until they begin to communicate with one another over a shared experience. Motion and circulation are important, as discourses circulate through groups and as members join or leave a variety of publics based on their participation in the flowing discourse.

While a public is constantly in flux as discourse circulates and members join or fade from participation, there is another element linked to place and experience that cements publics in a more permanent way. An experiential element grounded in a sense place creates a public who share knowledge-through-experience – defined by Rickert as "thereness " – with more definitive boundaries and permanent constituencies ("It is All There"). The power of thereness to develop a strong sense of insiders and outsiders creates a much more distinct boundary between those who share this special knowledge set apart from those who do not, even though the experience required to gain this knowledge depends on sense of feeling steeped in the subjectivity of

memory, which is "characterized by extraordinary partiality" (Dickenson, Blair, and Ott 27). Yet, thereness also has the power to share this bond across time, extending the community feeling across time, rooted in place. Like discourse, thereness requires a participation in the material place or event to warrant constituency. Thereness shares memory's flimsy temporal connection properties, which can also transcend temporal boundaries with weak connections to time, strong connections to place, and cemented by embodied experience (Rice; Warner). The participation requisite emphasizes place, one's embodied presence, and material interaction. While participation in discourse may go dormant through cycles of remembering and forgetting, there is a special degree of endurance in thereness that can be activated through discourse.

Museum visitors are members of many publics and may join a public that is created around the exhibition of a display that grows to spill out of the institution's walls into other streams of discourse. Framing the definition of rhetoric around this emphasis of communication and movement in flux is a powerful tool to understanding the exchange of knowledge as a meaning-making process that reaches beyond the walls of an exhibition or institution and cannot be controlled once it starts to flow. Museum interpretation and curatorial intent do not remain monolithic once publics take them up in their own rhetorical construction of discourse.

While rhetoric is a vast discipline of diverse scholarly endeavors, this paper highlights the concept of rhetoric as the study of that larger ecology in which the objects, interpretations, and public discourses operate. Rhetoric in this work refers to the study of relationships between texts and discourse, the broader network in which communication and cultural material exist. It is traditional to situate one's definition of rhetoric in the classical alignments of Sophists or other fine points of ancient Greek intellectual endeavors, yet for the sake of interdisciplinary clarity, I will swiftly note that much work has been done to move rhetoric from the classical framing to a

broader study of texts and discourses (Bitzer; Bizzel and Herzberg; Dillon; Edbauer; Havelock; Lauer). Bitzer's work was pivotal in directing focus to relationships of context with his work on the study of rhetorical situation. Edbauer moves from discrete categories of rhetorical elements, such as rhetorical situation, to understanding discourse in what she terms a "rhetorical ecology" (9). Edbauer's work broadens the concept of understanding discourse through deeper understanding of context, lived experience, and "public feelings" that can be framed and studied (5). Planting the ecotriangle of publics, objects, and place as operating within a rhetorical ecology is key to this project's view of messy, blurry, overlapping elements at play within a living ecology of rhetorical context in flux. Defining rhetoric in this way offers a braoader inclusive conceptualization for understanding the circulation of discourse surrounding an element, such as a text or object, as well as the processes of rhetorical construction.

The study of public rhetorics – or looking at the rhetorical ecology of discourses as they circulate within, between, and amongst groups – is a fruitful application of interdisciplinary scholarship, especially those disciplines that interface with publics. Museums are built to interface with the public, thus related scholarship into public rhetorics and museums is well established (Ackerman and Coogan; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott; Gallagher and Kalin; Greer and Grobman; Phillips). Since the public "turn" in archaeology is more recent as a pan-disciplinary consideration, there is a great deal of room for growth and exploration for archaeology and public rhetorics. Building bridges of interdisciplinary scholarship for this emerging scholarship in archaeology is timely and beneficial.

Archaeology uses the term "public" in many of its foundational ethical remits to provide public access, public education, with even a specialism of public archaeology that focuses on communication and interpretation of archaeology for the public. Yet, for all of the uses of the

word “public,” defining, identifying, or reflecting on the meaning of the word is perhaps under-considered within archaeology. The value in developing a connection between archaeological practice and public communication is a relatively new turn in the discipline of archaeology.

Since the inception of archaeology as a social-scientific discipline, the focus has been on applying scientific principles of organization to the understanding of ancient societies through typologies and analysis of material culture, often prioritizing the material finds over the documentation – or at least publication – in early days of practice. In the past decade of the 2010s, archaeology has moved from rescue archaeology and a focus on insular documentation for the sake of future research potential into a new direction of public interest, outreach, and accountability (Virágos). This shift is directly related to the media culture of recent years. Yet, much like what can be seen with human remains in museum studies, the shift moved directly to ethics and best practice considerations. As a whole, the shift largely skipped over any reflection on how publics are perceived in the discipline. This jump over the explication of public results in packing along a vague mix of tacit assumptions to fill in that gap, delegating such considerations to the subfield of public archaeology.

While there has been scholarship on public archaeology topics for decades (Schadla-Hall; Hodder; McGimsey; Cleere), I argue that the “public” considerations have been until recently relegated to a specialist branch of archaeology rather than the purview of a whole profession. Public interest now means that archaeological discoveries are part of new feeds, TV series, and much wider discourses of public conversation than ever before. In turn, increased media coverage puts archaeological practices much more under public scrutiny than ever before, introducing the forces and tensions of public discourse to archaeological interpretation.

In this new arena of public interface, archaeology has several decades of work from specialist public archaeologists to depend on for navigating the transition of insular practices to exposed transparency that invites public participation in the discourse. There is a growing body of scholarship on public archaeology that is reaching widely across the discipline (Bonacci; Calcani; Moshenka; Watkins). Yet, this new ground offers interdisciplinary opportunities as well, such as inviting shared methods or models with the scholarship of public rhetorics to better understand the mechanisms of discourse communities and archaeology's role. Public memory studies is one example where the scholarship has already established a role in understanding publics at museums and memorials (Ackerman and Coogan; Greer and Grobman; Wright). Warner's multiplicity of plural publics, some of which archaeologists can consider themselves constituents, levels the discourse to a communication exchange on a more even surface than an antiquated model of dissemination from an academic high vantage point.

Objects

This research focuses on human remains. However, it has become clear that the approach to begin addressing human remains is missing language and theoretical framework that describes current practice. It is difficult to advance best practice standards for human remains in museum collections if the practices have already outpaced the capacity to describe them. The ambiguous nature of defining and approaching human remains requires reflexive analysis and lends itself to borrowing scholarship from public rhetorics. Tools from rhetoric serve to negotiate an understanding of human remains as an exception to definitions of material object or human entity, since the case of human remains are neither and both or something else entirely.

Are human remains objects by any relevant discipline's definition? The short answer was initially a universal no, though it is further complicated on all fronts. In archaeology, objects

must be manufactured or modified by humans in some way for their use to be considered objects (Caple; Morehart). This definition does not include human remains as archaeological objects since they are not made, modified, or used by their source culture . However, human remains do have investigative research potential to represent a variety of social indicators such as genetics, health, diet, disease, and burial practices, which makes them act a bit like objects as part of the archaeological record. Human remains are numbered and catalogued in an excavation along with the other artifacts from a particular context, identifying them as objects by the implications of assigning them object numbers. Yet human remains are not by definition artifacts, nor are they material culture, but can be approached in some overlapping ways to provide information about the archaeological record.

Material form is required for an object in archaeology but optional from the standpoint of rhetorical definitions. For rhetoric, an object is defined by its creative or symbolic value (Di Leo; Mascarenhas). Human remains are not creative work of humans but rather biological, yet they are meaningful symbols. A distinction could be made that they become rhetorical artifacts when they are in human use or creative circulation, a shift when the remains are unearthed and taken up into the archaeological record. Based on the symbolic significance attached to rhetoric's definition, a distinction begins to form between the source culture's lack of use for the human remains they buried and the new layers of significance applied to the remains as part of their association with archaeological context.

Human remains are neither humans nor inanimate objects, a sort of post-animate object perhaps, and the application of concepts from new materialism aid in situating human remains with the kinds of agency that is already implicitly afforded to them in ethical discussion about their care and display. Critical theory's materialisms offer a new approach to understanding

material as an activated part of the way humans behave and knowledge is constructed (Beucher et al.; Coole and Frost.) In this research, the post-humanist theory of new materialism is applied to human remains to develop a working understanding of how material objects can influence the process of rhetorical construction surrounding them. New Materialism theory provides a means to ascribe material agency to human remains in order to better articulate the feelings that already exist in museum ethics but exist without a currently articulated disciplinary framework.

Human remains straddle a space between living human being and material object. Many of the ethical debates consider what it means to treat remains with "dignity" and "respect" because they, unlike other objects in the collection, used to be a living person with beliefs, ideas, and wishes (Gazi; Hon). The entanglement of what is decided for them and what the person would have wanted based on our understanding of their sociocultural context sets human remains apart from other objects in a museum collection. The crisis of respectful intent seems to occur when agency is removed from the human remains. So, what is resolved in the recognition that agency was never lost? It seems that, in practice, the crisis actually results from ignoring the agency that is still present and acting in the dynamic.

From the perspective of archaeology, there is some pushback to affording agency to objects because it can conflate inherent value with modern culturally-applied values. Concerning objects, archaeologists prefer to distance themselves from anthropomorphizing inanimate objects. The specialism of conservation in particular grapples with this fine line of "treatment" of objects, borrowing medical terms, without talking about "needs" of the object since the object does not need anything – it is not alive – but rather our cultural construct of valuing its associated symbolic interpretation needs that object to be treated (Ashley-Smith; Sully). But in the case of human remains, it is not anthropomorphism at all to consider human needs or desires because the

object is a human, even if no longer living and able to voice those desires. This begs the question of whether human remains are exceptions to the definition of objects or the example that should challenge the established definition of objects to accommodate.

Reflecting on the ethical debates around human remains display, it is clear that the remains themselves affect how decisions are made about them, thus how living humans act around them. In that sense, the remains have agency and exert a force in the human-material relationship. The human is not the only one in that relationship influencing the outcome. Since human remains are not well-suited to any other category of object, artifact, or material culture that currently exists in archaeological terminology, perhaps this perspective of material agency can better situate how the human remains can be given agential consideration in the ethical debates that concern them. The case of human remains as the intermediary example of both human and non-human, human and post-human, activates the new materialism perspective on human and non-human agency that may have productive ramifications to understanding the nature of human remains in museum collections. The hybridity of human remains that confuse any attempt at bifurcating categorization offer a challenging counter-example to new materialism and other object-oriented posthumanist material theories.

Without rhetoric's take on objects and artifacts, I had always hesitated to call human remains "objects" though there really was not another useful term in circulation to use instead. Now, the interdisciplinary body of scholarship leads to the distinction that human remains are not objects to the original cultures from which they came. However, the fusion with rhetoric's definition of objects circles back to considering remains as objects the instant they become part of the archaeological record. Hodder reminds us that objects are palimpsests and when a body is excavated in archaeological context, a new layer of use and meaning begin. Thus, human

remains rather *become* objects when they are disinterred and taken up into use in modern museum and archaeological interpretive settings. The act of archaeological interpretation presents human remains as symbols of the previous culture and their display is creative rhetorical work of those who interpret, design, and display the remains.

The nuance in the act of becoming is important to recognize that the term objects is not synonymous with human remains unless they become objects as an additional layer of meaning though archaeological excavation. Thus, this definition of human remains as objects relies on archaeological context which in turn ties the definition to *in situ* place. Just as place is an often-overlooked but foundational aspect of defining publics, the association of human remains as objects has inherent connections to place.

Place

Places are an important factor in the creation of publics as the material place becomes a touchstone, catalyst, or hub connecting people to discourse. In the development of a rhetorical definition of publics, the idea of "the public" has been shattered and multiplied to recognize the plurality of collectives defined loosely by their participation in a shared discourse. Discourse circulates and can be described with fluid qualities to retain a sense of constant motion. With all of the motion, blurry edges, and amorphous boundaries of publics and discourse, it is tempting to rest upon the concept of place as a stable fixed entity. However, a sense of place is almost as artificially constructed as a public and subject to the plasticity that accompanies "interpretive flux" in the discourse (Greer and Grobman 136). Notions of "authenticity" are more connected to feelings than facts (Nora 19). The rigid boundaries fade in the wake of shifting discourse, overlaid with piles of "layers of physical and imaginary [that] blur any attempted distinction" (Dickenson, Blair, and Ott 23). Museums as places of public memory cannot be seen as static

repositories but rather as activators of discourse fostering the growth of publics. While there is a kind of material certainty in the physical location of a place, the understanding of its boundaries, significance, and use shift in rhythm with the discourse. Rhetoric offers an approach to discourse analysis that refines and informs on the visitor experience, explicating the relationship between publics and museum place.

As the definition of publics includes a grounding of material place, reflexively place is defined through meaning-making of publics. While place is solid by comparison to the fluid nature of publics and discourse, there is a evident plasticity to how they are conceptualized and reshaped. In fact, a place that loses its plasticity is in peril since the active reshaping through discourse "guard[s] against the twin dangers of ideological reification and amnesia" (Haskins 405). Place is vulnerable to cycles of remembrance but also tied to the same patterns of activation as the memories connected to them by thereness, laying dormant or shifting boundaries dependent on discourse that invokes knowledge through experience of that place.

Museums are interesting nodes of public memory study because of their “authenticity” and the ability to “foster a sense of cross-temporal community” with the cultures on display as well as the other visitors who have shared the same experience of the place (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 26). The materiality of a museum space, which by definition is created for publics, invites participation but in a different kind of discourse, a slower discourse, as the shared experience is often silent and solitary for each visitor (Haskins; Clary-Lemon). Museums, like memorials, have been burdened with the responsibility of their interpretation suggesting an “official form” of the narrative, though public rhetoric scholars are finding that the actual public discourse blurs with other vernacular forms and has a great deal more interpretive flux than it may seem as publics take up, interpret, reject, and re-form discourse in uncontrolled trajectories

(Greer and Grobman; Page and Rotunno). This evidence that the rhetorical process of interpretation in museum display is not absolute monolithic existence of curatorial interpretation or a linear producer-consumer relationship is great news, as it proves the process of rhetorical construction to be a more fluid process with a greater relationship to publics. The lens of public memory studies reveals what happens when the interpretation is let loose to be taken up in public discourse.

The place that connects publics with objects is the museum where discourse is activated. However, the place that the objects connect to – and invite the publics to engage with – is the context of archaeological excavation where the objects were discovered *in situ*. This place is often distant to the publics who engage with the objects in a museum setting, reserved only for the archaeologists and adventurous few. Yet, as established in the definition, objects cannot be understood without context of the archaeological site from which they were displaced. With all archaeological material, there is some degree of displacement starting the moment of excavation and it is the solemn remit of archaeology to keep a solid a bond between the objects and their *in situ* context. The impossible conundrum of bringing one place into another is resolved to the degree in which archaeological and museum interpretation work to engage publics in the context of the objects on display. The sense of place is retained for the objects by the strength of its rhetorical construction.

Publics, Objects, and Place in a Rhetorical Ecology

This chapter has demonstrated where gaps in scholarship can benefit from a relational approach to negotiating the complex interdisciplinary nuance of basic terms such as publics, objects, and place. The rhetorical approach to these research questions about human remains seeks to better understand the real practices of meaning-making that occur around exhibitions.

Surprisingly, Bruno Latour offers a pragmatic explanation of what I perceive as a blind spot in the current framework for approaching human remains. Latour criticizes modernity for always seeking to categorize and separate the world into binary dualistic opposing spheres with a clean split between humans versus objects or culture versus nature; new materialists reject the binary of structured opposites, arguing that "any bifurcation…fails to acknowledge the ontological hybridity that constitutes reality" (*We Have Never Been Modern*). The definitions developed so far in this chapter to understand place, publics, and objects emphasize the inextricably entangled relational qualities. Each of the elements is also imbued with motion. Rather than say they are thusly impossible to pin down, this reframing offers them as a dependent system in motion that can be observed within a rhetorical ecology. Axioms, models, or generalized trends cannot capture what really goes on in the process of meaning-making, discourse circulation, and public memory since there are too many factors in motion. Yet it is possible to explore what happens in real cases by observing real rhetorical ecologies to see that the motion of these forces is not mysterious.

In order to look at a relationship dynamic of the ecotriangle, three theories will be overlaid, each with a body of scholarship that relates and interrelates to publics, objects, and place, building connections between the nodes. Public memory studies bring an understanding of the relationship between publics and place. New materialism emphasizes the materiality of objects and places with their own forces of agency enacted on the rhetorical ecology. Rhetoric *in situ* enriches the value of place as connected inextricably both to the objects and the human understanding of context. These three areas of scholarship create partial connections between the nodes of publics, objects, and place. This project uses them in concert to explicate the ecotriangle in a given rhetorical ecology.

Public memory studies emphasize the perspective of the public and gives structure to nebulous factors such as memory, authenticity, and the flow of discourse. Rhetoric *in situ* favors the scholar's perspective in the meaning-making process as they develop interpretation through an embodied experience of place. While both concepts reach out to connect with the objects and places, they are both a one-way trajectory to those end points that originate at publics or researchers. New materialism completes the triangle by offering a way to build bridges that start from the node of objects with a view toward publics rather than vice versa. New materialism is also a means to consider the materiality present across the whole relationship from the physicality of objects and places to the material manifestations of discourse artifacts.

Material agency also accounts for archaeology's understanding of how landscapes partially determining behavior through the affordances or constraints of resources and topography. In that respect, the recurring significance of experience with place in public memory studies as well as the embodied practice from rhetoric *in situ* presupposes an influence that implies an agency of place. While posthumanist theories like new materialism may at first seem difficult to apply practically, the reconceptualization of these terms to account for material agency serves to elucidate tacit assumptions evident in behavior and approaches already established in archaeological and museum practice.

With remains as agents in the consideration, the sense of place also serves the remains, doubling the importance of developing a sense of place that brings the excavation to the museum. Scholarship from rhetoric *in situ* stresses the importance of understanding place and original context when developing research or participating in the meaning-making process (Enos "Rhetorical Archaeology"; Lamp). While public memory scholarship offers a framework to study the public responses of a display, rhetoric *in situ* offers a framework to develop methods

for scholars in the act of interpreting material culture with a strong relationship to place. This research relies on the work of rhetoric *in situ* to construct the archaeological site context and ensure that physical distance from the site does not equate to rhetorical distance from the site.

This research asks under-served questions about human remains in museum collections such as whether they are objects at all, if they have agency in the considerations about their care, and how a relationship with a sense of place is maintained while the remains are displaced from their interment. These questions have not been adequately explored in the scholarship. I believe these questions influence the ethical debates via the underlying assumptions implicit in the overlying ethical discourse. Every interpretation of human remains must consider these basic rhetorical construction questions about human remains in their collection in order to inform how they should be approached and interpreted.

2. THEORIES, METHODS, AND THE ECOTRIANGLE

I realized in the course of this research that Jeremy Bentham, 19th c. social reform philosopher and founder of utilitarianism, has a profound influence on my perspectives on human remains display as well as my positionality as a researcher based on my training, experience, and education. Bentham influences the way I frame object agency as giving objects a seat at the metaphorical table for decisions that concern them, making room to recognize their role in the process. Perhaps this is because Bentham demonstrates this agency at the literal table for council meetings at the university where I earned two graduate degrees studying the ethics and conservation of museum objects (see Figure 2 in Chapter 1). As per his wishes, Bentham's corpse sits in a booth on University College London campus where I walked by him daily all of my years at the Institute of Archaeology. He is still an active member of the campus community nearly 200 years after his death and is afforded a literal seat at the table – again, per his express wishes – at the occasional meeting of the College Council as a "Present but Not Voting" attendee (Booth). Using Bentham's literal seat at the table to represent his agency provides a parallel metaphor to tangibly represent respectful treatment of material human remains. In this project, I will extend this to a metaphorical "seat at the table" that represents the agency afforded to remains to formalize the tacit gap of what it means to approach human remains with "respect." If decision-makers place the remains on their list of stakeholders "at the table" as they consider what actions to make, respectful practices follow. A posthumanist – and utilitarianist – lens on object agency gives form to the issues of consent and respect that are, as of now in museum studies, strong-yet-undefined senses of feeling that are central to ethical issues but often difficult to address in terms of practice.

Figure 2: Jeremy Bentham's corpse attending a UCL Council meeting, seated next to Sir Malcolm Grant. Courtesy of UCL.

Bentham is a solid example of how objects actively contribute to the dynamics of their relationship with publics and place, understanding object agency. New materialism provides a theoretical lens through which to describe that contribution. Concepts taken up in rhetorical scholarship, such as new materialism, have been chosen for this project for what insights their framework can offer to describe and explicate the ecotriangle. The figurative device of a triangle described in Chapter 1 represents the nodes in that relationship as the convergence points (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1) onto which the chosen theories and concepts layer onto the triangle, illustrating how the nodes connect (see Figure 3). Public memory scholarship bridges an established connection between public memory and place through scholarship on museums, memories, place, and authenticity, representing a line of the triangle connecting publics to place. Rhetoric *in situ* cements the parallel, often convergent, approaches to understanding place shared between the disciplines of archaeology and rhetoric in both terminology and methods. Rhetoric *in situ* scholarship emphasizes the importance of considering place as an inseparable component

when interpreting texts, memory, and material. While providing a robust interdisciplinary approach to discussing place, rhetoric *in situ* draws lines of connection from place to both to publics and material culture, including text. Publics are defined through circulation of discourse that find touchstones in the materiality of places and objects, which completes the triangle to the third node of human remains. New materialism explicates how object agency describes the interactions between publics and objects, as illustrated with the case of Jeremy Bentham. New materialism offers this research an avenue to consider the materiality that is involved in discourse, publics, and place. The three theories introduced in this chapter form the connecting legs between the nodes of publics, objects, and place. While each lens sheds light on a portion of the ecotriangle relationship, taken together they give a sense of the whole system in action within a given rhetorical ecology.

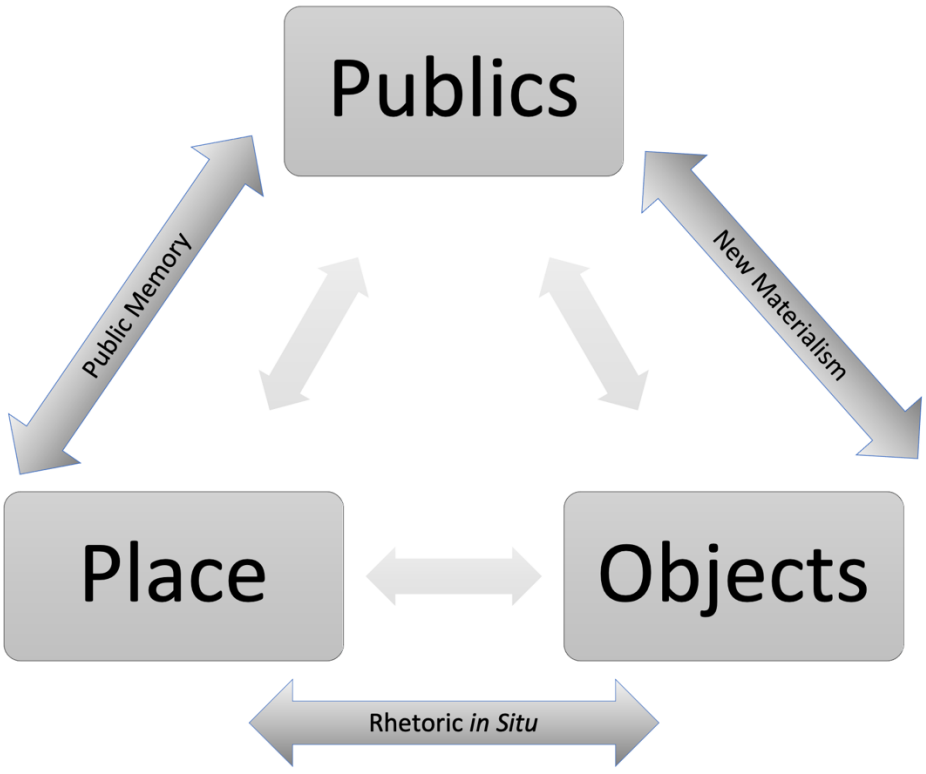

Figure 3: The ecotriangle with associated theoretical and conceptual tools used in this research to explicate the connections between publics, objects, and place.

These three lenses -- public memory, rhetoric *in situ*, and new materialism – have been chosen to capture the act of becoming at the moment of convergence of the relationship this research explores: human remains, publics, and place. Publics are understood through public memory studies as having fluid margins loosely defined by shared interests, experiences, or memory that are built though circulating discourse and are often centered on places and objects.

This methodology section will introduce the theoretical framework and applied concepts by situating public memory studies, rhetoric *in situ,* and new materialism in a literature review as well as situate them in their specific roles for this research project. Once the conceptual approach is established, the research design is presented and the two case studies are described. The limitations of this project are briefly outlined before closing with a discussion of the interdisciplinary value of this research.

Public Memory

Public memory studies concepts are critical to understanding the nature of public discourse and memory as it is shaped in relation to place. Public memory scholarship supports further explication of the definitive elements on how publics are shaped by discourse and place. The node of publics develops as public memory scholarship adds a robust conception of the otherwise vague and fluid elements of discourse and memory. While discourse and memory are always in flux, public memory studies capture the broader dynamics of their shape and circulation. Equally important to this project, public memory scholarship reaches toward the node of place to explicate the interrelationship between public memory and place. To relate how this scholarship develops the ecotriangle, a leg is formed between publics and place that progresses the conceptualization of both nodes.

There are different terms that indicate work in the memory of publics, including collective memory, social memory, and public memory. I prefer public memory because it most clearly attaches the complexity of publics developed in this project to the concept of memories. Dickenson, Blair, and Ott note that "public memory" also intimates strong ties to rhetoric in each term, indicating a rhetorical understanding of memory (6). Houdek and Phillips define public memory as it "refers to the circulation of recollections among members of a given community" (1). This circulation of memory within a community can also be seen as opposed to, responding to, or rejection of the "official" histories (Greer and Grobman 3). Scholarship on places of public memory include museums as a focus of interpretation and public discourse (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott; Gardner; Greer and Grobman; Noy; Phillips). I argue that human remains display in museums also overlaps with the scholarship on public rhetorics and memorials, since heritage tourism is a form of memorial tourism, all falling under the larger umbrella of thanatourism[1] (Haskins; Page and Rotunno; Rice; Sharpley and Stone). Though parallels and overlaps exist, human remains display has not yet been a topic of extensive public memory study. Considering disinterred human remains in the scholarship of place and memorials offers an opportunity to investigate the role of publics and public memory in the rhetorical process of engagement with human remains exhibits in museums.

This research intends to look at display of human remains from both the perspective of the curatorial choices made in preparing the display as well as the perspective of the public discourse that is taken up after the display opens to the public in the form of reviews, images, and other material data generated by visitors. This application of public memory studies intends

[1] Thanatourism refers to death, personal history, and heritage tourism and is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "dark tourism," though I separate the two so that the implications connected to the exploitations of the macabre are categorized in the separate subgroup of dark tourism. These terms will be discussed further in chapter 4.

to articulate the assumptions within the process of developing display practices of human remains.

Display development is centered around discourse, both official discourse developed with curatorial intent and vernacular discourse generated by publics. Publics are defined by the discourse they generate, participate, and circulate, coming together over shared knowledge, interest, or sense of feeling. Public memory offers a way to understand a public by tracing the discourse artifacts they circulate, often dividing the artifacts into two sometimes opposing categories of official forms and vernacular forms of discourse (Houdek and Phillips 1). Official forms of discourse are created by the institution with their intentions and agenda (Dickenson, Blair, and Ott 194). The official forms are the initial input of discourse and represent curatorial intent but raise concerns that they also represent an implicit authenticity or authority as well as political bias (Phillips 29). Official forms of discourse include the exhibition text, supplementary pamphlets, publications, interviews by specialists representing the institution, and guided tours to name a few. Vernacular forms of discourse are generated or modified by the publics as they take on “the role as memory workers” (Gallagher and Kalin 251). Vernacular forms of discourse are any communication generated or modified by publics, which can range from comments in a guestbook, conversations in the café with other visitors, to social media content. To say that official forms are superior in truth or authenticity or that vernacular forms are free from political agenda and bias "falsely present the matter as one of either/or" which neglects "how visitors ascribe meaning to and inscribe their own practices within heritage sites” (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 194). Official discourse enters the public circulation to be revised, rejected, reimagined, and responded to as much as it is retold, and subjected to acts of “removal” and “resumption” (Phillips 30). Equally, rhetorical production is a part of public engagement, ensuring that public

discourse is not just the analysis and critique of official forms but includes a robust component of creation through "complexly layered process of production" (Greer and Grobman 15). There is some relief in recognizing that official forms do not dominate the discourse and that there is not a unidirectional exchange, but rather a dynamic interchange in motion.

Museums are making active strides to blur the line between official and vernacular discourse to encourage engagement between publics and museums. A milestone in this hybridization of official museum discourse with the vernacular of social media influence came in 2013 when the Chicago Field Museum purchased a popular YouTube channel and created a position for science YouTuber Emily Graslie to become their Chief Curiosity Correspondent (Graslie). This position was an active step to foster the publicly-driven content of social media while providing greater access to collections and museum specialists. While Graslie's channel then shifted to an official form of discourse under the employ of the Field Museum, it is grounded in the viewer-driven vernacular discourse of the publics. This movement toward socially-driven content directly sponsored by museum institutions continues to grow, which values discourse as a defining feature of publics and fosters a stronger connection between publics and place. As a result, it is an opportunity for official and vernacular forms of discourse to actively merge, blur, and interact as museums and publics engage and respond to each other directly.

Public memory anchors official discourse in the reality of what happens to discourse once it is taken up by the public. From a museum studies perspective, curatorial intentions are the leading factor in the development of official discourse related to exhibitions, idealistically, or perhaps naïvely, overlooking the forces that act to revise, reshape, reject, and reframe that discourse once it is taken up into circulation of public discourse. This measure of intention

against circulated discourse destabilizes curatorial choice as an absolute authority, recognizing that official forms of narrative are often revised or rejected in this process of meaning-making in circulation of public discourse. The consumer model of discourse production by the museum and straight-out consumption by the publics thus crumbles. Adding the human remains as agents into this system serves to complicate and further destabilize curatorial authority, yet it may also highlight some of the discursive factors in this process.

Returning to the word "circulation," the connotations of movement and flux are essential to understanding both the node publics and the process of meaning-making. Public memory studies challenge many suppositions in museum interpretation, offering productive complications as this research explores museum interpretation through scholarship on museums as places of public memory. The study of publics and memory are both always rhetorical and highlight the plasticity or flux inherent in both concepts (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 6; Houdek and Phillips 1). The challenge represented here for museum studies application is the conflict between a static exhibit or fixed interpretation juxtaposed with the dynamic cycles of discourse, remembering and forgetting, as well as shifting publics that take up the interpretation over the course of the exhibit.

The relationship between places of public memory and the enactment of public discourse within and around museums is a study of permanence and impermanence (Greer and Grobman; Phillips; Zelizer). For museums, this means a permanent collection is open to endless inventive and reflexive cycles of interpretation based on the changing nature of discourse and publics that interact within the museum space. There are many kinds of places of public memory, officially planned or organically vernacular, though this research focuses on the unique position of museums as a place of public memory insofar as museum interpretation is a process of rhetorical construction of public memory in a place. Dickinson, Blair, and Ott offer that place and memory

are "always already rhetorical" and "deployed in and deploying" space and time (23-4). Publics are anchored to place. As such, museums only benefit to recognize and participate in their role as places of public memory.

Public memory studies also emphasize the relationship of publics to place. This research relies on public memory scholarship to develop the definitions of both publics and place in Chapter 1 as well as the relationship between these two nodes. Through circulation of discourse, publics are formed and the shapes of memory and meaning-making can be outlined. This research understands human remains as active agents in this network of circulation which a adds a component to the system, complicating the flow. The addition of human remains to established scholarship on public memory and place offers new avenues to understanding discourse surrounding museum display.

Public memory scholarship has an established framework for understanding a sense of place. In this research, place is a concept with a layered definition but also refers to two physical places in each instance: the museum and the *in situ* archaeological excavation. Public memory scholarship helps understand both places in a few key ways. First, the place defined by public memory studies is the one where publics converge and discourse is taken up, which refers to the museum here[2]. Second, the museum is where the objects and publics come together. Importantly, it is also where the interpretation of the *in situ* place reaches objects and publics, the other two nodes in the ecotriangle relationship. In a sense, the museum becomes the interface place through which the *in situ* place is rhetorically accessed by publics.

A strength of public memory scholarship is its viewpoint of place not as it should be but as it is when publics shift stances, accept, reject, reframe, remember, or forget. Public memory

[2] The second case study will challenge the rigid definition of place as the shared physical space of a museum's walls as the only place serving this function by bringing viewers to the archaeological site.

studies understands place as political and symbolic, developing official and vernacular forms that bring tension, blur lines, and imply a general instability (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott; Greer and Grobman). The relationship between publics and place is also a physical one, which has been described as "implacably material" and the catalyst for "memories to 'stick' as a result of having direct physical interaction" and resulting in permanent bond of thereness experience (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 29, 183). While recognizing the material factor in the relationship between publics and place, public memory scholarship favors the viewpoint of publics, framing the place as the setting for experiences and community interaction.

The strength of public memory's realistic perspective on the instability of place reveals an incomplete representation of place from a public-centric view. From this vantage point, the scholarship only offers an understanding of the bridge between publics and place from the node of publics looking off toward place in the distance. While place is defined through public memory, it is equally true that place defines a public. As such, public memory scholarship presents a gap in accounting for what the place brings to the experience and how the place may determine or influence the experiences and interactions of the publics. This research bolsters public memory's approach to the relationship between place and publics by giving place's agency more credit as a factor in those interactions.

Public memory has an inverse attachment to place versus time where place associations stay strong while time is distorted, subject to cycles of forgetting and remembrance. Just as discourse is described as fluid and place is in flux, time also loses its fixed status and enters a liquid state when filtered through public memory. The approach to time versus place in public memory has valuable applications to the specific case of human remains. A major debate in human remains ethics surrounds questions of time lapse – how old must human remains be

before they are acceptable to display? The answer seems simple with the idea that archaeological contexts equate to ancient, though a more developed understanding of this time blur in public memory may answer why this question is not as simple as it seems.

There is a strong public memory relationship to place but a weak structure for time, warping temporal distinctions (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott; Phillips). Standing in the presence of a once-living person, no matter how ancient, has the unique potential to develop an emotional connection that proportionately collapses the concept of time, perhaps even inversely proportional – or at least strongly linked – to the sense of place. Blair sees this relationship that collapses temporal boundaries as expanding the public to include those from the past because the shared sense of place or experience is so strong, enough to "foster a sense of cross-temporal community" (27). Understanding human remains as an active agent in this emotional response also offers insight into this complex sense of feeling. Both case studies offer an opportunity to explore this time-place phenomenon through public memory.

Publics and place can be brought together regardless of time and conceptualization of time develops through discourse. Public memory studies give this research an avenue to consider the discourse that connects a sense of place to an object, such as human remains, once an interpretation is taken up by a public. Bringing public memory studies to the issue of human remains display offers an agile and reflexive perspective by revealing a pliability to the meaning-making process of interpretation that is perhaps not fully considered in the overlaying ethical debates that forefront the conversations about human remains in museums. The discourse shifts in focus and public perception of human remains displays also shift with the changing ebbs and flows that shape discourse at any given time.

New Materialism

The theory of new materialism brings a focus to agency and materiality to this project. Crucial to expanding the developed definition of human remains as objects, agency is recognized as a factor in the relationship dynamic for all three nodes of publics, objects, and place. New materialism contributes a means to redistribute agency across the relationship, creating a perspective to view the relationship from other vantage points in the rhetorical ecology. The emphasis on materiality also closes the distance between approaches to research between rhetoric and archaeology. Cultural material in the form of objects, structures, and other vestiges of human activity are the main source of data for archaeological interpretation while texts and documentation are seen as somewhat separate ancillary sources of information. New materialism highlights the materiality of texts and reminds us of the physical artifacts of discourse that can be tracked as they circulate like floating markers that allow the currents of flow to become observable. This section develops an understanding of new materialism by tracing its predecessors to find connections between approaches in archaeology and rhetorical scholarship. Once a mutual convergence on the theory is established, the contributions of new materialism are explored for how agency builds on the definitions of objects and place to demonstrate their active role in the ecotriangle. Further, materiality applies to both objects and place but also adds tangibility to discourse artifacts which in turn informs the node of publics.

This research makes use of a relatively new posthumanist theory of new materialism which, of the three concepts brought to this research, has the smallest demonstrated record of interdisciplinary precedence to build upon. However, in the past decades, materialism theories have developed in step with perspectives on archaeological interpretation of material culture. By introducing new materialism as an iterative follow-on to interdisciplinary work between

archaeology and other theories of materialism, the fit joins naturally once the layers of material theories imbedded in archaeology's approach to material culture are recognized. New materialism has developed from the genealogical predecessor of cultural materialism, a theory that has established applications in archaeology.

Cultural materialism grew in response to Marxist theory through the work of Williams, Dollimore, Sinfield, and Milner. Cultural materialism's view on the relationship between culture, politics, and economics made room for human expression through material culture to subvert, reject, or redefine the dominant social ideology (Williams 51). Reading objects as acts of individual human expression or even commentary on their cultural context adds layers to the objects' interpretation. These layers include the more obvious "dominant framework of meaning" yet also add the tighter commentary intended by the maker and user of the object (Hebdige 516). A shift toward a focus on the material, though still rooted in the anthropocentric and symbolic, paved a new way to consider materiality in archaeological interpretation.

From the same Marxist-respnse root, archaeology also developed theories of materialisms along a parallel timeline as rhetoric and critical theory. Material culture theory developed to read objects and cultural material in their context of market creation, commodification, and social expression (Mullins; Miller). Field archaeologists such as Ian Hodder and Mary Beaudry were developing theoretical frameworks that have intimate ties with rhetoric's materialisms through use of theories from scholars like Foucault, Bourdieu, and Levi-Strauss (Yentsch and Beaudry 217-25). Specifically, Beaudry's work centers around interpreting material culture within the context of cultural discourses, inseparable from the material, environmental, and social relationships (Beaudry; Beaudry et al.; Mrozowski and Beaudry). Beaudry's scholarship reflects a form of materialist theory that develops an understanding of object meaning through discourse,

sharing approaches with public memory studies. Therefore, using new materialism to develop a definition of human remains as archaeological objects is a choice grounded in some precedent. The scholarship has so far recognized the necessity to understand objects as fused with layers of meaning from their context but has yet to take the next step of recognizing object agency.

New materialism is a theory that asserts material agency, elevating the term "object" to include human remains while giving shape to that feeling of a missing voice in the interpretive process, which is the foremost application of the theory to this project. By conceptualizing human remains as material with agency that affects human actions, new materialism explains the behavior already deeply ingrained in the treatment, interpretation, and display of human remains that is only vaguely identified as a need for "dignity" and "respect" (Gazi; Jones and Whitaker). New materialism is applied in this research in developing a definition of "object" to include human remains and to amplify the importance of materiality in understanding the rhetorical ecology in which objects, publics, and place interact. New materialism is part of the growing body of theories that fall into the posthuman movements in philosophy, rhetorical studies, and cultural theory (Barad; Coole and Frost; Graham; Haraway; Kohn). While it is not a unified theory as it has taken many directions in the various disciplines, many authors have summed up new materialism and the posthumanist standpoints as giving material or objects "their due" (Marback qtd. in Pflugfelder 442; Coole and Frost 2-3). In rhetoric, authors like Rickert, Fleming, Marback and others are making room to consider material agency as having a place at the table when considering influences on behavior, human and natural[3].

[3] For clarity, "human and natural" do not imply a duality or dichotomy but rather noting both while understanding them in a network of ontological symbiosis (though not necessarily mutual or commensurate) as Latour outlines (*We Have Never Been*).

With a new materialism approach, the term "object" can be expanded to include human remains yet simultaneously refined to account for the agency afforded to human remains in collections. This theory helps to interrogate assumptions that are tacit in both the existence of human remains in museum collections and the terminology used to discuss those remains. The materialist turn offers a lens to consider human remains in their position as material culture but with an imperative to consider them as also having agency, since they were at one time living people.

I pose that if anything should be considered "posthuman," then certainly human remains are definitively post-human, simultaneously embodying the qualities of the human and the material. Disciplines of archaeology and museum studies can find common place with rhetoric in defining human remains as posthuman, which can make explicit many of those tacit ethical considerations about dignity and respect that are applied to handling human remains in museum collections. New materialism offers an approach to understanding human remains as objects without any implied anthrocentric hierarchy that would diminish the dignity, respect, or agency that is afforded to human remains by calling them objects. Through a new materialist lens, archaeology can continue to treat human remains in the same way with deep concern for the dignity and respect of the object but now with enhanced methods to address the agency in decisions that these objects always already had.

New materialism focuses on materiality by breaking down the dichotomy of material and symbolic or even – which holds the most interest to the question of human remains – the dissolution of a human-material dichotomy. Re-centering of the concept of agency redistributes causal relationships to deal in the often-overlooked material forces, "for materiality is always something more than 'mere' matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that

renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable" (Coole and Frost 9). This leap from material importance to material agency may seem far or suited only for theoretical exercises but I argue a grounded application that material agency explains established practices and resolves several undefined tensions in archaeological interpretation.

Beyond the node of objects, new materialism also helps to recognize agency of place as more than just the setting upon which publics and objects interact. New materialism has opened up novel ways of refiguring the relationships between things themselves—not only from the perspective of human–human or human–nonhuman interactions (Pflugfelder 443). First, material agency offers an interactive approach to the relationship between people and their landscape. Archaeology already accounts for landscape and resources as factors for understanding society with spectrums – ranging from anthro-centrism to environmental determinism – to assert that one dominates the other. Rather than framing superiority or deterministic outcomes, material agency offers a view into the relationship between mankind and the landscape with affordances and constraints that are part of the interplay dynamics. This way, the rhetorical ecology is superimposed on the physical ecology and a more realistic model[4] of interrelated processes is revealed.

To complete the ecotriangle, materiality can account for tangible aspects that define of publics. Place has an important role, as discussed with regards to public memory, and so does discourse which can be observed through tangible artifacts like text. With such a dependence on discourse to define publics, new materialism also enhances the study of discourse through its material mechanisms of circulation. Rickert states "cultural work cannot be separated from materialities of embodiment and embeddedness, including the material (and not only the

[4] Work in predictive archaeology models by geophysical-archaeologist Ken Kvamme over the past 3 decades expresses this human-landscape interaction in all but name.

symbolic) aspects of discourse ("Parmenidies" 485). This research employs case studies of temporary exhibition events through the artifacts of discourse that include text, photographs, and film which have circulated in many different material forms. New materialism takes into account the material nature of these items that are taken up into the discourse which injects a sort of contrast dye of materiality into the fluid ether of discourse.

Bringing objects to the decision table, new materialism offers a perspective on objects that crystallizes practical enactments of respect. Agency informs the relationship dynamics of the triangle to break any notions of a one-sided transmission, expressing how publics are reciprocally influenced by objects or place. In addition, the materiality of the ecotriangle forefronts the relationship as an interaction that has elements of physicality for all three nodes.

Rhetoric *in situ*

This section develops an understanding of the relationship between material culture and original place by first establishing the shared connections between archaeology and rhetoric already in practice. While public memory can contextualize concepts of original and authentic to destabilize seemingly-fixed constructs like place and time, rhetoric *in situ* embosses the importance of original place. This section culminates to consider how the case of human remains offers productive challenges to current scholarship in both archaeology and rhetoric.

Now that new materialism established a seat at the table for remains, the discussion can turn to one of the major conversations about human remains in museums: place. Maintaining a relationship to place becomes a priority since interpretation can no longer be framed as a cathartic cultural construct of modern viewers to feel the remains are symbolically connected with their place and not fully displaced. Instead, with remains as agents in the consideration, the sense of place also serves the remains, knocking a wholly anthropocentric reading of the

importance of place a bit off balance and doubles the stakes for establishing and developing a sense of place through interpretation. Rhetoric *in situ* pays attention to context and also brings developed methods of rhetorical historiography with some establishment of how to approach non-traditional (i.e., non-textual) elements. This framework is primed to be productively complicated by considering human remains.

Rhetoric *in situ's* contributions to interdisciplinary research with archaeology are gaining momentum in recent years. In 2016, the American Society for the History of Rhetoric held the "Rhetoric *in Situ*" symposium in Atlanta, Georgia. The symposium, along with the subsequent publication of a special issue of *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, represents an emerging approach in rhetorical studies that highlights the importance of the relationship between material culture and place. This perspective in rhetoric shares terminology with archaeology and, as it develops and refines its methodology, would also gain from sharing resources with archaeology by recognizing bridges and parallels between approaches to research *in situ*.

While the specifics of a definition may differ, the connotative essence of the terminology shared by rhetoric and archaeology demonstrates a structure of disciplinary bridges already in place. Archaeology uses the Latin term "*in situ*" to refer to archaeological material that is "in its place," discovered where it fell when it was deposited[5]. The term has strong associations with the importance of place, original place, and can be seen in rhetorical scholarship that emphasizes the need to experience the sense of place and maintain the relationship between material culture and original place (Enos "Rhetorical Archaeology"; Lamp; Myers; Rickert "It is All There"). Between the two disciplines, there are shared methods and implicit values in connecting and maintaining the relationship of original place through the interpretation of material.

[5] Post-depositional processes are also accounted for, of course.

Scholarship from the 2016 symposium demonstrates a diversity of interpretation with distinctly different approaches to the concept of rhetoric *in situ*. Kennerly's work, as well as the article by Garath in the same special edition, cite archaeological discoveries as direct evidence to inform investigations in the history of rhetoric, making an explicit bridge of scholarly exchange between the two disciplines. Articles like those by Hayes or Eatman highlight a participatory approach to rhetoric *in situ* through embodied practice by the researcher, paralleling the methods of *in situ* survey and recording in archaeology. Since the material is discovered at the excavation site, the reason for being in the field seems a bit obvious in archaeology which overshadows the important point by Hayes on embodied practice to remember that thereness imparts a knowledge that is essential to archaeological interpretation. Interest in studying rhetoric on-location as a way of connecting material with place has been a topic for historians of rhetoric before this 2016 symposium, though the forum for scholarship represents a momentum in recent discourse (Endres et al; Enos "Rhetorical Archaeology"; Hauser; Hess; Lamp; Middleton et al.; Senda-Cook et al). As historians of rhetoric look to historical places and archaeological sites to develop new methods of approach for scholarship, there is an opportunity to build on a critical examination of the structure of established archaeological field research methods.

Rhetoric *in situ* scholarship offers an approach to *in situ* place that further reinforces the interdisciplinary focus of this research through shared methods and language between archaeology and rhetoric. Rhetoric *in situ* also provides a different definition to place than public memory that relies on grounded material geography, juxtaposing fluid feelings of authenticity in circulating discourse with the hard absolutism of GPS coordinates. Tension in the definition of place moves it from a fixed point to a hybrid of materiality that is also reliant on publics to recognize, identify, and shape the meaning and boundaries of place. Interdependent dynamics

where one node cannot be fully described without the others demonstrates the value in approaching publics, objects, and place as inseperably relational.

Publics shape and identify place but place also has a role in how publics engage with the environment. Just as objects have agency, places also determine ways in which humans can interact with it. If rhetoric *in situ* describes the human experience of embodied practice, as Hayes defines, then new materialism represents the place's part in the relationship through the affordances and constraints[6] it offers. In many ways, humans have always been partly at the mercy of their environment, so developing an understanding of material agency in the relationship brings greater understanding to the dynamics at work.

While rhetoric *in situ* and public memory are the main scholarship concepts developing the rhetoric-archaeology interdisciplinary approach to this project, new materialism grounds the research in the material and also balances the triad of publics-objects-place relationships so that one node is not favored over the others. Taken together, the lenses of public memory, new materialism, and rhetoric *in situ* contribute to the definitions of publics, objects, and place that were established in chapter one as well as offer a means to connect the nodes to better understand the relationship processes at work.

Research Design

This research explores its questions through the analysis of two case studies. The case study method of qualitative research is familiar to both rhetoric and archaeology, which lends itself to clarity as well as an established understanding of the limitations of the design. Case study was chosen as the most suitable method because it offers an opportunity for detailed

[6] While invoking the language of Don Norman and usability studies, the use of "affordance" and "constraint" does not explicitly imply UX concepts. Rather, the language Norman has introduced into scholarship serve as a set of active verbs to describe the agency of material from the material's side of the relationship which is how it is intended here.

analysis into exemplary instances, as opposed to other methods that look at a larger data set (Yin 9). Rather than considering a case as representative of a whole or typical instance, a case study has the strength of exploring an individual instance (Newkirk 130). For this research, the case studies are framed as unique examples of exhibition design, not samples of typical exhibitions.

Case study is the most suitable method to explore the processes described in the research questions listed in Chapter 1, recall:

- What does it mean to understand archaeological human remains as "objects"?
- How can an analysis of human remains contribute to scholarship in rhetoric about public memory in museums and places of public memory? What is the relationship between the concept of "place" and human remains?
- How can scholarship on place in rhetoric inform and/or contextualize the approach to interpretation of archaeological human remains in museum display? How can this relationship be expressed to the public through archaeological and museum interpretation?

Research questions beginning with "how" emphasize the process as an important part of the investigation. Above all, case study method allows for the fusion of case and context (Yin 15). This research conceptualizes rhetoric as an ecology of context, requiring the capacity to study the context of each case as essential. A case study design is legible in both disciplines and allows for the work of developing a strong relationship with context in understanding the processes of meaning-making.

Sources for data analysis are broad and varied in an attempt to capture many points in a rhetorical ecology that represent object interpretation, place, publics, and the modes of material discourse. For each case, the exhibition itself is the main focus of rhetorical analysis as

experienced by the researcher. The case studies are supported by data in the form of publicly-circulated discourse: exhibition reviews and other press, contextual documents about the places, archaeological sites, and historic events, and visitor/viewer responses where possible as well as images from official and vernacular sources, film footage, and historical documents literature. These points of data represent the circulating discourses from and also about the exhibition which offer a glimpse of the publics that formed around each case. These texts also represent vestiges of the material expressions that remain after an ephemeral experience – such as a temporary exhibition – is gone. Textual data from a number of sources associated with the exhibitions can then determine what can be revealed about the relationship of the three nodes that this research is attempting to triangulate: publics, place, and human remains.

Criteria for Selecting Case Studies

For case study selection, it was important to find a rhetorical ecology with a positive outcome in order to critically analyze what went right. From a museum studies perspective as the measure of success, I have chosen both of the case studies to be what I consider examples of positive curatorial choices that effectively communicate their interpretation of the human remains display with a strong relationship to place. In this project, examining what good examples look like may lead to greater connections in the relationship between scholarly interpretation and discourse taken up in public memory. In addition, polishing the rhetorical moves that are done well can lead to a more solid framework of heuristics or markers of best practice for development of future exhibitions.

Case study selection had a number of criteria that serve to emphasize the three key nodes of place, object, and publics while mitigating other variables. Selection considerations include:

- The human remains are from an archaeological context.

- The display was a temporary exhibition, as opposed to a permanent display that may be modified over time.
- The exhibition is associated with a heritage museum[7] and/or institutional mission objective to connect publics with place.
- There is a demonstrated objective to deemphasize time in the interpretation, both in the sense of temporal distance between the objects and the publics as well as the depth of time represented in the archaeology.
- Interpretation emphasizes place and encourages a connection of "thereness" for the publics to enhance the relationship between publics and *in situ* place.

Each criterion's description and justification follow:

The human remains are from an archaeological context. Exhibitions containing human remains were narrowed to only include those with human remains from archaeological contexts. An archaeological site is developing a sense of place through scientific investigation of the archaeological material buried there. When remains are discovered as part of this archaeological record, they are tied to the place in many senses though their provenience. The connection to place with excavated human remains from an archaeological context is already established at the time of discovery *in situ*. These rhetorical layers of connection between the place and the archaeologically excavated human remains can be explored through case studies. As outlined in the previous chapter, anthropological collections and medical specimens fall outside of the scope for this project.

Additionally, the criteria limitation to archaeological cases ensures continuity of language, since the definitions developed in this project are built on scholarship from rhetoric,

[7] While the Wellcome Collection is not a heritage museum, the objects exhibited in this case are from the Museum of London, which is a heritage museum.

archaeology, and museum studies and may not transfer wholesale into another discipline's usage. This interdisciplinary research centers around forging connections between archaeology and rhetoric in understanding place. As such, the requirement of the case studies to include only human remains excavated from archaeological contexts was necessary to ensure that all of the established definitions of terms apply. While it is a sincere hope that some of these concepts will have use in interpreting human remains in museums beyond the scope of this research, those connections or applications must be built elsewhere.

The display was a temporary exhibition, as opposed to a permanent display that may be modified over time. Defining an interpretive objective narrowed the pool on a further constraint of temporary exhibitions rather than considering permanent exhibits. Temporary exhibitions have a more structured theme or interpretive agenda to present which are developed and marketed clearly to potential visiting publics. Temporary exhibitions are also more straightforwardly contained as a case study without years of slow small changes to the design or interpretation, ensuring consistency of visitor experience. This containment aspect of temporary exhibitions reinforced the strength of case studies in the research design as focused investigations of an instance rather than a generalized analysis, allowing for a clear frame limited to the run of an exhibition. Thus, it follows that the temporary exhibitions had to have completed their display run or otherwise be finalized without the option for further changes to be considered for selection.

Documentary film presentations featuring select material from a museum collection may not be the first example to come to mind of a temporary museum exhibition but in many ways, it is the perfect example. The agenda and design are clear, the visitor experience is identical beyond what is possible in a physical museum display, and the interpretive message is narrated

to ensure communication better than any interpretive signage that can easily be passed by in a gallery unread. For the purposes of rhetorical analysis of the interpretation of objects, museum-centered documentaries have the potential to inform communication strategy directly to museum exhibition. The second case study, select episodes of *Medieval Dead* series, stretches the definition of a temporary exhibition to documentary film while meeting all of the qualifications of being limited and encapsulated without the possibility of changes while also challenging the boundaries of exhibitions as limited to physical walls of a museum.

Heritage museum and/or institutional mission objective to connect publics with place. Heritage museums were preferred in case selection because they are built on the bond of place and exist to share that depth of history with publics *in situ*. Heritage museums are defined here as the institutions and collections that are located in a place with the express mission to preserve and interpret the history of that place. The right case study must demonstrate an emphasis on this relationship with place as part of their interpretive objective or mission statement. The cases that took a unique approach to one or more of those nodes were selected.

The first case study, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones," made unique curatorial choices to de-emphasize differences in time and culture while emphasizing the individual human experience and relationship to place with the human remains displayed, which successfully develops a relationship between all three nodes of publics, objects, and place.

In the second case study, two selected episodes of the *Medieval Dead* series, provide cases of battlefield archaeology – one episode where the human remains provide an unusually high volume of data and the other episode where the remains have not been located on the battlefield – tests the relationship between place, publics, and human remains when one of those

nodes is physically absent and yet still the focus of the exhibition. All of the objects featured in the documentary are associated with the featured local heritage institutions.

By selecting case studies that clearly aim to connect the human remains with the *in situ* place for the audience, this research can explore how the interpretation was executed and also how the interpretation compensated for any imbalance of representation between the three nodes of the ecotriangle.

There is a demonstrated objective to deemphasize time in the interpretation, both in the sense of temporal distance between the objects and the publics as well as the depth of time represented in the archaeology. Public memory studies point out the strong relationship with place carries a weak connection to time. Since time does not serve to better understand publics nor place, an additional criterion was added to select cases that minimized the address of time in the interpretation. With so many other connections valued over place in communicating archaeological material, this qualification quickly narrowed the options to exhibitions that innovated in their exceptional approach to interpreting human remains. Exhibitions often shape their focus on the archaeological interpretations, building an understanding of the source culture or time period with the objects on display. The case studies selected depart from traditional presentation emphasis on time.

Interpretive emphasis on place that encourages a connection of "thereness" for the public visitors to enhance the relationship between publics and in situ place. As the case studies will demonstrate, a focus on communicating a sense of place is an innovative interpretive practice that offers a different approach to developing connections for the visitor. Public memory scholarship has established a strong connection between publics and place, pointing to a vast opportunity for this connection as a choice of interpretive emphasis. There is also a materiality to

place that offers engagement through physical interaction. This general idea of evoking a connection to in situ place while in a museum place starts with a familiarity shared by the publics with both places. Encompassing the desire to preferentially select cases from local heritage museums or to find some other connection that facilitates a familiarity with the in situ place, the final criteria for selection can be described as a shared sense of "thereness[8]."

The criteria of thereness ensures an unhindered relationship between publics and place. Turning to rhetorical history's roots in ontological truth with Protagoras, Rickert describes the inseparable bond between experience and knowledge where involvement is essential to knowing; without thereness there is not understanding ("From Reason to Reasoning"). Rickert laments that this essential aspect of understanding truth and knowledge is often overlooked (ibid 98-9). While thereness is often a part of what brings publics together through shared experiences, the interpretation of place to publics makes choices to overlook or invoke thereness as part of the meaning-making process. Thereness is also a term that can describe the human remains on display; since the object shares an experiential knowledge of the place – perhaps more so than anyone – the agency of the remains positions them as both the object on display and a member of publics. Selecting case studies that had a demonstrable connection of thereness with the audience based on the material on display and the location of the exhibition affords an opportunity to critique how thereness is used or overlooked by the interpretation.

There is a great hurdle in maintaining the connection of place with excavated human remains from the archaeological context relocated to museums no matter how short the physical distance. This transition from burial context to public display involves rhetorical work to develop a layered sense of place. A key focus of this research is to identify the means of retaining this

[8] Quotes used only to re-introduce the term for the first use in body text of this chapter.

sense of place in the interpretation. The case studies provide an opportunity to investigate this connection to sense of place at a short distance and strong shared thereness for both the publics and the remains to find patterns that can be tested in further research as the distance increases or thereness is diminished. This first look at concentrating on the variable of place will benefit the future navigation of interpreting place for more culturally, politically, and geographically complex distances between archaeological site and museum display.

Case Study: "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones"

In 2008, there was a temporary exhibition at the Wellcome Collection in London of loan objects from Museum of London (MoL)'s collection of remains, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones." The first case study made unique curatorial choices to de-emphasize differences in time and culture by displaying the remains in supine position without any grave goods or other objects of material culture which would identify the remains as from another time or culture. Instead, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" emphasized the individual human experience and relationship to place by diplaying human remains with only two aspects of interpretation: each body had a text panel that described their medical pathology and a photographic image of the modern street where the body was found. The pathology connects the public visitor with the remains through shared experience while the modern images of London streets connect the public with recognizable places, developing a relationship between all three.

The Museum of London repository of human remains are all from Museum of London Archaeological Services excavations, all from archaeological contexts within the city. The temporary exhibition has a clear objective to communicate a sense of place to visitors through curatorial interpretation. The 2008 Wellcome Collection exhibition, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones," has a geographic limit of the city of London for the *in situ* place and the place of

exhibition. This exhibition highlighted closeness or sameness between publics and objects by using language to collectively refer to both the visitors and remains on display as "Londoners" in the interpretation. The interpretation of all bodies in the room as Londoners amplifies the sense of thereness while implying the material agency of the remains as both objects and members of the public. This exhibition is innovative in its emphasis of sense of place, serving as a benchmark model and therefore worth exploring to understand what makes this exhibition successful in communicating place.

In the "Skeletons[9]" exhibition, bodies from jumbled centuries were displayed next to one another with minimal indication[10] of cultural or temporal difference. All skeletons were placed in supine osteological reconstruction position on an examination table that was dressed with nothing but a dark sand-like substance as a nod to their burial environment, connecting to *in situ* place. Burial practices were removed from the interpretation by unifying the presentation without reference to grave goods, clothing, or even *in situ* burial position. Instead of a timeline or groupings by culture – Roman, Saxon, Medieval, etc. – the bodies were positioned in a large gallery accompanied not by their grave goods but rather a photograph of their burial location, emphasizing the relationship of place. On the walls were images of restaurants, office buildings, and the London Mint to mark what stands over these bodies' burial sites. This use of personal experience of the object's life through pathology and thereness through images of modern street corners expresses a strong curatorial design to emphasize the material agency of the objects as humans – Londoners – demonstrated through thereness of place and experience.

[9] Abbreviation for the full exhibition title, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones," to reduce repetition.

[10] Individual interpretation of the bodies did include mention of time period/date but stressed medical pathology and forensic analysis.

Minimizing the distance of time or culture whilst emphasizing the proximity of place and the individual human experience, the exhibition design brings a closeness to the visitors. Publics were referred to as fellow Londoners who share an experience of living in the same place as those who are on display. Over the millennia, what it meant to be a Londoner spanned a diverse range of culture, religion, ethnicity through waves of invasion, colonization, and imperialism with cycles of oppression and marginalization that have changed shape and constituency. Any individual Londoner could situate themselves in their own heritage of tensions with deep layers of division embedded in London's publics since the city's inception during the Roman occupation. "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" strips the ability for visitors to situate themselves within the layers of historic conflict and discord to focus on the unifying experience of living in one's mortal body in the city that all Londoners call home.

This case study is an opportunity to attend to the inverse relationship between time and place through public memory scholarship. Centering "place" as London in London also expands the audience of shared experience to anyone who walks those same streets is having a connection with the lives of the people who came before. The forensic pathology reveals the richness of varied lives in London's history, showing how disease, injury, and malnutrition are written in one's bones along with the overindulgences that lead to obesity and gout, marking good times and bad in a person's lifetime. The pains of childbirth and arthritis were suffered by bodies on display as well as bodies of modern visitors in the room. There is an important connection to rhetoric *in situ*, specifically embodied practice, since part of the exhibition experience was being in London as part of the timeless Londoner experience.

The clear relationship between the individual, illustrated through the pathology, and the sense of place is embossed in this exhibition in a unique way. By stripping bare the differences

between people through de-emphasis of time period or cultural association, the exhibition offers an opportunity to explore the connection of place and public memory through thereness of shared experience. To account for the depth of layers doing the rhetorical work in these connections, the materiality of thereness – or at least the material interactions involved in embodied experience – are also considered in this case study.

The textual artifacts that have outlasted the temporary exhibition remain, which represent two avenues of discourse for interpretation: the official forms of curatorial presentation and the vernacular forms of public discourse. Rhetorical analysis of the curatorial choices can be made through study of the exhibitions and literature that was produced by the museum(s) as part of this display. Though I bring embodied experience as a visitor of the 2008 exhibition to the rhetorical analysis, this research can also rely on texts published by the Museum of London and the Wellcome Collection as well as their webpage archives. Approaching the exhibition from another angle, the public responses to the exhibition that have survived in digital media can also be analyzed as samples of the public discourse from the display. This exhibition left traces of the public discourse that developed around the remains and display through reviews, journalism, and visitor responses noted in various media. Vestigial artifacts of this exhibition in the form of the exhibition publications, news articles, press releases, and reviews are also used as references to represent the exhibition in the analysis (Colls; van Dooren; Mace; Marchini; Marshallsay; Sargent; Werner). These artifacts of discourse enhance the analysis of the exhibition's rhetorical ecology and circulation of discourse.

The choice of "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" as a case study meets all criteria established in the methodology for this research project while also challenging some of the assumptions within the criteria. I argue that this case explores how to blur the boundary between

publics and objects that makes room for material agency. This case also experimented with ways to encompass the *in situ* experience of place while within the walls of the museum, blurring distinction by evoking thereness. The exhibitions were popular and well received by the museum community and the general public, which merits a closer look at how their approach disrupted the expectations of a traditional interpretation and built strong connections for visitors with both the objects and place.

Case Study: *Medieval Dead*

From the six-episode documentary series, *Medieval Dead*, two episodes were chosen that emphasize place and public memory: episode 2, "The Last Stand at Visby," and episode 3, "Agincourt's Lost Dead." This documentary series attempts to connect the remains with place by emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between one informing the other in archaeological interpretation. These two episodes exemplify this reciprocity, as the Battle of Visby events are reconstructed through forensic analysis of the human remains, while the dead from Battle of Agincourt have not been found. The fallen soldiers from Agincourt's experiences are interpreted through analysis of the place where the battle took place and supplementary textual evidence. Rather than focus on the nodes of publics, place, and objects, this case study allows a relational investigation to see how the connections interact in the meaning-making process.

A televised documentary stretches the definition of temporary exhibition, though it has all of the features of being contained as a finished product and represents a focused presentation of curatorial interpretation in a discrete package. The sense of place in this case is more straightforward in a way, since the archaeological site or *in situ* place of excavation can be filmed on location, removing or mitigating the displacement factor of moving archaeological material to a museum space. Simultaneously, the sense of place is more complicated in that

publics are not sharing physical geographic proximity to the place, making distance a variable for the viewers' asynchronous viewing experience while bringing them closer in a virtual visit of the *in situ* location than a museum can. It is precisely this complication of understanding the distance that makes this case study valuable to this research for exploring those definitions and how public memory develops an understanding of place. The approach to communicating a sense of place in the interpretation of archaeological material is innovative for both the medium of exhibition and genre of archaeological documentary.

An emphasis on the specialism of battlefield archaeology in this series demonstrates a clear objective to communicate a sense of place in their interpretation and presentation of human remains. The *Medieval Dead* documentary series also emphasizes the archaeological process, featuring only remains excavated from *in situ* burial environments. In the case of the Agincourt site, the battlefield place is explored without any excavated human remains. The absence of the featured objects provides an interesting opportunity for rhetoric *in situ* to develop connections to publics and objects when one node of the triangle is obscured, necessitating a greater reliance on place.

Both episodes parallel issues with interpretation's strong relationship with place, which can be read through the tenants of rhetoric *in situ*, a key reason these battlefield episodes were chosen as a case study. The brevity of the battle event and the relative lack of archaeological deposits or cultural material means battlefield archaeology relies more heavily on interpreting the place. While *in situ* place is always important in archaeological analysis, battlefield archaeology represents a particular emphasis on place that can perhaps be better understood through rhetoric *in situ*. Mutually, rhetoric *in situ* may gain in methodological perspective through this rhetorical analysis of battlefield archaeology interpretation methods.

New materialism is applied to this case study by shifting emphases away from the objects' agency to the agency of place which fits with battlefield archaeology's approach to interpreting place. Battlefield archaeology attempts to reconstruct the events of a few hours that happened centuries ago, a unique type of archaeological investigation that cannot rely as heavily on material evidence from buried objects since there is only a brief event and any deposited material is often removed or relocated immediately after the battle. Instead, battlefield archaeology relies on investigation of the battlefield itself, considering the opportunities and limitations that the place afforded in order to interpret the event, implying material agency of the place itself. In battlefield archaeology interpretation, the place may have as much to do with determining the outcome of a battle as the human combatants (Zabecki). I argue that acknowledging material agency describes the interpretations that are already practiced in battlefield archaeology.

Another key reason this case study was chosen is the rich complexity of public memory demonstrated in the cycles of remembering and forgetting, specifically how human remains can affect this cycle through their agency. Agincourt has an indelible presence in public memory thanks in large part to Shakespeare's play, *Henry V*, yet because of this Shakespearean invocation, there is a gap between the memory of the event and the sense of place. "Agincourt's Lost Dead" attempts to reconnect the memory of the battle to the physical place where the battle occurred. This particular episode in a documentary series on human remains. Such an absence of human remains in a feature about human remains is a bold choice by the series that serves to highlight the importance of place. This absent node also offers an opportunity to understand how the remains are still accounted for in the ecotriangular relationship. Through the interpretation of

the place and accounts of the event, the human remains are interpreted – and remembered – *in abstentia*.

Conversely, the Battle of Visby is a lesser-known conflict[11] that took place Gotland in 1361. Unlike Agincourt, the remains from that day have been excavated in what became the largest battlefield mass grave ever found. Analysis and interpretation of the remains from the battlefield gravesite reconstruct a vivid narrative of the event which in turn triggers a cycle of remembrance. Through display of these human remains, the event is remembered, or re-remembered, in great detail. This aspect of the case study offers a depth of rhetorical exploration in the relationship between memory and place through archaeological interpretation of human remains.

The Visby battlefield offers a complementary juxtaposition with mass graves of armored soldiers and a battlefield that has remained open ground into modern times. Visby's mass graves represent an overwhelmingly represented node of human remains in the triangular relationship. Visby is battlefield archaeology's largest medieval skeletal assemblage in Europe with around 1200 fallen soldiers excavated to date (Pinhasi and Mays 322). The sheer volume of remains and material culture objects found at Visby confound the model of battlefield archaeology's reliance on place for interpretation of the event. Instead, the largest data point on the ecotriangle is the material objects while the node of publics is lightest in comparatively sparse discourse in a cycle of forgetting until the objects spark a cycle of remembrance, though the ecotriangle remains

[11] In the sense that is has not been taken up in English-speaking Western discourses of memory to the same extent as Shakespeare's literary works. However, this event is still circulating in Swedish and Gotlander public memories and discourses. Further, this battle arguably had a greater effect on European history than Agincourt. This tension between importance and perceived importance in public discourses will be explored in the case study's chapter -- this footnote serves to briefly acknowledge that tension and convey respect to the dissident viewpoint of Visby's importance.

equilateral. There is evidence of material agency in the relationship between objects and publics which will be explored through this case study.

The choice to compare battlefield archaeology sites presented as documentary episodes challenges the definition of an exhibition and provides examples of compensation for imbalanced representation of publics, objects, and place. Filling gaps and equalizing imbalance in the presence of each factor through rhetorical construction, this case study is an opportunity to investigate the interplay of relational forces within the ecotriangle. In addition, the abundance or absence of objects and the reliance on place in the methods of battlefield archaeology are a chance to demonstrate materiality and material agency at work in archaeological interpretation.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the reach of this scholarship that may be served in other places or as part of expanding further research opportunities. While the two case studies chosen offer complex rhetorical ecologies on human remains and place, two is a very small sample set. The primary focus of this section is the limitations of the project's scope as well as the inherent limitations in case study research design.

Notably from the vantage point of archaeology, this research is taking up issues that are essentially grounded in ethical debates within archaeology and museum scholarship, yet removing itself from those ethical conversations. While this work intends to serve the overlaying ethical debates, it is situated in rhetoric in its scholarly approaches to investigation and analysis. Not commenting directly on any of the ethical conversations still simultaneously recognizes that these debates are inseparable layers. This rhetorical work has great potential to inform the ethical conversations in those fields as part of expanding future research.

This work is also limited to human remains in publicly-accessible museum collections specifically from excavated archaeological contexts. Many museums house collections of human remains from medical collections, anthropological procurement, or other sources that are not archaeological excavations and, while not explicitly considered here, are important to include in human remains conversations. Some of the rhetorical work on the nature of human remains may still apply to these types of collections, though collections of remains that are not provenanced through archaeological excavation lack a connection to place and are situated in rhetorical ecologies that are too different from this project's research design to benefit directly from this project. Specifically, the way this project defines human remains as objects hinges upon the act of excavation as the moment when the remains become objects as they are taken up into the archaeological record and layers of new meaning and use are applied.

The complex interdisciplinary nature of this project has necessitated a broader approach to the cultural heritage disciplines. Consequently, distinctions between archaeology and museum studies are not fully developed. Archaeology and museums are often referred to here in the same breath as the group of disciplines being bridged with rhetoric. It is not the intent to imply that these are the same discipline since work between archaeology and museums is in itself interdisciplinary. Rather, the relationship is being framed as a through-thread to include archaeology in this frame of responsibility toward archaeologically-excavated materials. There is not a hand-off between disciplines where archaeology cuts ties in stakeholder responsibility once archaeological material enters a museum. Rather, there is a growing coalition of stakeholders in stewardship as material moves from archaeological site to museum collection. This "archaeology and museums" grouping represents a shorthand for this mutual stakeholder relationship for the sake of brevity within the limited scope of this research.

Certainly, the limitation of geographic and cultural distance built into this research design severely limits the scope of the initial conclusions developed within this project. Case study methods, by design, are limited to specific instances that offer an opportunity to extrapolate yet cannot generalize. As with all case studies, there are some shortcomings to the use of the findings, such as the limitations to generalizing the findings or the capacity for comparison (Yin 22-3). As such, the scope of potential extrapolation for this project is limited until further research can expand, challenge, and refine the conclusions made here.

Further to the point of geographical limitations, both cases are European contexts and produced by British institutions, the Museum of London and Wellcome Collection in one case, and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) in the other. In order to delve into the nuances, I felt it was essential to be highly familiar with the rhetorical ecologies in as many senses as possible with embodied experience, thereness, and cultural fluency. I am also a critical outsider, moving to the UK as a graduate student with a career in archaeology established in the United States for more than a decade at that time. Case study method limits extrapolation of findings and the tight geographical and cultural concentration of these chosen case studies further limits extrapolation potential. Research by scholars from other positionalities analyzing a more diverse range of rhetorical ecologies is essential to reinforce or challenge the findings of the modest contribution from these two case study analyses.

This research is requisitely brief with a narrow scope and is intended to serve as a sample of the kinds of scholarship possibilities that are yet to be explored with regard to human remains in museum collections. While this research focuses on “how” and “why” questions that are suited well to a case study design, complementary research with other methods that include statistics, survey, or other larger data sets may answer differently-framed questions about

publics, objects, and place that further understanding through comparison or generalization. The use of case studies as a research design is limited by a small sample size of the individual case, further limiting the way in which these concepts can be explored through the opportunities presented in these instances. There is a great deal more work to do in unpacking tacit processes of meaning-making in archaeological interpretation, even with regard to human remains.

Methodology Discussion

Objects from *in situ* archaeological contexts are interpreted for visiting publics in museum galleries, creating an interlaced relational triangle between the object, the place, and the visitor who experiences the exhibit. While scholarship in archaeology and museum studies has a large body of scholarship devoted to display and interpretation, this research contributes by asking a notoriously difficult question of that scene: What if the object is human remains? This question challenges some of the categories and smooth prescriptive flows of rationale, starting with how terms like "object" fit for starting the discussion of this "what if" scenario. Public memory studies has not asked the question specifically on human remains in museums or as a nodes of remembrance. New materialism has not situated human remains as an object nor considered what a once-human object means for posthumanism. Archaeology and museum studies have considered human remains more than the other fields by necessity but have yet to add the agency of human remains into the network of considerations. Human remains are framed here not as an exception to the rules but as a fitness test to interrogate the established rules.

The main body of scholarship for archaeology and museums on the subject of human remains are ethical conversations that can be catalogued by the acquisition source of remains with an emphasis on stakeholder relationships. Ethical scholarship is imperatively valuable, of course, but it seems so focused on engaging with dynamics of power and emphasis on the non-

material that it overlooks the materiality of the human remains and fails to acknowledge its agency. There are a great many tacit assumptions established in the ethical scholarship of museum studies that are worth unpacking. Perhaps understanding the layers of assumptions and spending more time considering the materiality and material agency of the object of discussion would strengthen and productively complicate the ethical scholarship on human remains collections. Unpacking those assumptions and making room to give the material a seat at the table of discussion begins when more scenarios and case studies ask the questions: What if that object on the shelf is human remains?

3. CASE STUDY: "SKELETONS: LONDON'S BURIED BONES" EXHIBITION

I have often conveyed the experience of visiting The Wellcome Collection's 2008 "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" as an example of bold display design of human remains. At the end of my first day in graduate school at the Institute of Archaeology in 2008, I joined two publics as a student of museum ethics and as a visitor to the Wellcome Collection. The exhibition invoked an awareness of a third public I joined in their inclusive rhetorical construction of "Londoner" based on experience of place no matter if the experience was a day or a lifetime. I was also a new Londoner through an experiential knowledge of place that was shared by everyone in the room, both living and dead. Like other visitor and exhibition critics, for me, the "Skeletons" exhibition experience brought together a powerful convergence of place and objects for the visiting publics.

When an exhibition successfully communicates a topic or demonstrates best practice in some way, it is often modeled by later exhibitions directly as the template for future exhibitions. While it is valuable to model methods of display layout and interpretation, the rhetorical ecology changes from one exhibition to another. Simply imitating the model of a great exhibition results in diminishing returns since the relationship of place, publics, and objects is never static nor replicable. Returning to the 2008 "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition for inspiration, this project's rhetorical approach endeavors to go beyond understanding the interpretation as a model to instead focus on *how* the exhibition displayed remains in a way that was respectful for the objects and respectfully engaging for the public. Much more can be learned from approaching a case study as a snapshot of this particular rhetorical ecology so that future displays can foster the right relationship between their place, their objects, and their publics by better understanding how these forces interact.

Public memory scholarship on places of memory helps to understand how publics define and use memory places as well as how a museum space serves as a place of public memory. To understand the engagement between visitors and objects in this case, empathy and embodied experience have been used to describe that process. Warner sees strangers becoming a public "by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse" (11-2). Rickert describes "thereness" as an essential aspect of knowledge relating to "involvements" and experience ("It Is All There" 95). Rickert's conceptualization coincides with a more literal interpretation of rhetoric *in situ* that necessitates physical presence in a material place (Hayes 169-70). In this case study of the 2008 exhibition "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones," the ecotriangle relationship of publics, objects, and place is explored within its specific rhetorical ecology.

This case study demonstrates how curatorial choices can actively develop a strong relationship within the ecotriangle by removing barriers that may be obstacles to engagement. This exhibition's design emphasizes shared life experience while removing indications of distance in the sense of geographic distance but also the distant past, distant cultures or social rituals, and even the distance between the life and the death that may otherwise separate visitors from the remains. Engagement with the objects on display as once-living persons also breaks down any clear barrier between publics and objects in this case. By understanding the remains on display as having agency through new materialism, this case also demonstrates how the remains are simultaneously objects and members of the public, fellow Londoners, in this rhetorical ecology.

Appropriateness of removing cultural, religious, social markers and archaeological context is not for every museum or exhibition. These questions move toward ethical conversations that are valid important considerations. Yet, these ethical spheres are built above

and outside of the pre-ethical architecture this rhetorically-centered project aims to construct. Analysis of the ecotriangular of this case study may provide novel perspectives to approach these ethical considerations but that later step falls outside of the scope of this project. As such, this case study analysis explores the rhetorical ecology as it was and leaves the questions of what it should be for the realm of ethical scholarship in museum studies (Mullins; Swain). This rhetorical analysis edges nearest to conversations about ethics in the discussion of modelling exhibitions from different rhetorical ecologies as a problematic practice.

From a rhetorical perspective, the strengths of this exhibition are the clear curatorial goals of creating a bond between the visitors and the remains on display, so a narrow focus of interpretation was a deliberate provocative choice in removing many layers of context. The layers removed from this exhibition are important aspects of critical context and cannot be ignored as an interpretive trend that might result from mimicking the "Skeletons" approach without careful consideration. Instead, this case study serves as an extreme example of how to achieve a narrow interpretive goal through curatorial choices that tightly support that goal. The modern cultural circumstances of London make this exhibition possible. As such the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" should be admired for the novel engagement avenues it achieved and studied critically without being copied in other rhetorical ecologies.

The case study's background and criteria are presented before the larger themes of the analysis are discussed. The relationship of publics, objects, and place is broken down to develop an understanding of the components' relationship to one another where objects become part of the public as they bond over a sense of place. The chapter concludes by looking outward to how this case brings insight into the relationship of the ecotriangle as expressed through the interpretation of human remains.

"Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" Exhibition

The Museum of London (MoL) is the local heritage museum and archive for greater London with millions of objects from thousands of years of London history from prehistoric through to modern times. With over 20,000 human remains in the archaeological collection, the MoL established the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology in 2003 to manage the human remains by developing policies and actions for their care, access, reburial, and research ("Centre for Human Bioarchaeology"). As part of this work, the Wellcome Trust funds and manages a digital database archive for the Centre of Human Bioarchaeology called the Wellcome Osteological Research Database which cross-references with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Center's (LAARC) archaeological database to connect information about the remains with information about their burial place and archaeological context ("About the Wellcome Osteological"). The Wellcome Collection, a free museum located about two miles from MoL's main London Wall galleries, is part of the larger charitable medical research organization, The Wellcome Trust.

In 1936 Sir Henry Wellcome, American pharmaceutical entrepreneur and public health activist, entrusted his fortune and personal collection of medically-related objects from around the world to a establish the Wellcome Trust. With the mission to "improve health through research," the Wellcome Trust currently funds 29 billion GBP, approximately $40 billion USD, in medical research across the globe (Robertson). The Wellcome Collection opened its museum doors to the public in 2007 with permanent galleries of Sir Henry Wellcome's medical anthropology objects and a gallery dedicated to temporary exhibitions. With research collaborations already thriving at the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, the Museum of London loaned 26 skeletons from the archaeological archive to develop "Skeletons: London's Buried

Bones" as one of the first temporary exhibitions at the Wellcome Collection ("Skeletons: London's Buried Bones"; Sargent). This exhibition represents an overlap in institutional missions to advance public understanding of health in the human experience and engage publics with London's heritage.

The exhibition design concept was simple with only two main aspects of interpretation for each individual on display: the pathology information determined from their skeleton and a photographic image of a modern street where the remains were found (see Figure 4). The usual contextualizing visuals of grave goods or other objects from their time period were not there. Only the skeletons were laid out in supine position in a case that resembles a table dressed in a dark sand-like substance, a nod to the dirt in a burial environment of their archaeological context. The text panel on each case notes the excavation location, estimated period for their lifetime, estimated sex, and the pathology of their bones. The images on the wall near each display were labeled by the excavation location rather than the modern street names or landmarks to remind the viewer that the reference is from the skeleton's familiar perspective. The individuals were chosen from a variety of sites that represent the "varied social geography" and a span of 16 centuries ("Dead Men do Tell Tales"; "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones"). It is important to note that while period date estimates were part of the pathology text panels, no other attention to chronology or cultural era was made. While poverty and affluence are a part of the interpretation, they are a conversation about medical pathology relating to disease and malnutrition instead of assumptions about class based on any factors of perceived socioeconomic status. This emphasis on human health becomes personal as each individual is only representing their own human life experience. Empathy through shared lived experience is at the center of this exhibition's engagement approach.

Figure 4: 2008 “Skeletons: London’s Buried Bones” exhibition showing an individual displayed in supine position, visitors reading the pathology text panel, and images of London sites on the wall behind. Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection.

“Skeletons: London’s Buried Bones” emphasizes engagement between individuals on the experience of life in London. The exhibition expands the definition of “Londoners” to include those with knowledge of the place through experience, whether visiting or native, past or present. The implicit requirement to share the experience is met by everyone by virtue of being present in the place of exhibition. Both the visitors and the individuals on display experienced accidents, illness, growing up or growing old, pollution, groceries, dinner, long walks, bad weather, and crowds in London. Without a directed exhibition path through the gallery space, the visitor was free to spend as much time as they liked getting to know each individual in no pre-scripted order. Much like every individual’s knowledge of London grows from their own paths through the city, visitors were able to visit the skeletons on display on their own path as they made empathetic engagements without influence of an official narrative or directed way to experience the exhibition.

This exhibition demonstrates the ecotriangular interrelationship of publics, objects, and place because it brought together the comradery of thereness in place and of human health through lived experience. As such, the objects and publics merge to form a community of Londoners across London's history. Object agency is key to understanding how this relationship dynamic create what Dickenson, Blair, and Ott refer to as a "cross-temporal community" (27). Place serves as the tie that binds publics and objects through their mutual thereness. Looking at the rhetorical ecology, it becomes clear that this exhibition's approach to public engagement is inextricably attached to London and specifically the Wellcome Collection galleries, which leads to a discussion on the issues that reproduction of this exhibition's format could pose in another rhetorical ecology.

Case Study Criteria

The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition was selected as the first case study for its innovative interpretation of place while meeting the rest of the criteria established in the methodology. Case study selection intended to emphasize the three key nodes of place, object, and publics while mitigating other variables. The criteria for case studies, as stated in chapter 2 methodology, are listed again here before the explication of each criterion.

The human remains are from an archaeological context. All of the 26 objects on display at the Wellcome Collection in 2008's "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition were loaned to the Wellcome from the Museum of London's collection of archaeologically-excavated human remains. All human remains in the Museum of London's collection are from archaeologically-excavated contexts, per section 2.1 ("Policies") of their Policy for the Care of Human Remains in Museum of London Collections (*ibid*.). This policy procedure requires archaeological provenience data to ensure that all remains are from archaeological excavations.

This criterion narrows the contextual situation for acquisition of the remains to archaeological excavations. Human remains in museum collections acquired by other means fall outside of this project's explicit frame of the ecotriangle because the frame is built upon the rhetorical layers associated with necessary stewardship of discovered bodies from rescue archaeology, urban construction, or other reasons for archaeology to be conducted in an area that cannot then be reused as the site of repatriation. Further, archaeologically excavated material has a known *in situ* provenience that clearly indicates the relationship with place.

The display was a temporary exhibition, as opposed to a permanent display that may be modified over time. While the 2008 "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" temporary exhibition is the focus of this chapter, all of the mentioned comparative exhibitions were also temporary. The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition was open at the Wellcome Collection in London from 23 July to 28 September, 2008 (Sargent). The 2008 Wellcome Collection exhibition is the focus of this case study. A recent exhibition tour, collectively named "Skeletons: Our Buried Bones" is compared in the discussion of this chapter only briefly but worth noting that this tour also meets the temporary exhibition criteria. "Skeletons: Our Buried Bones" was open in Glasgow at the Hunterian Museum from 19 August, 2016, to 8 January, 2017, then Bristol at Bristol Museum's MShed from 8 April to 3 September, 2017, and finally at Leeds Museum from 22 September, 2017, to 7 January, 2018 (Baxter; "Hunterian Skeletons"; "MShed Bristol Skeletons"). All of these temporary exhibitions were completed and off of display by the time of this research without possibility of modifications.

A temporary exhibition is important to ensure that all discourse refers to an identical rhetorical ecology. Since it is a short-term opening, temporary exhibitions are not subject to change in the same way as permanent gallery exhibits. Permanent exhibits may be updated or

otherwise modified over time, often for reasons other than curatorial intent such as cleaning, loaning objects, or removal of material for conservation. With a temporary exhibition, there is a snapshot of exhibition design with clear curatorial intent that matches the discourse circulating on a similar visitor experience, thus all discourse is referring to the same display in the same form. The fixed period of a temporary exhibition reduces variables for the case study that might result from minor changes to the display, interpretation, or presentation.

Heritage museum and/or institutional mission objective to connect publics with place. The Wellcome Collection and the Museum of London both have mission objectives to curate local heritage and work together closely for London's human remains. The Museum of London's mission statement contains a message of strong connection between publics and place:

> "We connect people with the lived experience of London. The story we tell is one of place and people, evolving through interaction and exchange. We summarize what we do in three words: We Are London. It is at once our aspiration and our mandate." ("Who We Are")

The motto of "We Are London" with an emphasis on "lived experience" explicitly acknowledges a relationship between publics and place. The Wellcome Collection's vision statement focuses on publics and discourse as their touchstone of "diverse community" through objects "to be a place that challenges the ways people think and feel about health by connecting science, medicine, life and art" (Robertson *et al*. 5-6). Together, these two institutions collaborate to store, research, and access the archaeologically-excavated human remains from London.

The Museum of London established the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology in 2003 to curate the remains excavated in London, a majority of which were excavated by the largest

archaeological service provider in London, Museum of London Archaeological Service[12] ("Centre for Human Bioarchaeology"). The Centre for Human Bioarchaeology also maintains a publicly-accessible research database in association with the Wellcome Collection, known as WORD, or the Wellcome Osteological Research Database ("About the Wellcome"). This mutual dedication of resources to the archaeologically excavated human remains of London is a joint effort that both institutions share with a clear remit to local heritage preservation.

There is a demonstrated objective to deemphasize time in the interpretation, both in the sense of temporal distance between the objects and the publics as well as the depth of time represented in the archaeology. The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition deemphasized time in the interpretation foremost by displaying the individuals without grave goods, associated objects, or in burial position. Grave goods, clothing, burial position, or personal effects are a clear visual indication of time period. While the exact historical era may not be obvious to all visitors without interpretive indication, these associated burial objects are clearly different from modern fashions and indicate a difference – thus distance – in time. Without these visual indicators of temporal distance, other interpretations can take precedence, such as the lived experience of the individual's pathologies

Interpretive emphasis on place that encourages a connection of "thereness" for the public visitors to enhance the relationship between publics and in situ place. Interpretive emphasis on place can be demonstrated in the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition by the images of modern London to mark the burial place of each individual on display. Rather than indicating identity through grave goods or time period, the skeletons are accompanied by a

[12] While accurate for the context of the 2008 exhibition, Museum of London Archaeology has since merged with Headlands Archaeology in 2017 to form a consortium under a different name, affiliation, and board of governance ("MOLA-Headland Infrastructure").

photograph of a modern place in London. The visual image visitors may recognize while the captioned place name is labeled as the skeleton would have known that same spot which merges the knowledge only obtained by lived experience in a particular place, creating a bond of mutual thereness. This bond was reinforced in the interpretation, where the text refers to both the visitors and the remains as Londoners. The emphasis on a sense of place in the exhibition interpretations grounded the public-object relationship in lived experience.

An Engagement: Publics and Objects

In this case, publics and objects are interconnected to the extent that the objects and publics merge into the same community of Londoners. This section explores how the visitors engaged with the remains on display on a personalized level. The engagement centers on living embodiment through human pathology, bonding over shared experience of life's injuries, illnesses, and lifestyle choices. Reciprocally, this section considers how the remains have a constituency in this same public through their shared knowledge of the place, thereness, from their own embodied experience as once-living citizens. Recognizing the agency of the remains in this analysis informs the broader argument that object agency is already acknowledged in museum practice. Based on the observations from this case study, the respectful treatment of human remains in museum collections appears to manifest as recognition of object agency.

While there are many possible approaches to public engagement, these "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition focus on removing potential barriers to connection by minimizing outward markers of distance between the person visiting the exhibition and the person on display. Time, culture, social, and ritual are identified here as a hinderance to engagement where the visitors can distance themselves from those on display by identifying the differences between their own culture, social, and ritualistic practices. By removing visual cues

to disassociate a visitor's natural tendency to make judgements based on outward identifiers. Without the obvious contextualizing markers, the visitors can focus on the pathology that the display emphasizes and the shared experience of living life in London.

It is important to note that many other outward markers of difference between people such as race or sex that may imply a marginalized group within a society are already minimized in this exhibition because skeletons do not preserve obvious indications of these features. Osteoarcheologists can estimate sex in some cases, along with age or cause of death, but they are always only estimates. It turns out we are all our most similar at the bone. For example, while stable isotope analysis indicates that one individual, Milborough Maxwell, grew up in the Caribbean (Sargent 62), commenting on her race is entirely speculation based on the skeleton alone. Scholars raise concerns that new materialism may overlook critical dynamics of race, gender, and identity (Beucher et al. 474), but in this case those dynamics are largely absent simply because they are beyond the limits of osteological analysis. A skeleton alone does not indicate race, sex, gender, culture, or social custom to a visitor and only hints at these identifiers when studied by osteoarchaeological specialists, stripping much of these cultural constructs from the interface between visitors and skeletons.

The minimization of outward markers of identity may appear to universalize one dominant narrative of the Londoner experience, yet the curators limit this by highly limiting any interpretive narrative. The exhibition negotiates the issues of poverty and social marginalization that can be addressed based on the pathology of diet and disease as well as the burial place but little is said about the aforementioned factors of identity negotiated by each individual. I argue that the absence of prejudicial identifiers opens a direct conduit for visitors to participate in their own individualized act of knowledge construction without being mediated by traditional

curatorial interpretation that contextualizes these identifiers through generalizations and reduce the individual skeleton to a representative synecdoche of their identifiers.

With such a complicated history of colonialism, immigration, and oppression that spans ten-fold the timeline of the United States', every Londoner has always had an infinitely complicated identity in which they situate themselves. Every visitor understands themselves as part of a community yet unique in their particular background. Each individual on display is given that dignity as well with the opportunity to tell their own story without the burden of group representation and importantly without the filter of the dominant social narrative. As demonstrated by the Cross Bones woman discussed herein, this exhibition is perhaps the only opportunity she ever received to share the story of her short life without the social identity factors that society judged her by during her lifetime.

Layers to Engagement

Choices made in the design of this exhibition worked to remove impediments to engagement layered between the visitors and the remains on display. Four major identifiers that normally put distance between visitors and objects were mitigated in this design: time, culture, social or ritual, and even death. The place, London, was central to the exhibition theme which removes distance geographically to create a shared sense of place, enhanced further by minimizing these other factors of identity distance. This section explores how the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition emphasized what was shared amongst those in the room by removing markers of difference or distance that may have worked as obstacles for engagement.

Distance of time is the first obstacle that was actively minimized in the exhibition design. While the estimated date range for the lives of each individual was noted on the accompanying text panel, there was no chronology to the layout with centuries intermingled throughout the

room. Without a prescripted path, visitors mingled freely amongst the displays. As Swain noted in reference to human remains ethics, there is some dividing line where distance into the past serves to distance visitors from the remains (95). While temporal distance works to make the display of archaeological human remains more socially acceptable than a recently-deceased body, it has an inverse effect on engagement, as Graslie comments, "time itself has a way of distancing a visitor's reaction to human remains…that creates a barrier for appreciation or respect" ("What Should Museums). This exhibition takes strategic advantage of what Zelizer points out that when it comes to places of public memory, there is a dissociation between memory and time but a strong association between memory and place (222-4). With place holding such significance in this exhibition, time was an obstacle overcome through emphasizing the connection to place. The design of this exhibition subverts expectation of a museum display explicating any chronology. The absence of expected identifiers is discombobulating, encouraging visitors to seek other more nuanced ways to orient themselves.

The lack of chronology also creates new relationships amongst the individuals on display, placing bodies next to one another who may have lived centuries apart. Without the differentiation, it is not easy to navigate the display with an understanding of any time period that separated the individuals that lay side by side. If the difference of a few centuries is barely noticeable when understanding the individual lives of two Londoners laid out a few feet apart, then the difference of a few centuries is equally minimal for the visitors walking amongst them. When another factor predominates, such as a sense of place, time can be folded, bent, and collapsed to bring together a sense of community in public memory (Zelizer). The interactions between visitors and the remains without the thought of time contributed to engagement with the individuals.

Places of public memory such as museums can collapse time, as described above, and also expand time to encompass a cross-temporal community to include both visitors and objects in the same public. The constancy of place creates a relatively stable embodied experience for any who visit regardless of whether they meet at the same time (Phillips 29). While this research understands publics as communities of discourse, publics evolved from "almost solely a spatial concept" and still preserve some sense of physical boundaries (Warner 26). With place, those who do not share common values still frame a community based on common space (Gallagher and Kalin 254). Time can be folded to bring people together over a shared knowledge of place. If a public can span the community of visitors who have shared a museum space at different times, I extend that community to include the Londoners whose remains were displayed in the "Skeletons" exhibition as members of the same public as the visitors.

The second potential hinderance to engagement that this exhibition mitigated through display design was a difference in cultural identity. Indications of culture include outward displays such as dress, adornment, and the objects an individual possesses or displays. The "Skeletons" exhibition did not display any associated objects with the bodies, presenting the skeletons equally as bodies on a table without their material goods or adornments[13]. Without the ability to judge differences in culture by visual means, visitors engaged with each body from an unprejudicial approach. While this curatorial choice reduces the ability to identify differences between individuals, it also removes the possibility to understand the individuals within their cultural context.

The key method of removing outward displays of culture was removing grave goods. None of the bodies were displayed with any associated burial objects. Grave goods help to

[13] The exception is an object (arrowhead projective point) imbedded in an individual's spinal vertebra.

understand the individual by understanding what culture the objects are associated with and how these objects indicate status or position within that culture. These objects are essential to archaeological interpretation yet the very act of categorizing someone's status in a system or recognizing them as part of a separate system distances any sense of shared life experience. By stripping bare the differences between people through removal of grave goods and de-emphasis of time period or cultural association, visitors are denied their expected tools for orientation. Thus, visitors must look deeper to find a way to navigate the exhibition which directs them to consider the shared experience of living in the city of London. The exhibition offers an opportunity to explore the connection of place and public memory through thereness of shared experience.

Difference in culture can create distance between people live in the same place at the same time. The engagement of Londoners as a shared community beyond cultural identity may also develop further affinity amongst modern Londoners. London has been a culturally diverse city since it was established as Londinium in 50 CE by the 40,000 Roman soldiers who landed on that shore seven years earlier (Werner 34). By this point in 43 CE, Roman soldiers were as ethnically diverse as the expanse of the Roman Empire, which included parts of what is now North Africa, Central Asia, and the Arabian Plateau with as few as 20% of soldiers hailing from the region of Italy ("The Evidence for the Diversity"). The locals who became Londoners in this early Londinium would have meshed their culture with Romanization which was already a mixed fusion of the local cultures that the soldiers were a part of before London. London's streets have been filled with diversity since its inception on for two thousand years. To be a Londoner has always been to navigate amid a global city of diversity, resulting in a near-infinite multiplicity of individual experiences. The absence of cultural indicators, along with the absence

of official interpretation text panels, creates a moment of engagement where visitors bring their own unique set of experiences to an unmediated construction of knowledge. Each individual is in control to navigate the meaning-making process based on whom (on display) they share a self-identified familiarity of place or pathology experience.

Pathology, what can be determined about a person's health and lifestyle, was an important component of the "Skeletons" exhibition. The medical framing of the exhibition was reflected in the choice of the supine position for all of the individuals on display. A review of the exhibition in *Current Archaeology* points to the forensic comparison, "all the skeletons are presented uniformly, with the trappings of burials…stripped away, and the remains themselves presented in anatomical positions, so that different bones can be seen and the skeletons compared more easily" (Marchini 33). The supine position, to lay flat on one's back facing upward, is the standard position used to reconstruct skeletons and perform analyses. Medical examinations on living persons are also usually conducted supine on one's back. This position invites the visitors to view the remains from the same perspective as the osteoarchaeologists, as each visitor follows the pathology report on the text panel and tries to see what the researcher sees as they analyze a skeleton.

A skeleton represents a person's long-term relationships with lifestyle, labor, habits, and illness that are present in the skeletal pathology. Visitors have the opportunity to empathize through shared experience of a toothache like the child from Chelsea Old Church and the Roman from Bishop's Gate. Nicholas Adams and Milborough Maxwell, named individuals on display, lived well into or past their 60s and suffered the aches and pains of arthritis along with about half of the other skeletons on display and likewise a number of visitors in the room at any given time. There is a physicality, a deeper material embodiment to this expression of empathy. A visitor

commented, “the bald interpretation of the exhibition creates an opportunity for visitors to contribute with their own understanding of health; I overheard people discussing the captions with observations of ‘Aunty so-and-so had this’” (NovaChronicaRogeri). One visitor noted about the East Smithfield Black Death man(?) who survived several years with an arrowhead imbedded in his spine, “both times I have visited the exhibition, visitors commented on the pain he must have suffered” (*ibid*). This engagement through a shared embodiment of life in a mortal human body is possible because of the emphasis on the lived experience of the individual.

Beyond the ever-present concern over disease as part of the human experience, Londoners are still grappling with health issues from individual lifestyle choices. William Wood from Chelsea Old Church is known from the archival records to have worked as a butcher and lived to the ripe age of 84 (Marshallasay). Yet by meeting William Wood at the “Skeletons” exhibition, a journalist noted that one ponders how a fellow who had been missing all of his teeth for many years could be obese (Hayward). Wood suffered from extra growths on his spine as well as osteoarthritis in both hips, painting a picture of a figure that had to lumber on his legs to move around with his large belly causing strain on his back and hips. Separated by centuries from Wood but sharing his approach to life’s gastronomic pleasures, a man from St Benet Sherehog had by his 40s developed a notch in his teeth from habitually clenching a smoking pipe (see Figure 5) as well as a pronounced limp due to gout inflammation and arthritis in his toes brought on by years of a high protein diet. While much of the pathology described throughout the exhibition tells of the circumstances each person endured in their lives, these two individuals highlight choice in lifestyle that mark their bones. Their personalities are filled in around the data points about their habits and lifestyles. The choices these men made are also choices that many face today to find moderation when circumstances afford a person more than they need. The

temptation of rich foods or craving tobacco are not physically-manifested sensations like pain as demonstrated with other pathologies, but the commiseration comes from the same shared knowledge of embodied experience.

Figure 5: Image of St Benet Sherehog man's teeth with pipe facet. Image courtesy of WORD.

With one life story, a visitor has the opportunity to meet the person and get to know them by their circumstance, the way their life impacted their bones. The ability for publics to connect on an emotional level with the remains is at the center of interpretation. Bekvalac, curator of human osteology at the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, remarked, "it is impossible to look at these bones without feeling an emotional connection to these people who died so long ago" (Kennedy). Another conservator noted of the experience, "I do not often get so up close and personal with an [object] but working on this type of material makes you wonder who the person was and what they did in life… [my work] gives this person more of a sense of identity and helps us to understand him a little better" (Bowron). No one would likely identify themselves as a

representative sample of a generic public to which they belong, and this exhibition was an opportunity to recognize that none of these individuals likely would either. The agency afforded to, or simply recognized in, the objects in this display reveal a level of engagement that is possible once enough layers were stripped away to discover avenues for connection.

The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition demonstrates some unconventional curatorial choices to remove indications of difference and distance in the time, culture, and social ritual to develop an environment where similarities or shared experience can dominate the engagement. One seemingly-insurmountable difference between the individuals in the room at the exhibition is that 26 are dead. While the previous potential hinderances can be set aside to find bonds of shared understanding, living people cannot empathize with death through personal experience. The "Skeletons" exhibition designed pathology as the central theme of engagement, which is written during one's lifetime. Life's marks on the body not only create a direct empathetic connection but clearly shift the focus to the living person's experience.

A skeleton is a symbolic *memento mori* of death, but the unique presentation of pathology in this case builds an understanding of their lived experience through disease, injury, lifestyle, and diet. While skeletal pathology can sometimes indicate cause of death, much more can be learned about the person's life from such investigation. Emily Sargent communicates this focus on life as a key message for public engagement, "skeletons can tell us more about what people lived with, rather than what they died from" ("Britain's Dug-Up Skeletons"). Bones are the part of the human body that remain when soft tissue is gone and just as they are slow to decay; they are also slow to change in one's lifetime. Malin Holst, osteoarchaeologist at the University of York, explains that skeletal remains do not often contain information that can determine cause of death ("Last Stand at Visby"). Unlike how a modern medical examiner

determines cause of death from a more complete body, skeletons often do not bear traces of the cause of death, instead bearing witness to the tolls on the body that accumulated over a lifetime.

Death is a concept that both separates and unites all people. No living person has knowledge of what it means to be dead, since that is a journey no one returns from[14]. Yet, every living person exists in a state of mortality, so it is a journey that everyone will know. Seaton situates death as a unique "universal, existing in all cultures as an absolute, not a construct of relative difference" (Sharpley and Stone 83). While cultural practices for dealing with death and the dead differ by cultural, social, and ritual practices that indicate difference, the act of death is a constant fact of life we all share. In this exhibition's emphasis on intimate individual engagement, each visitor has the latitude to process their pathos for loss in private acts of meaning-making between themselves and the objects.

This duality of death as both a barrier for personal understanding and a ubiquitous concept that touches everyone creates opportunities for a variety of knowledge construction at the exhibition. As a visitor, I was able to focus on the lived experience of the human body with most of the adult skeletons, save the pregnant woman. The children also sparked connections of loss for me but a connection with the precarious mortality I felt when pregnant created a deep connection with the Chelsea Old Church mother. This example demonstrates the highly individualized construction of knowledge that is contingent on my own life experiences. Each visitor brings their own experience of living in a mortal body in the city of London, forging countless pathways for their own construction of knowledge.

The "Skeletons" exhibition worked actively to disrupt the connection of skeletons with death and complicate engagement with remains on display, which resonated with visitors. The

[14] In terms of finite death, not taking into account temporary clinical death pronunciations or spiritual beliefs to the contrary.

unconventional interpretation removed the obstacles of potential distance between visitors and objects. Discourse that circulated in museum journals and online public forums reflected visitor response to this shift in focus away from death, both positively and also criticizing the disrupted expectations. A newspaper review of the exhibition expected an encounter with death and was surprised at how absent it was, "anyone going to this exhibition and hoping for a horror show should try elsewhere" (Marshallsay). A visitor complained in her blog about the departure from understanding skeletons as death, "I think consideration of ritual and belief is of fundamental importance to studies of death and the dead." (NovaChronicaRogeri). Disrupting expectations by removing these layers created a new, and potentially uncomfortable, experience for the visitors. By focusing on the embodied life experience of the individuals on display, the agency of the remains is demonstrated in the new perspective presented to the publics.

The individual creates a central focus for personal connection between visitor and object. When a traditional display presents human remains in context with their culture, they become a synecdoche to represent their culture, time period, or group. By stripping those layers, the individual represents only themselves through their singular life experience. The burden of representation common to remains display is completely removed. In the "Skeletons" exhibition, the sense of feeling is about meeting a person instead of generalizing about people.

Both the skeletons on display and the visitors in the room all share a community. The complicated history of London's cycles of immigration, poverty, international trade hub of opportunity and prosperity mean that every Londoner has their own unique set of histories and life experience in which they situate themselves in the city. The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition strips away the common indicators of socio-cultural identifiers to allow visitors to engage in their own construction of knowledge through their own connection

pathways of familiar pathology experiences and recognizable street corners. While it is certainly controversial to strip away social, cultural, and religious identifiers to help contextualize the remains, this choice has also stripped away the means through which curatorial authority can lead the experience through an official narrative path. The freedom afforded to the publics to construct their own meaning-making process was an opportunity to forge deeper connections on an individual level without measuring against an official form or dominant narrative.

As visitors engage with the objects, the objects are affecting the visitor that can be explicated through recognition of object agency. The material presence of the skeleton contributes a force to the dynamics of the relationship between publics and objects. Agency is also central to the objects' constituency in the cross-temporal community evoked by the "Skeletons" exhibition. The public of exhibition visitors are joined by objects in their mutual community of Londoners.

Human Objects with Agency

The line between human and object is already blurred when considering human remains, as the objects were once human. Human remains are simultaneously a material object and a human life. The "Skeletons" exhibition provides an opportunity to frame an understanding of human remains as objects with agency in a case where agency appears to be accounted for in the curatorial choices for the display. If theories of materiality are difficult to conceptualize outside of the theoretical realm, this case study demonstrates practical application for navigating the respectful treatment of human remains in museum collections. While human remains are a special case that could be seen as an exception, they are also perhaps a material hybrid where their agency does not seem so abstract.

The "Skeletons" exhibition offered a view of life in London from the perspective of the objects. The shared perspective is fostered by curatorial choices to emphasize the individual, lived experience, and understanding London as an urban community with timeless troubles. The objects on display are also members of the same public, blurring boundaries through empathy and engagement.

If publics are formed around discourse, how can the dead participate in order to join a public? Publics are activated by public memory and by sharing knowledge or experience, building a sense of community. Warner frames publics as built on the idea of physicality of place (26). Dickinson, Blair, and Ott add that the stability of place can "foster a sense of cross-temporal community" (27). The connection extends to visitors outside of one's experience who come after or came before, there is no set time limit to this community. The knowledge of a place, thereness, acts as a sort of discourse that can be invoked instead of circulated without a boundary of time.

Public health concerns can be understood through those on the margins of the community, bringing many of the skeletons on display into active roles as contributors in modern discourse. Syphilis in all of its forms is a communicable disease, and the stories from "Skeletons" point to experiences of poverty and exploitation as the pathology is further understood through layered connection to place. Spitalfields was thought to be a plague pit because of the vast quantity of remains, but carbon dating of the bones show it was older than the first plague of the 14th century. Famines and rising food prices marked this time. However, short-term suffering, even that which leads to death, does not often mark one's bones, as is the case with the individuals from Spitalfields on display. Instead, Spitalfields fills in some of the story where the bones cannot, indicating the community of London experienced a hardship together

with many losses. Cross Bones was a place for the poor and the excluded, such as prostitutes, located "far from the Parish church" according to John Stow in his 1598 survey of London (qt. Sargent 59). An 11-year-old child from Spitalfields lived with congenital syphilis since birth. A young woman from Cross Bones who suffered residual rickets from birth also had syphilis with open sores on her face that pocked the surface of her skull. Found at Cross Bones, these lives narrate a side of London where hardship and exploitation are not a result of choices for those who are so young. Issues of homelessness and exploitation of vulnerable youth are still a part of London life today. Further, access to safe quality healthcare continues to be a part of the systemic hardships for those on the fringe of the community.

How much suffering in this room could have been alleviated with medical attention that was never given? Such questions are always part of urban social discourse. Healthcare discourse is invoked by the material presence of the bodies in the room as a discourse of importance through mutual connection. The ecotriangle is demonstrated in this invocation, where people, material objects, and discourse "are threaded through each other and across networks (Rickert *Ambient Rhetoric* 24-5). The social issues that everyone in the room has experienced are timeless and worth the attention of visitors. As the exhibition raises larger issues like homelessness and public health, it demonstrates the blurred line where objects are activating discourse. The objects provide the stories for visitors to carry out beyond the exhibition as contributors to change.

The agency of remains in the "Skeletons" exhibition presents a unique and crucially important perspective on these social issues of marginalization that the historical record cannot give. Written records of the time present a bias toward the privileged in the community, written by and largely about the educated classes of society. Even treatises on poverty written as primary sources in the period, such as *London Labour and the London Poor* (Mayhew), are filtered

through the lens of the researcher's class, education, and social awareness no matter how earnest the authors' attempts to engage with marginalized individuals. The poor, exploited, and marginalized do not get the same opportunities to present their own stories in text, which makes the archaeological record so vital in uncovering evidence that they have left behind.

The young woman from Cross Bones tells her own story in this case study. The residual rickets on her skeleton tell she did not have enough nutrition, sunlight, or fresh air from the very beginning of her life. The syphilitic lesions on her face and her short life where she barely survived her teen years are a story of pain, neglect, and exploitation. The place of Cross Bones is a place of social marginalization where paupers, orphans, and prostitutes were laid to rest. At the "Skeletons" exhibition, layers of filtered interpretation were stripped away so that only her body and the place engage the visitor. She is able to tell her own story. While other important layers are removed in this exhibition design, the opportunity for each individual to present their own life through their remains recovers valuable stories directly from marginalized voices.

In its simplest form, to recognize the agency of the remains through new materialism's lens is to recognize that the remains impact another's actions, choices, or feelings. As Plotz offers in explanation that the object's agency "is not theory about the cultural significance of objects" (110). Rickert reinforces, "it is about the power of objects themselves" (*Ambient Rhetoric* 22). The remains possess a force, power, or agency that is not contained by the symbolic significance a culture affords them but rather derived innately from their material existence. The levels of engagement between visitors and the objects on display demonstrate material agency emotionally and physically so far as to impact how Londoners come to understand themselves as members of a community that spans space and time.

The interaction between publics and objects in this exhibition defines a community that encompasses both the visitors and the objects based on the materiality of mutual embodied experiences. As one journalist notes, "each skeleton reveals its own story, allowing us fascinating insight" ("York's Malin Holst"). There is a materiality to the experience in the sense that the presence of the remains on display evokes the physical embodiment of pain, injury, and illness alongside the emotional experience of loss, craving, and fear. The materiality is compounded by the ever-present context of place that surrounds the exhibition, defines the community, and grounds the experience in the physical space.

The immersive materiality of the exhibition highlights how the interactions amongst publics, objects, and place as interdependent ecotriangle relationship in a rhetorical ecology. A review of the exhibition notes, "pictures of the burial sites as they are today bridge the gap in years, and from across the centuries the exhibition encourages you to flesh out the lives of the people whose bones are on display" (Hayward 707). Further, I would add that this exhibition's design reinforces the materiality of a rhetorical ecology, fundamentally tethering it to a place. Central to the engagement experience was the sense of community built across time. The skeletons were not contextualized in their temporal, cultural, or social identity. Instead, the life told through their bones was linked to their *in situ* place of discovery. While visitors can empathize through shared life experience, the community of Londoners that encompasses publics and objects is rooted in place.

Publics Created by Place

The exhibition design is a repetition of two key elements, a skeleton and a photograph of their burial place. All of the more common layers of context offered in a museum display were stripped away, disorienting expectations and creating new opportunities. It was important to first

unpack the implications of what is missing from this simplistic display in order to fully appreciate how much room was made for the skeleton and the photograph to fill up in this exhibition's rhetorical ecology. The previous section enumerates the layers of interpretation that were absent from the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition. The following section explores how a sense of place becomes central to the act of knowledge construction in the ecotriangle relationship.

The interpersonal bonds created between visitors and individuals on display were solidified in the shared experience of place. From the individual experiences explicated in the display's pathology, Londoners still grapple with critical social issues in the same city that are emotionally important, connecting another conduit for community and shared knowledge. Issues that are clearly visible today as one moves through London can be seen as part of the lives of those who came before. Issues of urban pollution and urban living conditions, poverty, access to healthcare, marginalization, exploitation and violence touch all Londoners' lives. Objects have the agency to invoke personal and communal discourse.

Narratives formed by repeated recounting activate a sense of larger issues for London's community in the compassion they invoke. Residual rickets, caused by a lack of vitamin D in most cases, remind every Londoner that sunshine has always been in short supply. Northern climates are susceptible to sunlight deficiency, though it is exacerbated when pollution and rainclouds dominate the sky and is additionally a concern in urban environments when most daily activities are done indoors. At Chelsea Old Church, a child of 11 years old and 78-year-old Nicholas Adams both suffered the softened bones and deformities resulting from residual rickets, as did a woman(?) from St Brides and the aforementioned young woman from Cross Bones. While pollution is improving in London with cleaner energy sources and vehicle congestion

zones, indoor work environments are still common and the infrequency of sunny days remains the same.

Beyond pollution and indoor living, people live in close quarters in cities. As evidenced in the recent global pandemic, urban living increases concerns with regards to communicable disease (Santiago-Alarcon and MacGregor-Fors). The East Smithfield Black Death site marks the 1348-50 plague outbreak which likely ended the life of the man(?) who managed to carry on for years with a projectile imbedded in his spine before succumbing in the plague[15]. However, outbreaks in urban London were not isolated events but pepper the lives of the 26 individuals on display. At St Brides, a man lived past middle age with tuberculosis that deformed his joints and an infant of 9 months survived smallpox long enough to suffer limb deformities. A St Brides woman had a lung infection that may have prompted her post-mortem autopsy[16] to identify the cause. A century ago, T W Wilkinson remarked that "The Angel of Death seems to be continuously hovering over London" (qt. Sargent 17). The unique experience of urban living during a time of community stress can only be understood by those who have experienced it, creating a bond of special knowledge amongst city-dwellers who have survived such events.

With so many layers of contextual understanding stripped from this exhibition design, place becomes the central touchstone to relate to the individuals and create a shared public that includes visitors and objects together. The accompanying photograph of a place in modern London that visitors recognize or where they could visit to share the experience of standing in the same place. The exhibition spills out of the museum walls expanding through greater

[15] Cause of death is not evident on the skeleton, the place of burial in a plague pit leads to the assumption of plague as cause, though it is likely that any death by other causes during a plague year would also be buried in the mass grave system in place during that crisis.

[16] A post mortem craniotomy was performed on this individual though it cannot be determined if it was an autopsy to identify infection or if it was a teaching dissection. However, with no other post-mortem cuts on the body, it is more likely an autopsy since dissections usually leave more extensive evidence.

London. Rather than the museum posing as a surrogate intermediary for the *in situ* archaeological context, this exhibition includes opportunities to engage with *in situ* memory places across the city. The materiality of the exhibition experience can be compounded in a further sensory experience at the locations throughout the city. The geographic locations are another opportunity to immerse in the engagement with the individuals long after the exhibition closes.

London as Plastic Place

London has been at the center of how "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" communicated life in a body as a shared experience amongst visitors and objects. Further interpretations of rhetoric *in situ* expand Bizzell's work on "thick descriptions" only go so far as to recognize the importance of context (Adamczyk; Tell). The emphasis on place as an equal node in the ecotriangle – not just a backdrop setting for publics and objects – pushes my definition of rhetoric *in situ* to require thereness, the knowledge only gained through experience of a place. The process of engagement described in this chapter thus far is a form of meaning-making that is inseparable from material place. This section considers how place is understood within the case study and how it contributes to the understanding of publics' engagement with objects.

At the "Skeletons" exhibition, the photographs of the burial places are presented in an equal representation of visitor's and object's recognition. The image is of modern London recognizable to visitors while the caption describes the location as the skeleton would have recognized. Sometimes the juxtaposition is jarring, as with a photograph of a Pizza Hut labeled "Merton Priory," which refers to the monastery that once stood where the Pizza Hut now

operates, indicating the deep and varied layers of meaning that can occupy the same place (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Merton Priory site in modern day. Photo by Thomas Adank, courtesy of Marshallsay/Culture24.

Creating a Sense of Place

There are two places in the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition: the museum place within the walls of the Wellcome Collection in London and the places across London that are evoked through the photographs on the walls. The act of bringing greater London into the museum space expands and somewhat abstracts the boundaries of the memory place, blanketing London. Jelena Bekvalac, Curator of Human Osteology, remarked "Putting them in context with where they were buried and what those sites look like now will mean visitors will have a real, tangible connection to these people" ("Skeletons: Our Buried" *Archaeology News Network*). Instead of erecting a memorial or single marker as a place of memory, the exhibition expands the whole city of London into a memory place.

The Wellcome Collection is the first place of memory visitors in this exhibition experience, where they gather to engage with the exhibition, but attempts to elevate the greater city to primary place of memory. While Gardner states, "whatever we do and whether we like it or not, museums retain some level of authority by virtue of our existence" (5), this exhibition does as much as possible to host the publics and objects in the museum space but steps aside from interpretive authority to allow visitors to engage in personal meaning-making experiences. Rather, the Wellcome Collection gallery space offer what Gallagher and Kalin call, "common spatial frame to otherwise disparate experiences and understanding" and bring together fragmented discourses to "frame diverse values and ideals in common spaces" (254). The diversity of individual experiences represented by the remains on display is matched by the visitors in the room and the museum affords the space. Visitors bring their knowledge of London and come together with objects on display for a moment where meaning becomes in their own acts of knowledge construction.

The “Skeletons” exhibition spotlights the *in situ* find locations to emphasize shared place and minimize the sense of displacement for the skeletons. Though the remains have not left the city, the museum represents displacement for the objects that have been removed from archaeological excavations to museum collections. The “Skeletons” exhibition references this displacement visually in two ways. First, the accompanying photographs of find locations are clear indications of their connection to the excavation site. Second and more subtly, the dark sand-like substance that dresses each table where the skeletons are displayed is a visual reference to their *in situ* burial environment. The photograph of a modern London location points to the geographic location that can be pinpointed two-dimensionally on a map while the visual nod to soil surrounding the skeletons reminds visitors of the three-dimensional depth at that location.

Displacement transforms to an immersive understanding of *in situ* engagement with the city of London as a whole while actively invoking the depth of physical and rhetorical layers surrounding the visitor. There is a call to action for the visitors, inviting them to continue the relationship they built with the objects out into the city.

With minimal guidance on how to engage with the display, the "Skeletons" exhibition presented a space where visitors engage with a familiar place while developing of the layers of unfamiliar history that coexist in place. The image of a Pizza Hut with the associated caption of Merton Priory (Figure 6 above) exemplifies how layered with meaning these places of memory can be. A Pizza Hut is the modern experience that shares that same place equally with the experience of a monastic priory. Both the Pizza Hut and Merton Priory are rhetorical layers that are now inseparable from one another in that place.

Further multiplying individual acts of meaning-making, the photographs on the wall may spark different responses of recognition in each visitor, but all fall on a sliding scale of thereness. Rice analogizes public memory as a "horizon" where "everyone can measure his or her own towardness or awayness" (104). Located in central London, the Wellcome Colleciton museum is only a short distance from the place where each image can be relocated. The photographs and accompanying map interpret the lives of the individuals on display by spatially pinpointing a precise spot in London where they shared knowledge of experience. These points invoke thereness. For those who position themselves farther away, sharing less knowledge of London, the exhibition offers the opportunity to engage with those places outside of the museum walls and develop the bond of thereness to further enrich visitor engagement. With the map and the image of each find location, the places marked throughout London can be visited and imbued with new meaning after the exhibition experience.

This exhibition grows the idea of publics to include constituency across time and simultaneously expands the concept of memory place to include a whole city. The photographs of *in situ* find locations add nodes of memory places outside the museum walls and opens the possibility to encompass London as the community space. Greater London is huge in terms of memory place, which are usually framed as fixed memorials or walled institutions that occupy no more than a park, plaza, or square. Greater London is equally a huge public in terms of a community brought together through shared discourse and experience, increasing exponentially with the additional constituency of the dead. Holst observed that the exhibition reminds us, "we are walking over the bones of generations of our predecessor" ("York's Malin Holst Contributes"). Though visitors to the exhibition meet only 26 fellow Londoners of the past, the awareness of a shared bond unlocks an understanding that they are a part of a vast community; though millions of people walk the streets of London, the majority of the community are below.

The ecotriangle of the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition demonstrates the inseparable relationship of publics and objects to place. The curatorial objectives emphasized this relationship by stripping many factors that defied visitor expectations which required the visitors to work at adapting to a sparse yet intimate exhibition design. This productively uncomfortable setting at the Wellcome Collection activated visitor engagement into moments of meaning-making that were uniquely individual for each encounter between fellow Londoners, living and dead. By limiting curatorial interpretation narrative to experimental minimums, only offering pathology reports matched to photographs of London locations with incongruous place-name captions, the institutional dominant narrative was set aside to allow the agency of both visitors and objects to create in their own acts of knowledge construction.

Grounded Ecotriangle in a Unique Rhetorical Ecology

The 2008 "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition has been studied as a successful example of human remains display since it opened in the summer of 2008 (Leahy; Seaton). The reasons given center around an idea of clear rhetorical objectives evident in the display design. Seaton states, "it was mounted with a *single-minded focus*," (104 emphasis in original), and Leahy adds "both the rationale and the design… were brilliantly simple" (38). These observations are important because they praise the method of developing an exhibition through clear communication of objectives over any particular design element used in the display. The strength of this project is in the rhetorical approach to understanding how the exhibition met its goals from a perspective beyond curatorial design to conceptualize how the ecotriangle interacts.

The remit, values, and mission of the institution inform the character and identity of the exhibition design. As Seaton notes in his critique, "the exhibition was evidently one that stemmed from the Wellcome [Trust] Institute's core identity and mission as a medical foundation" (104). The focus on pathology for the "Skeletons" exhibition fits neatly within the strengths and mission of the institution. London offers a place, as of the time of the exhibition run, where public interests in science, museums, and history are largely accepted along with a largely absent modern cultural apprehension to human or animal remains on display. For reference, the Wellcome Collection shares the same city block along Gower Street where Jeremy Bentham's corpse has been propped up on a bench in a hallway for nearly 200 years. London's population is not and never has been unified in cultural practice, though the continued practices within the Bloomsbury area, where the Wellcome Collection is located, indicate the kind of

relationships between publics and human remains thriving at the time of the exhibition in that place.

Designing an exhibition gallery where publics, objects, and place interact in a way that achieves the mission goals requires a base conception of the potential publics, the agency of objects, and the rhetorical layers of the place. More than that, the curatorial objectives were developed with an understanding of the rhetorical ecology in which the exhibition would operate. The rhetorical ecology is the landscape on which the triangular relationship of publics, place, and objects plays out immersed in the situational and contextual dynamics at play as well as the laminated rhetorical meaning ascribed to the features of that landscape. Like an ecosystem ecology, rhetorical ecologies are complex and interdependent, always in motion. Fittingly, a core approach to predicting the shape of a rhetorical ecology begins with an understanding of the involved publics, objects, and place in an act of forecasting.

For the 2008 Wellcome Collection "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition, an idea of the rhetorical ecology can be reconstructed through understanding as many components as possible. Publics can be evaluated as potentially including the publics already served by both museums involved, the Museum of London and the Wellcome Collection. Add publics that have topical interest in the exhibition or are otherwise tapped into associated discourse communities such as archaeology, history, and medical science. Publics defined by geography are also considered, comprising of various constituencies in the physical vicinity of the Wellcome Collection galleries. All of these various publics can be best understood first by introspection to understand what the Wellcome Collection is, where it is located, and how it interacts with associated discourse. Publics in this case were defined by place, Londoners, grounding the publics in their definition of place.

The discourse surrounding the Wellcome Collection helps interested publics self-select because they offer a consistent vision for public engagement in health and the human body. The Wellcome Collection is a medical museum that has a reputation of never shying away from taboo topics on human health. Their permanent bookshop section is a resource for human health publications of all kinds that are geared toward all ages but also strategically serves to set the tone, with anatomy illustrations in the windows to allow potential patrons to make choices before they step through the doors. Thus, there is a passive filtration system in place that narrows the publics served to those who choose to engage in what the Wellcome Collection has to offer.

The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition was a unique experience that was innovative and finely tuned to its ecotriangle at the Wellcome Collection in 2008. Visitors were encouraged through every curatorial choice to enact their own agency in the meaning-making process through empathy and a community with the remains. This method of emphasizing lived experience and place in turn deemphasized other contextual information and many other interpretation opportunities. The "Skeletons" case study's curatorial objectives are effective in its specific rhetorical ecology. Without the precisely identical set of circumstances, imitation of this exhibition as model does not replicate the rhetorical ecology in which it operated.

In order to achieve the curatorial goals of engagement, many layers of meaning were stripped from the display, compromising the cultural and social context of each person's life and removing the archaeological knowledge gained from associated matrix of objects and data. While this decision for the "Skeletons" exhibition successfully subverted visitor expectations, the curatorial choices essentially omitted the majority of interpretation provided by the archaeological context. Archaeological interpretation needs to piece together the immersed contextualized object within its social, cultural, religious, temporal layers. These elements have

been de-emphasized in this case study as an exception to traditional interpretation. The "Skeletons" exhibition achieved new avenues for engagement between publics and objects but at a high cost of contextual erasure. The essential lesson from this case study is the admirable mastery of matching curatorial choices to the specific rhetorical ecology in which the exhibition operated. The process of this mastery is far more important to emulate than the product of the end design. In fact, modelling the exhibition in even a very similar rhetorical ecology demonstrates that imitation does not result in duplication.

In the vastly variant rhetorical ecologies of museums across time and place, one size does not fit all, as was proven in a 2016-18 travelling re-release of the exhibition, "Skeletons: Our Buried Bones." Even though the circumstances were very similar between the 2008 and 2016 exhibitions, the rhetorical ecologies were not identical and some of the effective 2008 elements of the exhibition design broke down. The Museum of London loaned ten of the original 26 individuals for the touring exhibition which was modeled on the original 2008 exhibition in general design.

London bodies travelled to Leeds, Bristol, and Glasgow removing them from the *in-situ* familiarity of their memory place. Along with the London bodies, individuals from the host museums' collections were displayed, creating three new exhibitions specific to each host museum and operating in three distinct rhetorical ecologies. The familiarity of place was diminished since London was no longer an immersive experience in which the exhibition took place. The photographs of a Pizza Hut parking lots and street corners were no longer touchstones. What's worse, the same horizon of place knowledge that helped visitors in 2008 orient themselves as toward or away in terms of familiarity with London now presents an apparent dichotomy where each visitor orients themselves as being aligned with Glasgow,

Bristol, or Leeds *as opposed to* London. Instead of extending the cross-temporal community to stretch the length and breadth of Great Britain, the exhibition called attention to divisions[17]. The plasticity of place had limits that did not stretch to encompass the travelling exhibition's locations. Replication of the "Skeletons" exhibition in another rhetorical ecology has, at best, diminishing returns. At worst, the provocative-yet-situationally-appropriate curatorial design can backfire in another ecology since the same choices that work for one set of publics may be rejected by another. This case study presents an exhibition designed with a focus understanding of its rhetorical ecology and also serves as an example of an exhibition that is highly situated in its rhetorical ecology.

An Inimitable Rhetorical Ecology

The "Skeletons" exhibitions challenge boundaries for how close of a connection between publics and objects can be achieved. The exhibitions offer the study of human remains display a great deal to appreciate in its objective-driven design. The laser-focused objectives of empathetic engagement between publics and objects through their shared experience of living in London was served by careful consideration for how each design element encouraged the relationship of publics and objects in that place. The exhibition also offers a lesson in the pitfalls of mimicking a successful exhibition design without understanding and adapting to the circumstances of another rhetorical ecology.

This case study presents a rhetorical ecology to observe the ecotriangle in action. The relationship between publics and objects was an intimate one based on mutual connections of lived experience. The exhibition design was simplistic with minimal interpretive intervention,

[17] Examples of division brought up during the 2016-18 tour include a Battle of Towton soldier displayed at Leeds which evoked the York north vs. south bloodshed of the Wars of the Roses and the Tiree woman at Glasgow, whose initial excavation by a London-based archaeologist made headlines for the mistrust the Highland islanders of the Scottish Inner Hebrides felt toward Londoners as distant oppressors (Baxter; "Hunterian Skeletons").

giving room for each visitor to engage in their own meaning-making process as they made their own path through the open-plan gallery. Objects contributed their own narratives of lived experience that were equally intimate. The exhibition did not mediate with a generalizing interpretation that would reduce their individual life experience to a representative synecdoche. The level of engagement and focus on lived experience demonstrates the agency of objects as contributors to the relationship ecotriangle. Place in this case mitigated tensions between museum place and *in situ* displacement from archaeological excavation because the museum is geographically nested within the *in situ* landscape. Place also merged publics and objects into a shared community formed around mutual thereness in London. The ability for objects to join visiting publics is also a function of their agency, since the objects contributed to the discourse of thereness.

Extrapolating out from the case study, the engagement between publics and objects achieved here explicates how agency of the material objects accounts for the ethical remit of respect in a grounded way. As developed in the introduction of this project, museum studies scholarship on ethics for human remains grapples with respect as an important but abstract consideration that is not fully translatable into curatorial action. The "Skeletons" case study forefronts the agency of the remains and gives a tangible interaction to consider when making choices. The recognition that the remains affect curatorial behavior, and public behavior, by their material presence offers a mechanism to account for this acting force. The space created by new materialism to consider human remains as agents in these choices creates a clearer understanding of how respect fits into the interpretive process.

In Chapter 5, topics of barriers and relationship dynamics will be revisited in a broader sense with the opportunity to compare and contrast the two case studies' approaches to the

relationship of their respective ecotriangles. Concepts that can either distance or immerse, such as time, are also compared between the two case studies' divergent approaches to these concepts. Place, displacement, and material agency of place will also be comparatively analyzed. In addition, the rhetorical ecology of this case is narrow in the sense that the publics served were physically present in the galleries during the temporary exhibition, which can be compared to the broader audience and timeframe of availability that influence ecotriangular relationships and morph the borders of the rhetorical ecology.

4. CASE STUDY: *MEDIEVAL DEAD* SERIES

In the Public Archaeology program at University College London, I became fascinated with the complexities involved in shaping archaeological site report data into engaging documentaries because so much can go so very wrong. Basic considerations of depth versus breadth of information are important but when documentaries involve human remains, the dramatic tone became a crucial knife's edge for ethical considerations of respect. After more than a decade of post-graduate connoisseurship, I developed a sense for which programs passed or failed but I could not articulate the divide any better than Supreme Court Justice Stewart's "I know it when I see it" (Gewirtz). Rhetoric provided tools to understand the implications of genre shift and public-facing discourse that have strengthened my approach to such ethical issues (Fahnestock; Rice). The pre-ethical framework of this project provides an opportunity to establish an articulate structure with which to approach this example of ethical debate and beyond. As such, the second case study in this project analyzes the ecotriangle of publics, objects, and place for a British documentary series, *Medieval Dead*.

Medieval Dead is a documentary series released in 2013 to UKTV, a subsidiary of the British Broadcasting Corporation (*Like a Shot Entertainment*). The central cast of specialists across the series are based at University of York and include battlefield archaeologist Tim Sutherland, osteoarchaeologist Malin Holst, and metal detectorist Simon Richardson ("*Medieval Dead* Full Cast"; "Dept. of Archaeology" *University of York*). *Medieval Dead* was written and directed by Jeremy Freeston, who contributes to many factual historical documentary series for British television ("York Archaeologists to Star"). The series creates a complementary sense of place as it takes the viewers on site to the battlefields and excavations as well as bringing them

into the storerooms and galleries of museums. Not only is there an insider look at memory places, the specialists offer an insider look at how they approach object and place interpretation.

This documentary series offers viewers an inside look at the construction of knowledge from the perspective of the archaeological process, explicating how place and objects are understood through their contextual interrelation. The traditional approach to communicating archaeology is a epideictic model of finished interpretation with perhaps some indications of uncertainty (Edbauer 6; Fahnestock 335). This documentary shifts its discourse back toward what Fahnestock classifies as the forensic discourse that genres of primary scientific research use (333). While avoiding a change toward specialist language, the specialists engage in dialogue amongst themselves as they analyze the objects and sites. Instead of being told the end result, the viewer witnesses the act of knowledge construction where the material and specialists work together to develop interpretations.

In the series, the team travels to sites like Visby, Masterby, and Agincourt to meet with local scholars from associated heritage museums and archaeological projects. The documentary captures unique perspectives on the ecotriangle in how it approaches knowledge construction and place. The act of specialist knowledge construction engages the audience to follow the process as in the act of becoming. Sharing the moments of meaning-making implies a level collective where publics and specialists are joined in the same process rather than the hierarchical implications when a knowledge product is handed down from scholars to publics. Instead of walking back through the process in an artificial explication to reveal how they did it, there is a present tense to the different groups of scholars convening to look at the material together for the first time. There is an authenticity to the acts of meaning making presented in *Medieval Dead*.

Unlike an exhibition within the physical walls of a museum, the documentary brings the public along on-site to understand the field through the lens of a battlefield archaeology team, explicating the meaning-making process *in situ* for understanding the battle event by walking the field. The immersive experience of reimagining the battle event through field study sparks a cycle of remembrance in publics, just as the graphic trauma evident on the remains invokes an understanding of the violence of the event. By invoking the moment as a remembrance through study and communication to publics, the people who fought and died in that event are remembered. Sutherland explicates the objects' agency by involving the remains in the value of the study, where archaeology can "give them something back" when publics engage with these people by remembering their stories, lives, and sacrifice ("Last Stand at Visby"). To Sutherland, the cycle of remembrance through discovery and study is for the benefit of the remains as well as the viewing publics. New materialism explicates material agency implicit in Sutherland's stance. The ecotriangle's forces are also represented in this directive to "give them something back" since it is not only the people taking the information from objects and place but rather a complementary reciprocity.

Focusing on place, the *Medieval Dead* series highlights the practices and interpretation techniques of battlefield archaeology. The specialized approach of battlefield archaeology shares a great deal of methodology with rhetoric *in situ* as they both emphasize the embodied experience of the researcher in the place of study. Battlefield archaeology seeks to understand the movements and details of the battle through the affordances and constraints that the landscape imposed on the event by requiring experiential knowledge of the field and relying heavily on walking survey and remote sensing techniques. The battlefield archaeology approach to landscape interpretation requires the researcher to conduct research as embodied practice in

the material landscape. The series demonstrates how a battlefield archaeologist navigates the material landscape as part of the meaning-making process.

From the six-episode documentary series, two episodes were chosen for the case study[18] that emphasize place and public memory: episode 2, "The Last Stand at Visby," and episode 3, "Agincourt's Lost Dead." This case emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between one node informing the others in the ecotriangle because one node is materially absent or inaccessible in each episode. The human remains had not been found from the battle of Agincourt and the field of Visby is covered over by urban development. These two episodes exemplify reciprocity in the ecotriangle, as the Battle of Visby events are reconstructed through forensic analysis of the human remains while the dead from Battle of Agincourt have not been found, so their experience is interpreted through analysis of the battlefield site and supplementary textual evidence. This case analysis presents chance to see how an ecotriangle with obscured nodes compensates for each in the ecotriangle relationship.

The balance of the ecotriangle is unevenly represented in this case where the remains are absent from the one battle and the field itself is obscured in the other. Yet all three nodes are still exerting relational forces, where publics and place can build an understanding of the objects or publics and objects cast light on the shape of place. The two chosen episodes in this case study offer an interesting opportunity to see how objects can play a larger role to fill in gaps for understanding place, then examine how place can fill in gaps for understanding absent objects. I argue that the ecotriangle remains still stably intact even when one node is obscured because the relationships between publics, places, and objects can inform one another to the extent that all three are understood even when one is minimally represented in the archaeological record. Even

[18] The case study refers to both episodes analyzed, while "episode" will refer to each individual episode.

when a component of the relationship is obscured, its presence is explicated through the rest of the relationship developed within the rhetorical ecology.

This case study offers an opportunity to explore how objects inform place and vice versa. "Last Stand at Visby" presents a collection of remains that inform the place that has been obscured. At Visby, the battlefield has been covered by urban encroachment beyond the medieval city walls. While the archaeology can be understood through remote sensing techniques, the landscape has been heavily modified by buildings and roadways. The sense of place is built through understanding the remains discovered there, the largest battlefield mass grave[19] ever found from medieval times. Conversely at Agincourt, the field remains largely open and untouched as farmland while the fallen soldiers from either side have not been found. Without the remains, the field itself is a valuable resource for understanding the events that the soldiers lived through and died from when England's Henry V defeated the French on 25 October, 1415, as part of the Hundred Years War.

Case Study Criteria

Conversations and outside sources noted in this analysis are internal references to the episode content, thus are all part of the viewer's experience. The central specialists throughout the *Medieval Dead* series are based at the University of York and include archaeologist Tim Sutherland, osteoarchaeologist Malin Holst, and metal detectorist Simon Richardson. The York team have all worked together on battlefield sites in the past, most famously the battle of Towton[20]. In the Visby episode, the team visit osteoarchaeologist Petter Akeson and curator Thomas Neijman at the National Historic Museum, Stockholm, along with Karen Watts of the

[19] Over a thousand bodies have been excavated there with at least one more known mass grave still left buried.

[20] Towton was Richard III's victory to claim the English throne during the bloody civil war known as the War of the Roses.

UK Royal Armories. For Agincourt, Sutherland meets with Anne Curry, Agincourt historian from University of Southampton, and Robert Eyre, archivist for the Warwickshire County Records Office. The organic interactions between specialists who do not normally work together creates authentic dialogue as they work together to construct meaning. The quotes and text references cited throughout from these specialists were pulled directly from the episodes to bring aspects of the viewing experience to the analysis.

The documentary series, *Medieval Dead*, values the process of knowledge construction in its interpretation of human remains. This series demonstrates an approach that connects publics with objects and place by offering an immersive viewer experience in the process, allowing viewers to look over the shoulder of archaeologists and be a part of the interpretation process. Such a behind-the-scenes look at interpretation to show how objects inform place and vice versa is a unique approach to public engagement. While the medium of documentary film cannot be modeled 1:1 by museum exhibitions, there is transferrable value in the analysis of the public engagement methods employed.

The analysis for this episode on the remains from Visby's 1361CE mass graves summarizes the main questions surrounding human remains while mimicking the processual presentation of information, discourse amongst the specialists, and hypotheses to mimic the episode's experience. Immersing audiences in the process of meaning-making encourages critical interpretation of the data and maintains the uncertainty of scientific knowledge that is often removed when specialist knowledge is translated into public-facing discourse (Fahnestock). The episode also presents the violence and death in a processual justification, where the graphic nature of the conversations is necessary to understanding the perimortem events but never more than is necessary. The meaning-making process is still uncomfortable to

watch as it is uncomfortable for specialists to undertake, as the immersion into understanding the marks on the remains affects the specialists. However, the restraint from exploitative use of the macabre allows the knowledge construction to happen in an atmosphere of respect for all parties of publics, specialists, and remains.

The immersion in this case study works on many levels for the publics, from the logical steps established by the specialists to the emotional visceral connection developed for the objects and place as part of the interpretation process. The case uses deep emotional pathos to build this connection with the public but it stays on the side of productive instead of exploitative, which admittedly is a fine line. Battlefield archaeology is the archaeology of violence and death, as well as extreme pivotal shifts in the greater historic timeline. In order to develop an empathetic understanding of the event, archaeologists build an immersive narrative of the battle. The reality of battlefield archaeology is gruesome, full of violence to individuals as the collateral stories that summate to the larger historic event. While dates and kings can feel quite cold and factual, battlefield archaeology puts those dates and political shifts into context by understanding how the individual soldiers fought, died, or fled in those moments.

The rhetorical approach to public engagement through immersion in the process highlights an important and underutilized approach to interpretation. In this documentary series, publics become privy to the process of how archaeologists build the narrative of the soldiers' experience. In order to offer genuine access into the process of interpreting the evidence, the specialists share the gruesome dark realities of violence and death. The level of detail required to understand the fighting techniques, manner of death, and post-mortem treatment of the dead bodies can be shocking for those outside of the profession. Nevertheless, publics were invited into the interpretation process as an immersive experience of emotional connection with these

objects and places, sharing the perspective of connection that the researchers make in their embodied practice on site and with the remains. As such, this rhetorical analysis of the case study must also convey the nature of violence and death to accurately capture the sense of feeling that is so pivotal to this case's approach to the relationship of publics with objects and place.

Although the mode of media between televised documentaries and museum exhibitions, these episodes from the series *Medieval Dead* meet the case study criteria outlined in the methodology of this project. Importantly, this case study steps outside of the constraints of a physical gallery exhibition and through analysis can offer insight into rhetorical approaches to ecotriangle dynamics. The case study criteria follow below with an account of how the episodes from *Medieval Dead*, "Agincourt's Lost Dead" and "Last Stand at Visby," fit into the scope of this research.

The human remains are from an archaeological context. This documentary emphasizes the archaeological process, featuring only remains excavated from *in situ* burial environments. In the episode on the Agincourt site, the battlefield place is explored without any excavated human remains[21] located or analyzed. The importance of remote sensing and other non-invasive archaeological data practices is also emphasized, highlighting the value of disturbing as little as possible. In the episode on Visby, there is at least one other known mass grave from the battle that has deliberately not been excavated because there is no valid scholarly, industrial development, or salvage reason to disturb the remains. Even within archaeological excavation, disturbing human remains is always a last resort, a value which is explicated to the audience of the documentary.

[21] As discussed in Chapter 1, without the archaeological discovery adding the new social use layer to the palimpsest of meaning for human remains at Agincourt, I hesitate to refer to the as-un-yet discovered human remains as objects or use the terms interchangeably in this specific instance.

The display was a temporary exhibition, as opposed to a permanent display that may be modified over time. This case study challenges the traditional definition of "exhibition" as a physical display only accessible within the museum walls, expanding it to include the medium of film. A televised documentary stretches the definition of temporary exhibition, though it has all of the features of being contained as a finished product and represents a focused presentation of curatorial interpretation in a discrete package. The approach to the objects and place can be much more focused with precisely one linear narrative of observation offered to the audience in the form of an edited video presentation. This medium highlights the benefits of guided tours, behind-the-scenes storeroom visits, and specialist scholar lectures that are often a part of temporary exhibition schedules but are not accessible for all visitors due to their exclusivity by limitations of time and space. The documentary films specialist scholars as they converse in a panel-discussion like atmosphere, giving viewers an inside understanding of the meaning-making process that is often obscured in the finished product of an exhibition. Thus, the choice of documentary film episodes brings to light the advantages of presenting objects and place to publics in the most ideal form of special exhibition.

The documentary films are handled in this case study like an exhibition by using the language of museum studies. The analysis focuses on the objects, place, and presentation of information to the public from an exhibition perspective, rather than the frame of film criticism. For example, objects presented in the museum storeroom are the focus of the critique within the storeroom space and will not frame the storeroom in terms of lighting or mise en scène. Rather than discuss directorial auteur, this analysis considers curatorial intent. The objects and places are presented like a guided tour with the analysis focused on how they are communicated to the audience through interpretation in the presented narrative.

Heritage museum and/or institutional mission objective to connect publics with place.

The Gotland Museum, Visby, houses the remains from the mass graves. Located within the same city as the burials, the remains are part of the heritage collection that spans the 9,000-year depth of local history with an institutional mission statement that fosters "Collective Memory – by gathering, making accessible and spreading knowledge of Gotland's art, natural and cultural heritage, we nurture and preserve communal memories" ("Om Oss" Gotland Museum). As the battle of Visby highlights, there is a history of invasion that includes a near genocide of what were the ethnic Gotlanders in the 14th century, complicating the publics' connection with the local heritage. While modern Gotlanders have deep connection to the place as their own heritage, layers of past events across millennia implicate ancestral aggression in the history of violence that has seen waves of dominant colonialism across the island.

Case in point, the armor from the Visby mass graves is held at the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm, as Sweden annexed Gotland less than three centuries after the Danish invasion, claiming the island for Sweden in 1645CE (Elfving). Though both publics and objects are deeply connected to the place, the heritage museum must navigate a tension in the relationship between the publics and the objects where victim, oppressor, colonialist, or invader no longer have clear delineations. Fostering a relationship between publics, objects, and place means unpacking these tensions using the cultural heritage center as a place of open discourse. The Swedish History Museum perceives its role as a place that is open to multiplying and complicating the national narrative, "with art and our natural and cultural heritage as a foundation, we are an autonomous arena for democratic discussions and talks. Our aim is to challenge our ingrained thoughts and principles" (ibid.). The encouragement of discourse builds a sense of community, activating the museum space as a place of public memory.

There is a demonstrated objective to deemphasize time in the interpretation, both in the sense of temporal distance between the objects and the publics as well as the depth of time represented in the archaeology. The nature of battlefield archaeology is a short span of time with significant consequences where a distinct change in culture, politics, or society can be marked by the pivotal event, making battlefield sites an important type of activity site (Sutherland; Curry and Foard; Timm-Knudsen). These brief but significant moments in history help to understand the action moments that shaped the larger narrative of history over time. Battlefield archaeology zooms in not only on the brevity of the event but the experience of the individual soldiers as they interact with the field of battle, developing a strong interpretive connection between objects and place.

In line with this extreme compression of time, the published documentary episodes are each an exhibition of minutes, not months. The exhibition compressed into a documentary film medium offers an identical experience for each visitor (viewer) through a focused restricted narrative presentation. While physical exhibitions within a museum space must account for variability in visitor experience from skipping interpretive text panels to walking through an exhibition backwards, the medium of documentary provides the ideal scenario of a controlled guided tour, information presented in the precise intended order, and the special access to storerooms and specialist interviews. While all of these elements of guided tours, behind-the-scenes access, and expert talks are often offered as part of an exhibition's schedule of events, the logistics of providing all of these augmented experiences is not possible for all visitors, further creating a margin of error when analyzing the typical visitor experience. Approaching the documentary in this case study as an idealized uniform exhibition experience can elucidate the

ways in which museum exhibitions can engage with publics in other media, including physical museum galleries.

Interpretive emphasis on place that encourages a connection of "thereness" for the public visitors to enhance the relationship between publics and in situ place. The documentary's process-driven approach to communication highlights the importance of place in the archaeological method. The archaeologists' thereness serves as a central component in how they construct knowledge. With an emphasis on the specialism of battlefield archaeology, this case study has a clear objective to communicate a sense of place in the specialists' interpretation and presentation of human remains. Archaeological excavation requires in situ research simply because the objects are buried in a set place that one must go to in order to uncover them. Yet outside of excavation of the ground, remote sensing and other non-invasive techniques distance the researcher from the importance of embodied experience of the material landscape. Battlefield archaeology, on the other hand, accentuates the importance of knowing the sense of place as the foundation to understanding the additional data provided by remote sensing or excavation.

Traditional archaeological sites have a depth of deposits from years or centuries of activities, whereas battlefield sites are at best sparse with surface finds of small objects that were deposited in the extremely brief event. Rather than rely on interpretation of what is underground, battlefield archaeology methods take into account the landscape itself as a determining factor in the event. This emphasis on *in situ* interpretation of place, coupled with the meaning-making process as a primary angle for engagement, relies on explicating to the publics how place informs the interpretation by bringing the publics along to the site. While visitors are viewing out of time and at a distance that is potentially great, the documentary is filmed on site in order to capture the significance of *in situ* experience, thereness, in the meaning-making process.

One episode in particular, "Agincourt's Lost Dead," relies on thereness of *in situ* place for interpretation in the complete absence of excavated human remains. Agincourt is a bold choice for an episode in a series called *Medieval Dead* to explore the death of soldiers from that event without any dead soldiers to study. The burden of interpretation falls on the battlefield to inform the personal violence and conflict experience of the soldiers. While archival documentation and the historic discourse pertaining to the battle are consulted, the episode validates the essential requirement of thereness in archaeological interpretation.

Literature scholars and historians interviewed in the episode present their interpretations of primary and historical secondary sources to build an interpretation of the events at Agincourt. However, these archival interpretations do not take into account the knowledge gained *in situ* by embodied practice, demonstrating the importance of thereness as part of the interpretive process. Shakespeare's history, Henry V, has kept the battle of Agincourt circulating in public discourse for centuries, which has led to a romanticized impression of the historical event that is contradicted by the ground-truthing of archaeological interpretation *in situ*. Battlefield archaeologists revisit Agincourt to refine and challenge the understanding of such a "well-known" battle to explicate the essential relationship to material-place thereness in interpretation.

The episodes featured from *Medieval Dead* in this analysis meet all of the criteria for analysis as examples of human remains display but were chosen because they demonstrate some exceptional approaches to the ecotriangle. Publics are not presented with facts in the consumption model of knowledge but instead join the specialists during acts of knowledge construction. Information becomes meaning through analysis and interpretation within the documentary, allowing viewers to see a process of scientific knowledge construction often obscured from public view. These two episodes in particular also bring interesting examination

into the stability of the ecotriangle when one node is materially absent or obscured. At Visby, the remains can be analyzed but the field is obscured under urban encroachment. For Agincourt, the field is open to survey but the remains of the fallen soldiers have not been found[22]. In each instance, there is an imbalance of materiality accounting for each node yet equilateral balance is maintained by the forces of the obscured node continuing to act on the ecotriangle. Public memory meets the agency of place and objects at the battlefield, where the field's meaning is laminated to the fallen soldiers when invoking the event and reciprocally the skeletons of battlefield dead cannot properly be understood except as part of the greater event on the landscape.

Place and Material Agency in Battlefield Archaeology

The sense of place in this case study has less of an inherent duality than exhibitions within museums since the archaeological site can be filmed on location, bringing the public out into the field to see the *in situ* place of excavation. There is always a displacement when objects move from archaeological sites to museum collections, no matter how close the museum is to the *in situ* find spot, which adds a layer of distance that must be actively negotiated through interpretation to maintain a sense of place. Filming on location removes the secondary location of a museum, bringing a contextual sense of place to the publics. While the viewing experience may happen in a third location, the place and the objects maintain their bond while the publics develop a sense of their relationship.

Simultaneously, the sense of place is more complicated in that "visitors" are not sharing physical geographic proximity to the place, taking away the publics' development of thereness.

[22] English officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Woodford, who excavated that site in 1818 while occupying the region after England regained control after the battle of Waterloo in the Napoleonic conflicts may have found a mass grave at Agincourt but excavation records were lost when their storage facility, the Pantechnicon in London, was destroyed by fire in 1874 ("The Destruction of the Pantechnicon").

The nature of film makes distance a variable for the visitors' asynchronous viewing experience while bringing them closer in a virtual visit of the *in situ* location than a nearby museum could offer. It is precisely this complication of understanding the distance that makes this case study valuable to this research for exploring how public memory develops an understanding of place. Discourse is easily circulated in a museum space as visitors join publics through their proximity and engagement. Additionally, thereness cannot be achieved without engaging in the material landscape, which cannot happen from the comfort of one's own home. Yet, the emphasis on the meaning-making process explicated by the scholars and specialists as they interpret the place can offer an even more enriching knowledge of the place than publics could achieve without that level of guidance on site. A key factor to thereness is knowledge, which can only be achieved by experiencing the place but is not guaranteed just by visiting without engagement (Rickert "It is All There"). The missing piece of embodied presence cannot be replicated yet the value of place develops an even stronger connection for the publics through this case study's communication approach.

In archaeology, the importance of experiencing the environment to confirm or challenge hypotheses made before or without visiting the site is a process called "ground truthing," which proves a tacit disciplinary understanding that embodied practice is essential to the meaning-making process. Battlefield archaeology attempts to reconstruct events by determining the possibilities the landscape limits or affords. Methods of accessing past people through place include determining "aspect," which in the most general sense is finding the advantageous viewpoints that were also identified by the people who interacted with place before. The act of determining aspect is an act of empathy since the archaeologist must step into the shoes of the soldiers before battle to understand how those soldiers understood the place. Empathetic

thereness connects the publics to the objects even when the objects are absent. To bring this into rhetoric *in situ* terms, this mutual development of the archaeologist providing a more nuanced understanding of the site via embodied practice is what Eatman refers to as "emplaced rhetoric" (in Lamp 119). What is simply presented in the case study as a gut feeling based on years of experience is actually used to communicate the complex interrelationship of the meaning-making process between the place and the archaeological interpreter. Rhetoric *in situ* describes the role of the specialist while the place enacts a force which is explicated by new materialism to understand both .

While viewers do not gain thereness during their visit to the documentary, the importance of embodied experience as essential to the meaning-making process is demonstrated by the specialists' reliance on thereness. The absence of the featured objects in the "Agincourt's Lost Dead" provides an interesting opportunity for rhetoric *in situ* to develop connections to publics and objects in a seemingly-imbalanced ecotriangle with a greater reliance on place. The ecotriangle remains equilateral because of the indivisible interrelationship between publics, objects, and place. The interpretation continuously seeks to understand the fallen soldiers' experience, indicating that strong rhetorical presence of the objects persist as an active part of the ecotriangle. Embodied practice of rhetoric *in situ* corresponds to battlefield archaeology methods for event reconstruction, relying on the material landscape. Battlefield archaeology methods move rhetoric *in situ* beyond "analyzing embodied and emplaced rhetoric" which focuses on the discourse's relationship to place (Middleton 571 "Contemplating the Participatory"). The landscape survey and event reconstruction of battlefield archaeology methods map to rhetoric's process of interpretation *in situ*, "as a tool for accessing the past" (Eatman 154). The scholar's engagement in the materiality of place creates a richer interpretation than is offered in the

archival texts. Archaeology brings a disciplinary-implied preference to interpretation of material place over text which may serve as a productive tension with rhetoric *in situ* as methodology continues to develop in parallel.

This documentary series communicates the expertise of battlefield archaeology across its episodes with an emphasis on embodied experience of place, describing rhetoric *in situ* in plain terms. Using phrases like "gut feeling" and "hunch" as vaguely defined skills, the audience builds an understanding of how specialists Tim Sutherland and Simon Richardson possess a knowledge of medieval battlefield events that is only possible through years of experience walking those sites ("Richard III's Lost Chapel;" "Defenders of Mastery"). Through interviews, these two experts talk through the meaning-making process of deciphering a battle site by demonstrating the kinds of information they can interpret only by standing on the site, in the field, looking at the larger landscape and making geo-spatial connections by walking through the environment feeling the subtle topography.

Recognizing the agency of place in a conflict event highlights another factor that is clearly already acting in the rhetorical ecology. Tacit assumptions about battlefield archaeology methods benefit from a new materialist approach to the agency of place as a critical factor in battlefield interpretation. The brevity of the event and the relative lack of archaeological deposits or cultural material means battlefield archaeology relies more heavily on interpreting the landscape. There may be a few scattered broken weapon bits or individual links of chainmail but a complete absence of the normal depth of features to interpret like in occupation archaeology ("Defenders of Masterby"). The event does not leave the same amount of cultural material as a longer-term occupation, so the place itself does much of the work. Walking the field of battle is

an opportunity for specialists like Sutherland to read the landscape for its affordances and constraints that contributed to the battle outcome and the path of the conflict.

A new materialist view of the battlefield is not describing environmental determinism but rather recognizing how human behavior is only part of the equation as the place itself provides parameters; it is a relationship which means that the humans are not the only actors contributing to the relationship. Battlefield archaeology underlines the importance of place as a factor because the battle event is not a long-term relationship but rather a brief, dynamic one. The field at Agincourt is a chance to see how place challenges the textual accounts of this event. In 1415, the political stakes were high which certainly colored the reporting of the event on both sides. The political skew of the texts was only further amplified in the centuries of retelling, each with its overlaying layers of various situational motivations. The place, on the other hand, has a fixed combination of possibilities and limitations for what tactics can be employed, the number and arrangement of combatants, as well as the opportunities for routed soldiers to flee. In the battle of Visby, place limited options for Gotlanders to be pinned down without chance to escape.

A Moment of Violence and Death

Battlefield archaeology is the study of conflict events whose outcomes often lead to major shifts in history in a very narrow temporal window. Sutherland conceptualizes a battle as a pivot moment "where big things change dramatically in a moment, maybe hours instead of decades" ("Richard III's Lost Chapel"). These pivotal moments are defined by violence, and the fallen soldiers represent that moment where the greater historical shifts as the life of one individual end in that same moment. The remains represent a moment of death in a battlefield context where the situation of their death is not necessarily representative of their life. Instead of

a lifetime, battlefield archaeology focuses on death. The perimortem event is what is represented in the archaeology, so battlefield archaeology becomes a story of endings.

Battlefields are subject to the cycles of remembering and forgetting. The process of public memory discourse in a place, especially one of a pivotal violent event, represent divergent paths for the winning and losing sides yet also death and loss for both. Since the memories will change as the event's significance is reformed continuously in modern times via modern sentiments, subject to fluctuating discourse interpretation which reflects the plasticity of public memory. Phillips points out the "inconsistency that is contingent on invocation" which Casey redirects into the cyclical nature, refining "invocation" to "resumption" (Phillips 30). Casey's contribution of resumption connects back to history's public memories and the cyclical nature of remembrance, recirculating the act of invocation. At Agincourt, the memory of the battle, thanks in part to Shakespeare, has never laid dormant to be invoked. Rather, the significance passes through cycles in tune with social and cultural shifts. The act of archaeological investigation catalyzes a resumption phase in the cycle of remembrance and the emphasis on the meaning-making process invites publics to share that participation and engage in the processual discourse.

Publics engaged in heritage discourse are activating remembrance, whether it be for connecting to ancestors or ancestral place. Public memory is inextricably linked with the older traditions of thanatourism in the sense that remembrance is a part of identity and heritage. In museum studies, "thanatourism" and "dark tourism" are often used interchangeably with imprecise results. While dark tourism refers to the macabre with connotations of exploitation or sensationalization of death, thanatourism has historically been defined as grief, memorial, or heritage tourism. Rather than define a niche of specialized museums, thanatourism is rooted in the public memory of all heritage places.

Recognizing thanatourism as a ubiquitous function of museums rather than a derogatory term for morbid fascination highlights the sense of feeling embedded in the flux of public memory discourse. Public memory studies recognize the powerful force of emotions at places of public memory as well as the "reified links between feelings and action" in public discourse (Rice 59). Knudsen extends the power of emotional connections to "feeling for the particular people who have died" (56). Thanatourism in this framing contributes to the understanding of public memory as it points to publics also seeking out a connection through sense of feelings to objects, including human remains.

The visceral reaction of emotions that are invoked by the remains of the fallen Gotlanders at Visby demonstrate the power feelings have to engage publics in acts of remembrance. It is powerful to see in "Last Stand at Visby" how the specialists struggle with the powerful emotions that these remains evoke. Seasoned osteoarchaeologists describe how deeply affected they become as they engage with these remains, fusing the emotional elements into the meaning-making process. This intimate insight into the process also frees the publics to model the specialists in their merging of emotions and data as a deeper level of understanding. The emotional responses of the specialist grant a sort of permission to the viewers to also allow the remains to bring out grief and disturbance, collaborating emotionally as part of one's own meaning-making process.

Lost Bones and Forgotten Fields

This case study offers a challenge on which to test the inference that publics, objects, and place must be understood in relation to one another when one of those nodes is obscured. In the episode at Visby, the battlefield is obscured under buildings, parks, and roadways, essentially eliminating a key method of battlefield archaeology to contextualize the event in the material

landscape of the field. At Agincourt, the field is farmland much like it was 600 years ago, but the graves of the fallen soldiers have not been found. Because publics, objects, and place are understood relationally, the absence of one can be explicated by the other two, still working in an ecotriangular relationship of equal value. The absent node still asserts forces in the relationship dynamic, which can be understood by investigating how the absent node is informed by the other two. This case study offers two opportunities to observe how invisible nodes continue to inform the ecotriangle.

In terms of public memory, the ecotriangles represent different phases of memory resumption. Visby is not remembered in the same way as Agincourt, lacking texts and continuous discourse of remembrance. While Agincourt has a romanticized fame in Britain retold and embellished by authors, historians, and Shakespeare, there are sparse records of the details of the Battle at Visby. The event is a pivotal part of Gotlander history but it survives through the filter of historians stating big facts of the broader historical narrative. Visby is a scantly-framed event that can be richly elucidated by the remains to understand what it was like in front of the walls at Visby on that day for those who fought. The intimate reality of how Gotlanders experienced an army of Danish warriors and mercenaries invading on 27 July, 1361CE, was largely lost. The remains from the mass graves provide unmediated testimony to the event that engage publics and researchers alike through a sense of feeling. The gaps from sparse textual evidence open an opportunity in public memory to be filled with the stories that the remains can tell.

Conversely, Agincourt was the battle that cemented English King Henry V's fame ending the hundred year's war against France and has a broader-reaching immortality in the public memory, although highly romanticized and warped by political motivations. Agincourt carries a

stronger sense of memories or "understanding" filled in by Shakespeare and other historians who have written more extensively about 25 October, 1415CE. The politicized romantic retellings of the battle create a false sense of knowledge in public memory because facts have a great potential to be overwritten by well-known narratives. Where the place contradicts the text, knowledge construction works to overwrite – or at least overlay – what historians and poets have reified over centuries of discourse.

The ecotriangle remains equilaterally intact in this case study since all three nodes act in the relationship regardless of their material representation. Analysis of the two episodes that follow explicate this balance as the obscured node begins to take place through processual discourse as the archaeologists work together to develop an understanding of the event. By revealing the process of knowledge construction, the essential work to understand the obscured node brings a shape to the absent material. With the emphasis on different nodes, "Last Stand at Visby" and "Agincourt's Lost Dead" demonstrate archaeological methods that implicitly rely on material agency and embodied practice, where new materialism and rhetoric *in situ* explicate the meaning-making process.

Visby: The Bones Tell a Vivid Tale

Visby's mass graves are unique in their rarity, building a greater web of stakeholders and publics beyond the significance of the battle and sense of place. The sheer number of remains, over a thousand excavated, is unprecedented anywhere form medieval Europe and represent a cross-section of society that is not as well represented in the historical record. Furthermore, the armor left on the bodies is an atypical exception to how the dead were handled on medieval battlefields and offers a great deal of information about medieval armor technology across Europe. The massive data set provided by the Visby finds provide descriptive detail of the battle

in 1361 but also serve as a point of extrapolation to understand other events from this period. The fighting force was a cross-section of the native Gotlander rural community and through their skeletons, those who are underrepresented in the historical texts are in this case become the majority of the story-tellers.

It is important to express how rare medieval battlefield graves are in the archaeological record, making Visby an important find in many ways for the sheer amount of data it offers about medieval conflict. Mass graves are difficult to find since they are relatively small archaeological features[23] and bones take on the properties of their burial environment, making them difficult to find with most remote sensing techniques (Curry and Foard 61). Battlefield graves are difficult to find because bodies are normally stripped of their armor, which makes them difficult to find using remote sensing techniques since bone tends to take on the properties of its burial environment over time. At Visby, at least 1,100 complete skeletons have been excavated to date, many still wearing their armor ("Last Stand at Visby"). A data set of ten times the individuals of any other medieval mass grave site is an incredible insight into understanding who fought at Visby. Beyond Visby, the presence of so much armor on the bodies makes this site unique in the greater medieval record. Visby's mass graves include the most fallen fighters from any medieval battle found, the most medieval armor discovered anywhere from this period.

Visby's mass graves provide a substantial influx of data to understand medieval battles and armor technology, but the value of generalizations from the skeletons as medieval synecdoche overlooks the value of each skeleton as an individual experience. The remains from the mass graves bring to the present an intimate narrative of the gruesome reality that hot July

[23] In archaeology, a feature refers to evidence of non-portable activity such as a structure built above or a hole dug below the surface. A mass grave is a hole dug in the ground then backfilled with the same dirt, making them relatively small and difficult to discern in comparison to a building foundation, buried metal objects, or other more detectable features.

day in 1361CE with immersive and emotionally moving evidence. Aside from the broader significance, Visby is an intimate look at what medieval conflict looked like when it was not two professional armies but rather one side of professional mercenaries against common medieval men, children, and families.

The remains from three mass graves offer a rich context as to what happened on July 27, 1361CE at Visby. While the battlefield place and the broad strokes of the event have continued to be part of the known history of Gotland, the brutality done to the local farmers who fought that day faded from public memory until their skeletons brought back the vivid details of the event. With the battlefield obscured and the contemporary texts scant, the remains are the main resource for engaging with and understanding the event that marks the place. This example demonstrates the extent to which the objects can inform the place in public memory in this exhibition.

Figure 7: Display case of "Visby 1361" exhibit at Gotland Museum, Visby, depicting several technologies of torso armor and chainmail fused to skulls. Image courtesy of Gotland Museum.

The Danish invasion of Visby is understood through the patterns of violence on the dead Gotlanders from that day, bringing a harsh reality into public discourse with complicated sense of feelings. This vivid and visceral approach to human remains display serves to counteract what Linenthal calls "the insidious and dangerous attempts to sanitize or romanticize history" that make places of memory become places of forgetting (990). While the battle of Visby exhibition at the Gotland Museum has been labeled as thanatourism and also dark tourism, leaning into the macabre serves a very clear remit to communicate this event to publics through immersive emotive engagement. The morbidity of violence communicated in the Visby exhibition is not sensationalized – the battle really was that horrific – and is therefore necessary to engage in the memory of the event and the Gotlanders' deaths. Public memory is accessed through the violence in the interpretation.

A cycle of public remembrance is activated in this episode through the process of knowledge construction that unfolds as specialists work through questions and data presented by the human remains. The presence of such a large cache of armor is a major question because no such abandonment of metal resources like this has been found in European medieval archaeology before. The inconsistent methods of filling the mass graves with bodies is also another question that requires interpretation to understand why some graves follow the common model of organized placement of bodies while other pits are a jumble of corpses thrown in with little care. The bones themselves have exceptionally abundant marks of violence on them, another unusual characteristic of the Visby objects that raises questions. The "Last Stand at Visby" episode brings the audience along for the process of rectifying the data with possible interpretations as specialists puzzle through these interrelated aspects of the Visby objects. The process requires specialists to consider vivid details about the violence of the event, immersing viewers in an

emotional experience that brings the gory suffering of the Visby individuals into empathetic focus.

The presence of armor in this quantity is a stand-out question that scholars seek to answer. The armor itself represents a variety of lamellar and plate technologies that were obsolete by 1361, indicating that the outfitting for battle consisted of hand-me-downs passed through the families of poor peasants. The Danes invading were a professional army of raiders and mercenaries who would have been well equipped. One hypothesis is that once the Danish army had killed all of these thousands of Gotlanders, their antiquated equipment was not worth salvaging. However, if a simple lack of motivation were the cause, armor would be a far more common grave feature than it is. The hypothesis of unwanted armor also does not account for the basic tenant of the victorious force to control, remove, or destroy any resources in order to control the defeated side's access. Swords and helmets are scarce in the Visby graves, supporting the notion that the Danes were exercising resource control.

Another point considered was the heat of July, with thousands of bloated bodies each with torso armor that would be embedded in the swollen corpses and difficult to remove. The wholesale slaughter of the peasant class during the battle may have slowed down the processing of the fallen since those peasants who would perform such tasks were dead. In the thousand years of medieval warfare, plenty of other battles took place on hot days, so the heat alone does not validate the rarity of armor left behind. Perhaps a combination of all of those factors led to the Danes' unusual choice to control access through burial. The fact that all of those resources were dumped into the mass grave pits indicates some extreme circumstance.

The grave arrangement between the three excavated pits also indicates unusual circumstances. One grave, likely the first, had the bodies lined up as is commonly seen in plague

pits or other respectful burials in a time of high body count. The other two pits contain hundreds of bodies dumped in and jumbled. Perhaps the heat turned the burial to an act of disposal that was more urgent than the ritual. Perhaps the locals that were left alive realized they could not get it done properly with so few survivors, so they just got it done. This speculation all points to a grim situation that had some urgency without the ability to manage the work, another indication of extreme circumstances. These questions engage the audience to imagine the circumstances through the view of Visby survivors from both sides of the battle to understand their actions.

Working backward from the body disposal in mass graves, the specialists turn to the skeletons to understand the battle itself and the Visby skeletons show evidence of the violence of the conflict event. While history pivoted on the point of the battle, individual men and boys lost their lives by the thousands. The patterns of injury are focused with deep cuts to the shins, knees and ankles. Tibia either severed clean through or with multiple (< 7 parallel) cuts indicate that without leg protection, Gotlanders were targeted at this point of weakness. The Danes took their long swords and disabled the Gotlanders by taking them out at the ankles. In the episode, the resident and visiting specialists discussed what these cut marks indicate about the battle, giving viewers access to the process of knowledge construction. Holst, visiting osteoarchaeologist from York, thought initially the lower leg cuts indicate the person was on horseback. Resident osteoarchaeologist Petter Akeson offered the counterpoint that repetitive blows appear to be from a high angle, matching the damage of a sword or axe swinging repeatedly as the two fighters stood face to face (see Figure 8). Akeson provided more skeletal data, showing both Holst and the viewers several skeletons with both legs severed which would be impossible if the person was mounted on a horse (see Figure 9). Holst, an experienced battlefield osteoarchaeologist, remarked at her own shock for the consistent brutality suggested on the bones (“Last Stand at

Visby"). The marks make it clear that the Gotlanders were not professional or even properly equipped soldiers. The repeated patterns of leg trauma indicate the Danish mercenaries exploited the weakness in the lack of armor *en masse*.

Figure 8: Patterns of cut marks on the tibia of multiple individuals. Screenshot from "Last Stand at Visby" episode, *Medieval Dead*.

Figure 9: *In situ* excavation image of legs/feet cut off in one blow from a long sword or axe. Image courtesy of Gotland Museum digital archive.

The patterns from repetition across the bodies helps to develop a detailed understanding of the Danish invaders' techniques in the battle and paints a narrative of underprepared peasants slaughtered in an imbalanced engagement that does not represent the experience of two professional armies meeting on the field. Cut marks on shin bones and skull fractures are documented on so many of the skeletons examined, forming a generalized pattern of how the Danish mercenaries strategized in the battle. As with the individual that convinced Holst that horses were not a part of the battle, many skeletons have both legs cleaved off completely (see Figure 9). The low blows to disable the Gotlanders was a method for quick submission but also indicates high quality weapons on the Danish side because the bones and tendons of the feet, and likely a layer of leather shoes, are not easy to cut clean through without exceptional weapons. The specialists use their knowledge to work through from what they see on the bones to what the evidence means, sharing the moment where data becomes meaning with the audience.

The hypothesis of efficiency by the specialists regarding the leg bone trauma shifted to a narrative of excessive violence that was inefficiently overzealous when they began to analyze the skulls. The hobbling technique disabled the Gotland resistance with ruthless efficiency and exhibits a methodical violence that is not common of other medieval battles. The skulls of the fallen also show trauma far in excess of a fatal blow, indicating an unnecessary level of brutality. Once disabled and on the ground with leg injuries, the skulls were crushed, stabbed, and/or impaled in a combination of blunt force and sharp force trauma. Rhomboidal voids are common in the skulls and come in two main groups of sizes: either from a crossbow bold with a diamond-shaped iron tip or the larger voids from the impact of a warhammer, which are also rhomboidal in cross-section and taper to a point. See Figure 10 for an example of a skull with a warhammer void at the left base, two larger blunt-force trauma fractures (likely from a shield bash), and three

crossbow bolts imbedded in the back of the skull. Any one of these injuries would have almost certainly been fatal, so the excessive trauma speaks to an exceptionally violent brutality.

Figure 10: Skull on display at Gotland Museum, Visby, with blunt force trauma on left temple void, probable Warhammer-tip void fracture at left base below larger gap, and three crossbow bolt quarrels imbedded in back of skull. Image courtesy of Gotland Museum.

Finally, the process of interpreting the bones points to the life that was cut short on that day. The bones age to teenagers, prepubescent boys, elderly, and disabled peasants, indicating that the standing force that met the Danes at Visby were whole family units and likely the vast majority of the male rural population to include the entire spectrum of non-able-bodied ranks. Amongst the armor were modified torso protection that was fitted to small bodies, further indicating that all boys and men from the countryside were there in entire family units. Visby locked the gates, so there was nowhere to go and the Danes did not spare the young or old.

The data points are interpreted with various hypotheses floated in order to build up a narrative of the event, revealing the process of meaning-making as a tool for public engagement. Publics gain access to the moment of becoming as they witness acts of knowledge construction form when specialists gather around the objects. Viewers also witness the emotional impact on

the specialists as they gain an understanding of the event and connect with the human remains. The specialists' respectful demeanor in the presence of the remains as well as their emotional responses as they attempt to empathize through immersive reconstruction hypotheses exemplify engagement practices. Working through potential answers to questions posed by the battlefield data invites discourse but also models practices for approaching human remains in a museum setting by demonstrating how the specialists frame their own interactions with the remains during the process.

While the specialists are more accustomed to the grim subject matters associated with battlefield archaeology, emotional connections are still a part of the interpretive process. Petter Akeson, osteoarchaeologist at the National Historic Museum in Stockholm, has worked with the Visby remains more than anyone and admits to the layer of emotional difficulty this work entails. Akeson speaks to viewers with authentic poignancy in the episode, "sometimes when you pick up a cranium with a big hole in it, you just put it down and have to go and take some coffee and take a break for a while, it disturbs you what people can do to each other." Akeson models the appropriateness of emotional response when faced with such violent conclusions in the interpretive process.

Bringing publics into this process gives an over-the-shoulder perspective on specialist knowledge construction which includes as part of the process space to empathize with the final moments of human life experience uncovered while interpreting the Visby remains. The presentation of information in this case study invites publics to join the specialists' perspective as a part of the meaning-making process. Akeson's visceral response to the brutality marked on the skeletons is echoed by many of the other specialists, which in turn validates emotional responses of viewers. Connecting publics with the immersive emotional experience of the event through

interpretation of the remains demonstrates how objects affect publics' sense of feeling as part of the meaning-making process.

Completing the ecotriangle, place is understood as a contributing force in the Visby event through the larger patterns of violence observed in the remains. The questions of discarded armor, chaotic burial, and excessive brutality were partially answered by the remains themselves but cannot be fully understood until the field of battle fills in the gaps. Foreign merchants closed the city gate, limiting the Gotlanders to the exposed field outside the walls. The field did not afford Gotlanders any advantage or path of escape from the Danes, thus providing opportunity for the extreme mutilation of thousands gathered helplessly outside the city walls. The wholesale extermination of the Gotlanders led to an overwhelming number of corpses on the field and few surviving locals to dispose of the bodies. The July heat and lack of cover directly influenced the hasty burial of battlefield debris in an unprecedented abandonment of resources like armor, weapons, and coins. The violence of the battle was a choice of the Danish mercenaries but the opportunity was afforded in large part to the place of battle. Though the field is largely obscured by urbanization in modern Visby, place's role in the ecotriangle is an essential component to answer the questions raised by the remains.

The episode, "Last Stand at Visby," communicates to the audience primarily through explication of the interpretive process, developing a nuanced insight into the process of archaeological interpretation. This processual approach provides two valuable contributions to the ecotriangle. First, publics develop an immersive relationship with the objects through a sort of guided tour as they observe how specialist participate with the objects in the act of knowledge construction. The guided tour also lays bare the varying levels of uncertainty that are attached to the interpretation. Publics often receive a finished product with scientific knowledge that

obscures uncertainty as expert interpretation gets translated into scientific fact (Fahnestock). Second, the importance of emotional investment as part of the interpretive process with human remains is expressed. Archaeologist Tim Sutherland remarks that he finds value in "giving back" to the remains in his relationship with the objects as he uncovers the narratives of common people that so often get lost in the broad strokes of history. In other words, Sutherland recognizes the agency of objects through what they provide to him and actively frames his work to reciprocate in an exchange that indicates respect.

Through analysis of the ecotriangle dynamics in the "Last Stand at Visby" episode, the relationship maintains an equilateral shape. Each node of publics, objects, and place contribute to the explication of one another, maintaining their interrelational dynamic. Even as the material presence of place diminishes with the battlefield obscured, the objects only provide part of the necessary information to understand the events of 27 July, 1361CE, while place accounts for many essential gaps required for knowledge construction. The relationship of objects and place are demonstrated in their mutual contributions to knowledge construction. Publics activate remembrance of the event as the presentation of analytical evidence in the episode captures how information becomes knowledge through emphasis on the process of meaning making.

Agincourt: Remembering the Fallen from the Field

The episode, "Agincourt's Lost Dead," represents a more common shape to ecotriangles in battlefield archaeology because the rarity of identified or excavated mass graves usually puts a greater burden of interpretation on the landscape of the field. Most archaeological sites represent centuries of occupation, while battlefield archaeology represents a very narrow yet pivotal window of time on a scale of minutes, hours, but no more than days. As such, there is not a depth of deposits to excavate. Rather at-best, a scatter of surface finds constitutes the material objects

left to interpret. Battlefield methods rely on the landscape to provide perspective on the battle which requires an embodied practice approach in common with rhetoric *in situ*. Interdisciplinary parallels between battlefield archaeology and rhetoric *in situ* are an opportunity for crosspollination of methods as well as stereoscopic perspective into the ecotriangle.

As with the rest of the *Medieval Dead* series, "Agincourt's Lost Dead" engages its publics via immersion in the meaning-making process as archaeologists try to shed light on the absent objects by understanding the role of place in the relationship. Understanding Agincourt is complicated by layers of political romanticism in the discourse surrounding the battle, most notably Shakespeare's retelling in his history, *Henry V*. The Battle of Agincourt marked a turning point in the Hundred Years' War between France and England. In Britain, this battle has come to stand for victory against the odds where the outnumbered few prevail. Through public discourse, King Henry V's victory over the French forces on 25 October, 1415CE "reached mythical proportions" as "the most famous medieval battle, at least in England" (Sutherland, "Agincourt's Lost Dead"). Without locating the remains, archaeologists try to make sense of the conflicting textual accounts by revisiting the place of battle.

Starting from place as opposed to objects requires a different approach that highlights both the problematic nature of written histories as well as the value of rhetoric *in situ* as an approach to the historic texts. While the Visby example relied heavily on the objects with osteoarchaeological and historic armaments specialists providing most of the interpretive techniques, Agincourt is understood through the process of rectifying disparate textual accounts in the historic archives with ground truthing techniques of archaeological survey, remote sensing, and test excavation.

In the episode, historian Anne Curry presents a variety of early texts that recount the battle of Agincourt which vary in their accounts of troop numbers from 60,000 well-equipped French versus Henry's routed band of 6,000 unarmored English longbowmen. On the other end of the estimation scale, Curry's research suggest a nearly-even match of perhaps 9,000 men on each side, based on exchequer files of contemporary payroll records and funding allocations ("Agincourt's Lost Dead"). Archival research can weigh secondary source narratives against primary archival accounting records but limitations of texts without material context can only postulate why the numbers vary so widely. The disparity is linked to many political factors, certainly England's underdog narrative of nationalistic pride but also France's internal rifts at the time with factions wanting to exaggerate troop numbers and hide losses. At this point, the archival sources are at an impasse of disagreement, where embodied practice of rhetoric *in situ* joins archaeology's ground-truthing to consider how place weighs into these disparate numbers.

Material and historical factore recalibrate the warping of source material by providing context for the political and persuasive filters in which texts were written. The concurrent French civil war that Henry V was exploiting in 1415CE between the Burgundians and Armagnac, which would skew the numbers of French soldiers to be larger by both sides yet telling opposite stories in terms of French losses in the battle. The Burgundians would have wanted to exaggerate the number of men-at-arms they were capable of mustering while hiding the severity of their losses to present a strong show of force to the Armagnacs while England built their narrative of victory as one against miraculous odds while showcasing their famous longbowmen with impressive casualties to report. Rhetoric *in situ* asks scholars to look beyond the text to find context amongst material culture. Enos' work with integrating textual and material investigation recognizes the importance of material culture to "provide insights to the context within which

rhetoric took place, but also to reconstruct the mentalities of the culture that produced such discourse" ("Theory, Validity, and Historiography" 9). Simply meeting each textual account with skepticism does not resolve the disparity, which is where the place itself can provide a perspective that is not tied to the political agendas of contemporary writers from the medieval period. The value of material context to textual evidence lies within a balance of partial texts written by people with agendas with the material context.

The early source material gives shape to the kinds of questions that can be answered in the field through ground truthing. Maps of the battle that are still printed today in texts have worked off of historic maps of the battle and it appears that they have all relied solely on secondary archival texts produced centuries after the battle as sources. In the documentary, Curry compares the earliest known map of the battle location, the Cassini map from the 18th century, to the 1832 map of troop arrangements found in Harris Nicholas' *History of the Battle of Agincourt* second edition where she notes that Nicolas placed the field according to Cassini even though there is a gap of four centuries between the battle and the first textual account. It seems Nicholas did not visit France to check but instead banked on the credibility of Cassini, "it's a bit problematic" Curry admits from an archival research perspective ("Agincourt's Lost Dead"). Archaeologist Tim Sutherland attempts to triangulate this information with a field survey. Initial ground truthing noted that both the Cassini and Nicholas maps place the battle west of Agincourt village, flipping the relational description that place the far border of the field along Tramencourt forest, which is east of Agincourt village. Thus, Cassini and Nicholas placed the battle more than forty kilometers to the wrong side of Agincourt village. Such textual inconsistencies are perpetuated when scholars ignore the material evidence available *in situ* to favor secondary textual sources because of the elevated value of text in certain fields.

Rhetoric *in situ* integrates knowledge from the perspective of the researcher by emphasizing the layer of understanding only achieved through embodied experience in the material context of the environment. Enos challenges historians of rhetoric to follow the example of archaeologists to "dirty our hands" and get out into the field ("Theory, Validity, and Historiography" 14). As Enos encourages cross-pollination of methods between archaeology and rhetoric, archaeology's "ground truthing" can bring material validation to texts as an integrated practice. Archaeology verifies information gathered from desk-based assessments through *in-situ* contextualization, a practice commonly known as ground-truthing, as an essential component to archaeological survey methods. Demonstrated by Sutherland's response to archival data as a starting hypothesis, he seeks to substantiate the texts' accounts out in the field through direct observation of the material landscape. Place can offer a great deal of information to support, refute, and enrich textual evidence by understanding it within the materiality of the landscape.

Scholarly and public knowledge developed around secondary texts, such as Cassini and Nicholas, written from a geographic and temporal distance lacks the essential knowledge of thereness. Thereness implies a materiality to the knowledge and public memory, embedded in place but also material. Unlike personal memories, shared discourse has material roots, "public memory exists in the world rather than in a person's head and so is embodied in different cultural forms" (Zelizer 232). While public memory is not a consistent reliable source of facts, there is a strong association place that is significant in public memory. For centuries, archival scholars have relied on the recirculation of secondary textual sources without tapping into the resource of *in situ* place and associated discourse of public memory.

Place can validate or complicate textual evidence but the relationship goes both ways. Archaeological survey of Agincourt field uncovered an anomaly that could not be explained

without input from textual resourcs. Sutherland surveyed the field east of Agincourt village for over a decade using methods ranging from simple sight-observation walking survey to a variety of geophysical remote sensing techniques. During survey at Agincourt, a large metal anomaly was identified that would, under normal circumstances, almost certainly not represent a mass grave. However, there are textual accounts that King Henry burned and/or buried vast amounts of armor since his small army could not carry the load, making the metal an impractical resource to transport. The text provided an explanation that would not have been postulated based on archaeological data alone. Excavations on the metal anomaly revealed a buried modern industrial pipe. While a disappointment, the use of text to investigate questions of place contextualizes both sources of data.

Returning to texts and discourse for source material to investigate, Sutherland began investigating the field east of Agincourt village identified in local vernacular memory discourse to be the site of the 1415CE battle. Local memory also pointed Sutherland to a previous excavation by an English officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Woodford, in 1818CE. Woodford pursued hobbyist archaeology while occupying the region after England regained control after the battle of Waterloo in the Napoleonic conflicts. On the heels of another French defeat by the English, tensions were high with the locals during Woodford's excavations, demonstrating inextricable rhetorical layers in the public memory of the place.

Layers of history, meaning, and understanding with the battle of the hundred years' war floating up toward the surface when it is invoked by later events, such as the English occupation in the 19th century after the Napoleonic Wars. The 1415CE battle event cannot be looked at in isolation but rather it is fused to the history of the place on either side, "all memory places and commemorative sites have their own histories" (Gallagher and Kalin 247). Agincourt is a

memory place divided, where on one hand the English bedight "churches and cathedrals across England bare tomb effigies and memorials to the veterans of Agincourt" while "in France, there are relatively few" without any contemporary medieval marker known to indicate the battlefield site ("Agincourt's Lost Dead"). The English continuously invoke the memory of victory at Agincourt through text, monuments, and fiction in the centuries after. While it may seem that the French have chosen to forget, the memory rises to the top with local discourse full of tension when another English force arrives in the area. The rhetorical layers of injury and mistrust are piled on after Henry V's victory, Woodford's occupying force, and likely colored British archaeologist Tim Sutherland's ability to gain trust and access to the Agincourt site.

Some rhetorical layers can be explicated through textual evidence, while others fade when the text is destroyed. Woodford excavated in the fields east of Agincourt between Tramencourt forest and the village of Maisoncelle, allegedly uncovering a mass grave. Letters of private correspondence survive between Woodford and his brother but the occupying Colonel's excavation journals were destroyed in a fire at the Pantechnicon storage warehouse, London, in 1874 that housed that collection ("Agincourt's Lost Dead;" "Destruction of the London Pantechnicon"). Without the excavation journal, no record of where Woodford dug or what he found beyond the highlights of news he shared with his brother in the letters. The private letters are the only surviving textual documentation available from Woodford's excavations. Retained by the Warwickshire County Records Office, one of Woodford's letters provides a detailed sketch of a French gold ecu coin from the reign of Charles VI, minted from 1380 to1422CE. The mention of this coin may validate that Woodford was looking in the correct place, East of Agincourt village, providing some supportive evidence that Sutherland's assessment of the historic Cassini and Nicholas maps were marking the wrong spot.

Woodford may have identified the correct field for Agincourt but local public memory still remembers him as an occupying English adversary who sought to disrespect the fallen French soldiers at Agincourt. By Woodford's own account, he commissioned a sarcophagus of unknown dimension in which he intended to reinter the remains he disturbed while excavating a mass grave on the site. Upon reading the letters about Woodford's earnest attempt at respectful repatriation of the French soldiers' remains onto consecrated ground, Sutherland was surprised by the dissonance between Woodford's own words and how he is remembered in public discourse. Sutherland mused "this isn't the general story that is available, the general story is that he was a bit of a baddy" ("Agincourt's Lost Dead"). Woodford's efforts at genuine respect and social-scientific interest could not overcome the circumstances of his presence as an occupying English officer layered on top of the subject matter of Agincourt's disastrous defeat by the English in 1415CE. Thus, the public memory of tension runs deep as echoed in the inevitable issues that French residents of Agincourt had with the English amateur archaeology enthusiast as each side had their own deep associations to that place because of the same event.

The French perspective and the English are two layers laminated together in tension. There are moments when the seemingly-incommensurable narratives weave across one another, such as when the French carried out Woodford's intensions by using the sarcophagus he commissioned to reinter the disturbed remains. While geomatics has not been carried out in the churchyard and excavations will remain highly unlikely, ground-truthing of the churchyard at St. Nicholas in Agincourt village revealed sgraffito carved on the wall with the date "1838," which matches an account of reinterment taking place two decades after Woodford's excavation in 1818CE ("Agincourt's Lost Dead"). In Agincourt village, Woodford is still largely painted as a desecrating English gloater, yet the use of his commissioned sarcophagus to repatriate the

remains is an indication of unity when it comes to the respect of the remains. Agincourt from 1415CE exists in the material landscape of the area ready to be invoked into another cycle of revision, recursion, or remembrance.

The exact location of each event in the battle of Agincourt has yet to be established, though agency of place can still be seen in the battle's outcome. While environmental determinism is an extreme, new materialism's agency of place recognizes an active role in the ecotriangle. Battlefield archaeology is built around methods that take into account the affordances and constraints of the field as a contributing agent to the battle that shape the actions of the people engaged in conflict upon it. For example, Curry's work on archival evidence postulates two armies that were fairly evenly matched in terms of numbers, ranging from nine to twelve thousand per side. While England relied heavily on the longbowmen, likely numbering around two-thirds of their army, the French ranks were primarily swordsmen. Taking into account only the two armies without considering the field, the French side seems superior in equipment, distribution of military specialization, and number at least marginally even in the most modest estimates. According to Curry, the simple plan of the French was to ride down the archers with cavalry since the bowmen are far less effective once the enemy has made it into hand-to-hand combat range. Thus, the French anticipated a battle that consisted mainly of mêlée fighting. "The French think they are going to a party," Karen Watts explains, "they're expecting a glorious amount of hand-to-hand combat with the opposing English armies" (Agincourt's Lost Dead"). Without accounting for agency of place by considering the field of battle, the French were certain of victory.

However, the field on which the two armies met favored the longbowmen with a vast expanse of open field, soft wet ground, and calm winds on 25 October, 1415CE. The place has

agency in determining the outcome of a battle just as much as the human combatants (Zabecki). The terrain, visibility, and weather conditions are forces that influence the success of battle strategies. Horses inevitably struggled on wet ground, advancing slower across an open field fully exposed without cover, hampering the French tactics described by Curry and resulting in heavy casualties before they reached the English lines. The place favored archery as the advantage of the day, demonstrating a powerful force to be considered beyond human-to-human interaction when understanding the conflict event.

The agency of place influenced the outcome of the battle and remains accessible to embodied research to reconstruct place's role in the event. Place of public memory accumulate rhetorical layers of meaning which can be amplified or minimized in rhythm with cycles of remembrance and forgetting. The rhetorical layers are applied to place but do not alone account for the significance of a place without also recognizing agency. Places have a material presence that surpasses the significance placed on them by publics. This distinction of rhetorical layers versus agency is described by Dickinson, how places of public memory "do not just represent the past, the accrete their own past" (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 30). Battlefield archaeology surveys the field to understand how place was experienced in the moment of conflict. The materiality and timeless presence provided by places of public memory make them part of the relationship network that act as a sort of intermediary between past and present publics.

Describing material agency of a battlefield points to its force acting on the battle as well as its continuing role as a memory place for the event. New materialism ascribes agency to place, both effecting the events of that day for the men fighting as well as indelibly marking an imprint of that event in that place that can be retraced because it is the only decision-maker left to interact with after everyone else is dead. The *in situ* agency of place helps us recover the

experience of the soldiers in concert with the experience that the place presents to visitors. Walking the field of Agincourt as a touchstone, archaeologists like Sutherland interact with the place constructing knowledge as observations become interpretation.

Approaching places of public memory from the specialist-intermediary perspective works well with the processual approach to engagement utilized in this case study between publics and specialists as they work through the meaning-making process. In this mode of delivery, thereness is not innate to the publics' experience because the audience views the documentary at any distance without necessarily visiting the site. However, appreciation of thereness can be developed through the archaeological interpretation of the place, demonstrating to the publics how to read the place. Visiting a place without appreciation of the context does not grant thereness knowledge the same way that intellectual pursuits without material embodied experience of place does not grant thereness. That extra layer of interpretive support would likely be needed even if one was in France instead of on their own living room couch. Much like Rice's horizon of public memory to place, one can orient themselves as toward or away with an open invitation to move closer through increased engagement with place. The knowledge required to share that special knowledge of place is more advanced in this instance and perhaps transferable from specialists to viewers as they share in the process, creating potential in each viewer to acquire thereness in the future by connecting their gained knowledge with experience of place.

Publics offered a view into the process to see how specialists use discourse, text, and place to develop a richer synergism of knowledge construction than any of the sources offer alone. The archaeological approach demonstrated by Tim Sutherland's instinct to ground-truth archival accounts models the value of rhetoric *in situ* scholarship's maxim of embodied approaches to text.

Publics and the Cycle of Remembrance

This documentary series' process-based approach to public engagement offers a unique insight into the ecotriangle relationship that actively explicates tacit connections. The medium of film was framed herein as a guided tour, closer to an ideal museum guided tour without the possibility of visitors walking through the exhibition backwards, reading text out of order, or wandering off. While all of those outliers are still very much a part of exhibition design in the physical museum space, this case represents the analysis of an experience that is uniform and repeatable for the publics. A documentary certainly does not present a one-to-one comparison to a museum exhibition, but the medium offers methods of engagement that could be creatively adapted to museum space.

In the storerooms with the Gotland collection, publics joined specialists for an inside look at the construction of knowledge. Rather than using a host or other Dr. Watson-type of exposition catalyst, "Last Stand at Visby" captured a genuine glimpse at the process where outside specialists joined local experts to puzzle through understanding the objects in front of them. In both episodes of *Medieval Dead*, the combination of interviews with and conversations between the experts help the viewer not only learn about the site but see how process of information, certainty, and knowledge construction happens in battlefield archaeology.

Rather than focus on the individual nodes of publics, place, and objects, this case study allows a relational investigation to see how the ecotriangle interacts in the meaning-making process. The approach to communicating a sense place in the interpretation of archaeological material is innovative for both the medium of exhibition and genre of archaeological documentary. However, this is once again a cautionary tale against wholesale modeling of

another successful exhibition without rhetorical analysis and adapting the idea to each specific instance of rhetorical ecology and curatorial objectives.

Because a documentary can film on site, *in situ*, there is a chance to be closer to the sense of place, understand thereness from landmarks, and see the affordances and constraints of the landscape. The medium of documentary film has a chance to close some aspect of the gap between place and displacement. Museums have moved toward engagement methods of multimedia elements within exhibition spaces, documentary footage could bring the process of knowledge construction into the public discourse and bridge the gap between museum place and *in situ* displacement.

The documentary medium may be considered akin to the narrative-driven display model, which raises concerns from a public memory perspective. Narrative-driven displays provide structures "that visitors perform as they move through the site," according to Gallagher and Kalin. The concern with this model of interpretation is that critical analysis is no longer encouraged when a tight narrative is presented, creating an official monolithic form to the knowledge. Absolute presentation of a single narrative assumes publics consume without critique, "as a result, visitors may come to rely exclusively on those narrative frameworks and experiences for making decisions and judgements about the past, present, and future, particularly in the absence of specialized knowledge or first-hand experience" (Gallagher and Kalin 253). Museums inform, thus taking a stance on what happened in a particular event or context through "epideictic and material rhetoric" but the pedagogical opportunity is in creating spaces for uncertainty for the visitor "while also prompting visitors to create their own complex, productively uncomfortable pathways toward understanding" (Obermark 93). Unlike a traditional documentary's narrative presentation model, *Medieval Dead* encourages engagement

by publics as they follow beside the specialists critically analyzing the material in the act of knowledge construction. In this case, publics are part of the process immersed in meaning-making with all of the agency to critically assess the raw data presented. Throughout both episodes analyzed, experts shared their data with the viewers and their peers, capturing the act of interpretation as the camera's viewpoint represents the viewing publics' invitation to join the meaning-making process. The value of this nuanced difference between narrative storytelling and processual knowledge construction is in the fuzzy boundary it creates between the experts' official discourse and the vernacular discourse generated in the same environment.

A key reason these battlefield episodes were chosen as a case study is that both episodes parallel issues with interpretation's strong relationship with place, which can be read through the tenants of rhetoric *in situ*. The brevity of the event and the relative lack of archaeological deposits or cultural material means battlefield archaeology relies more heavily on interpreting the place to construct knowledge of the event, empathy for the remains, and interpretation of the objects. For both episodes with added emphasis in "Agincourt's Lost Dead," new materialism is applied to the battlefield to recognize the agency of place in the archaeological approach to interpretation. Battlefield archaeology relies on investigation of the battlefield itself, considering the opportunities and limitations that the place afforded in order to interpret the event, implying material agency of the place itself. Each episode provides a grounded example of how material objects and place influence human behavior in a relational dynamic. When all ecotriangle components are present, the relationship is clearly intelligible. Yet it is important to recognize that the same ecotriangle relationship is present even in the absence or diminished presence of one node. While the methods applied to interpreting the relationship may vary based on the

existing data, the relational dependency and importance of understanding publics, objects, and place in concert remains unchanged.

In Chapter 5, further comparisons can be made between the two case studies. The central themes of capturing the meaning-making process where information and experience become knowledge is essential to both case studies but framed in different ways. Methods of interpretation and engagement for publics are represented by both cases with distinctive approaches. A deeper discussion will also develop on the problems of modeling a case study without regard to the suitability of such a design in another rhetorical ecology. As such, the value in both of these case study critiques can be found in the analysis of how each interpretation fits within its unique rhetorical ecology and what the study of rhetorical ecology components like the ecotriangle offer to the pre-ethical architecture for interpreting human remains in museum display.

5. ECOTRIANGULAR DENOUEMENT

A career archaeologist specialized in object conservation, I have worked within and contributed to scholarship on the ethical display of human remains for nearly twenty years. As a younger professional, I was insulated by institutional policy from the complicated navigation of translating ethical debates into best practice standards. In 2009, I was tasked to complete a feasibility study for the installation of "visible storage[24]" at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London because there were concerns about the passive display[25] of their entire collection of human remains. Fundamental questions about the nature of remains became more pressing than the ethical questions because I struggled to define even the most basic parameters. Mummies, skulls, and a desiccated brain were easily classified as human remains, but what about locks of hair, stray fingers, or the earlobes attached to a pair of earrings? The museum administration was split between inclusive, classifying all human tissue, versus mortuary exclusivity, where parts that could be removed from a body without necessarily being dead did not count as objects of a sensitive nature. Derailed from stasis without consensus on basic definitions, decisions about the nature of remains quickly became conflated with ethical considerations. Over a decade later, this research is contributing to the essential pre-ethical architecture as a necessary foundation to support the superstructure of ethical debates for human remains. Though this rhetorical project situates in the theoretical realm, the grounded application in practice has the potential to pragmatically inform projects like the one mentioned here with an essential rhetorical framework.

[24] A passive display solution for creating more open access to collections, visible storage is the idea of rehousing the objects in storage so they can be seen as a sort of hybridized display. This can range from clear boxes, glass case shelving, to sliding drawers. Beyond the increased storage space and costs, issues of whether or not all objects in a collection, especially human remains, should be more accessible has become a major debate.

[25] Passive display refers to all situations where displays are not actively interpreted, such as a window to see the storerooms, etc.

Interdisciplinary work requires both sides to come to some stasis about meanings and established views that may be taken for granted when working within one's own discipline. The act of explaining a stance requires some justification along with the definition, bringing productive opportunities for growth that come from interrogating assumptions. As a researcher with advanced degrees in each of the three fields of archaeology, museum studies, and soon rhetoric, the starting point for this project kept moving further back to the most basic of terms and tenets. The search for the starting point was initially to find common ground but instead turned into a puzzle of identifying tensions between concepts in the disciplines and resolving them through reflective interrogation. The resulting hybrid of terms and approaches may be the most valuable aspect of this research.

The overlying research questions are contributing to the body of knowledge for all disciplines are a worthy endeavor. Yet, the basic building blocks that have been redefined within interdisciplinary common ground are full of critical nuance, which carries value and broader-reaching implications beyond the scope of the research questions. The exercise of explaining the most fundamental concepts between disciplines requires both critique and compromise. I hope this research project serves as an example that encourages other scholars to undertake foundational cross-examinations in interdisciplinary research to enrich their own scholarship.

This project has developed a perspective for approaching human remains by pooling together tools from rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies to build a frame. The primary objective for building an interdisciplinary frame was to explore the thesis questions. Instead of prescriptions, this research has situated questions as contingent on the rhetorical ecology in which they are asked, developing a heuristic model full of moving targets. The complexity of interdisciplinary research makes such endeavors less about solving issues with finite statements

and more about serving the involved disciplines with productive contributions. Thus, the measure of success for this project is in the questions that it provokes as much as it is in the questions that were answered.

In this project, the research questions were answered through an interwoven approach to the scholarship, then tested through the chosen case studies. An interesting side effect of this method, likely catalyzed by the aforementioned foundational interrogation of assumptions, turned out to be a deeper commitment to framing research within a rhetorical ecology. To keep a clear focus on the research questions and framed approach, many other considerations that may also affect the system of relationships became more apparent as dynamic factors outside of the research focus yet lurking nearby. The rhetorical ecology allowed this research to organize the approach as an ecotriangle of publics, objects, and place in the center while acknowledging that this relationship does not take place in a vacuum but rather is surrounded by vibrant activity on all sides. Peripheral concerns could be placed somewhere in the vicinity of my research focus while maintaining some scope limitations.

To address the research questions while acknowledging the rhetorical ecology, this conclusion chapter is structured in four parts. First, the project's research questions are discussed to highlight the contributions made to the disciplines of rhetoric, archaeology, and museum studies within the established scope. Next, further insights that can be gained through a direct comparison of the two case studies are considered. Third, some possibilities of broader-ranging contributions are explored for each of the three disciplines brought together: archaeology, museum studies, and rhetoric. Finally, this chapter ends with thoughts on moving forward. This last section relates the limitations and further research along with some of the larger questions seen in the near and far distance of this project's rhetorical ecologies. Bookending this research,

Chapter 1 began by developing a nuanced interdisciplinary compromise for answers and Chapter 5 ends with a heuristic of nuanced interdisciplinary questions unanswered.

To recall from Chapter 1, the main research questions for this project are as follows:

- What does it mean to understand archaeological human remains as "objects"?
- How can an analysis of human remains contribute to scholarship in rhetoric about public memory in museums and places of public memory? What is the relationship between the concept of "place" and human remains?
- How can scholarship on place in rhetoric inform and/or contextualize the approach to interpretation of archaeological human remains in museum display? How can this relationship be expressed to the public through archaeological and museum interpretation?

What does it mean to understand archaeological human remains as "objects"? As established in the interdisciplinary definition, human remains are the exceptional find in archaeological contexts because they were not objects in their source culture but rather become objects upon excavation discovery when taken up into the archaeological record, gaining further rhetorical layers of meaning. Capturing the moment of meaning-making is central to this project both for human remains as objects and the relationship of the ecotriangle in museum interpretation. In both acts of knowledge construction, interpretation is framed as the building of rhetorical layers. New materialism frames object agency as an essential component for understanding human remains as museum objects.

New materialism is a posthumanist theory that acknowledges material agency. Human remains complicate understanding objects in context with the added layer of a person with thoughts, ideas, and agency. The living person's relationship with the remains develops

rhetorical layers on another level from situating an object in its place and culture or context. This research has demonstrated how object agency describes the process of interpreting human remains as a mutual cross-flow of meaning-making between living persons and the dead. In the case studies, publics and specialists clearly respond to the remains as an integral part of knowledge construction. The responses that human remains evoke demonstrate their agency in the process. Human remains are a special case that represents a limbo between humans and objects in post-human theories worthy of further investigation.

As palimpsests of rhetorical layers, part of the interpretation process recognizes the inextricable multiplicity of human remains as archaeological objects, historic corpses, and the memory of a human life. While object and corpse are fairly straightforward to interpret based on the archaeological context, human remains offer a special opportunity to engage with the life of an individual not necessarily represented in the broader narratives of the historical record. Both case studies work to recover the voices and stories of marginalized or underrepresented people who did not have the opportunity to tell their own stories before the interpretation work of these exhibitions. Examples that resonate with me as a constituent of the exhibitions' publics include the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" Cross Bones woman who died so young with syphilis pitting her small frame ravaged by residual rickets and the "Last Stand at Visby" spent time on the bodies and tiny torso armor of young boys who died outside the closed city gates at Visby.

Archaeology specialists from both cases, Jelena Bekvalac and Tim Sutherland, talk about giving back to the individuals by telling their stories. However, it is equally true that those stories are only uncoverable because of what the material presence of those individual's remains tell the archaeologists. This mutual interchange substantiates the agency of objects as essential to the process of knowledge construction in archaeology.

Between the two case studies, publics and objects interface in different processes of knowledge construction. In Chapter 3, "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" created an intimate space for individual interaction between publics and objects where visitors were free to build their own connections through shared experience with the remains on display. Minimal interpretation and an open gallery plan encouraged visitors to meet each individual and form their own relationships through pathology and thereness, where visitors found their own connections based on their own lived experiences. In Chapter 4, the *Medieval Dead* series developed a guided experience for publics that focused on the moment of knowledge construction through the interpretation process of archaeologists. Viewers had the barrier of scientific fact pulled away to see how specialists approach objects to undertake the meaning-making. Knowledge construction is normally only presented as the finished product of that process, such as text panels or scripted statements. Over the shoulder of specialists, publics could witness the agency of the objects in an active role along with the dialogue of professionals interacting with the remains. While the latter case offered a highly structured path for publics to engage with the objects and the former provided an individual approach, both cases focused on the process of bringing the publics' and objects' agency together at the moment of knowledge construction.

The ecotriangle of publics, objects, and place has been conceptualized in this research as a dynamic relationship of interactions to frame the process of knowledge construction. The ecotriangle supposes equilateral agency for publics, objects, and place. Placing the ecotriangle within a rhetorical ecology animates the process with movement and forces acting on knowledge construction, maintaining continuous plasticity and flux. A rhetorical ecology appears messy and difficult to quantify, but it reflects a productively realistic approach to how publics and objects

interact in situationally-dependent engagement. This project focused on human remains as the objects in the ecotriangle relationship.

Can object interpretation extend this agency afforded here to human remains to other objects? Human remains work as an introduction to the practical application of posthumanism and material agency in object interpretation. The hybridity of human and object qualifies remains as post-human to even a skeptical anthropocentric, which opens the possibility to consider the material agency of other objects. Public memory scholarship provided a lens through which to consider reactions of publics to activate cycles of remembrance or provoke engagement and discourse, all while fore-fronting the power of publics' sense of feeling to catalyze responses to objects. On the other side of the interaction, new materialism offers material agency as a way to account for the objects' role in the interaction. The mechanisms proposed by the ecotriangle relationship and demonstrated in the case studies apply to all material objects in museum collections to some degree. Further work into the applications of new materialism to museum object interpretation will certainly develop and refine the role of material agency, both for museum studies and archaeology, but also an opportunity for rhetoric scholarship.

How can an analysis of human remains contribute to scholarship in rhetoric about public memory in museums and places of public memory? What is the relationship between the concept of "place" and human remains? Scholarship in rhetoric on public memory in museums delves into human-remains-adjacent subjects such as memorials, rhetorical production of discourse in museum spaces, and historically-situated emotional attachment, which could all benefit from specifically considering the remains that are present in the memorials and museums that are already the subject of research. Just as this project asked at the outset, public memory work in museums can look around the collections and contemplate, what about the human

remains? This question has not been asked enough yet, which offers ample opportunities to test assumptions and refine views on partiality, social performance, and material connection (Rice; Obermark; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott). This question also opens cross-disciplinary pollination on objects, heritage, and thanatourism scholarship from museum studies (Sharpley and Stone; Caple; Parker-Pearson). For example, Obermark refers to the narrative provided in museum interpretive texts leave room for uncertainty when she notes that visitors respond with their own knowledge construction, "prompting visitors to create their own complex, productively uncomfortable pathways toward understanding" (93). Chapter 3 investigated "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" as an exhibition that stripped the comforting narrative interpretation away from visitors where instead of text pointing to gaps of uncertainties, human remains and a pathology report were all the interpretation visitors were provided to understand a human life. The exhibition prompted a focus on lived experience, leaving an enormous space for visitors to navigate their own pathways connecting life in London. The material presence of human remains created a similar pedagogical opportunity as presented in Obermark's research; an opportunity to expand or hone the rhetorical understanding of her described process. As in this example and beyond, human remains in museum collections have not been explored enough to challenge and develop scholarship in rhetoric on museums.

Rhetorical scholarship on place, such as rhetoric *in situ*, also has an opportunity to study the close connection between place and displacement with human remains. The ritual of burial binds human remains to a place with implications of permanent intent. When remains are disturbed, the intentions of the ritual are broken, which highlights the tensions associated with the act of displacement. Maintaining the connection between human remains and *in situ* place creates a challenge to rhetorically construct this attachment through interpretation. In the Chapter

3 case study, “Skeletons: London’s Buried Bones” created visual associations of modern London streets with photographs of places where each individual was found. This approach of drawing attention to the displacement as an expansion of the exhibition, relying on the plasticity of place in public memory, minimized the tension of displacement by emphasizing the short geographical distance. In Chapter 4, the medium of documentary film chose to go on location for each episode of *Medieval Dead*, providing a vicarious immersion as archaeologists communicate the embodied experience from the field. In the instance of “Skeletons,” publics are in proximity to the burial places as they stand in London, whereas viewers of *Medieval Dead* can watch from any distance and in the span of thirty minutes travel from the island of Gotland off the coast of Sweden while watching “Last Stand at Visby” to the French countryside in “Agincourt’s Lost Dead.” The success of communicating place and displacement to publics in both of these contrasting situations depends on the rhetorical construction of place. How do differences in the publics’ displacement from *in situ* place impact the rhetorical construction of place? Such questions are squarely within rhetoric’s realm of scholarship, and human remains add an interesting approach to addressing such issues of place.

How can scholarship on place in rhetoric inform and/or contextualize the approach to interpretation of archaeological human remains in museum display? How can this relationship be expressed to the public through archaeological and museum interpretation?

As framed for rhetorical scholarship in the previous section, public memory studies and rhetoric in situ already have established depth of resources pertaining to rhetorical construction of place that would benefit human remains interpretation. Place, whether it be an archaeological site or museum gallery, holds layers of meaning that give a touchstone for communities to gather. Dickenson, Blair, and Ott characterize places of public memory as centers of power for publics

because they are “implacably material” (29). Chapter 3 argues for human remains joining certain publics through shared knowledge and activation of discourse. Place is thus an access point to the cross-temporal community that shares a connection of memory significance and thereness. Understanding place through such rhetorical lenses enhances the ability of archaeologists and curators to express the relationship of place through interpretation.

Time is another interpretive factor that benefits from the work of rhetorical scholars on place. As Zelizer establishes, place holds a strong connection for publics while time is flexible, even collapsible, as a “dissociative” property of public memory (223). The two case studies demonstrate inverse approaches to the interpretation of time, both creating public engagement which further demonstrates the applied value of a rhetorical understanding of public memory and place. In Chapter 3, individuals from a sampling of nearly two thousand years of London are displayed together with a deliberate intent to minimize the visitor’s use of time to identify differentiation. In Chapter 4, time is cut to a narrow window as the viewer is asked to immerse in the context of understanding just one day in the past. Time jumps and ignoring time as curatorial choices both take advantage of the publics’ weak association with time with regard to place memory. Scholarship like Zelizer’s provides a deeper understanding of how public memory is shaped in relation to place and material objects, which has the potential to translate directly into interpretation.

Archaeological and museum interpretation is part of the rhetorical construction of knowledge. Scholarship in rhetoric abounds with insight into the process of knowledge construction and production of discourse (Ackerman and Coogan; Greer and Grobman; Gallagher and Kalin). This project’s relational approach to understanding object interpretation and the development of the ecotriangle as an expository device are grounded in the rhetorical

scholarship on publics and place. Material agency and embodied practice are built into the structure of the relationship of publics, objects, and place. The ecotriangle works in part to recognize the forces and flux that influence the circulation of discourse that cannot be controlled once discourse enters the world, but these dynamics can be better understood by rhetors during the production process. Effective interpretation practices must be built on an understanding of how knowledge construction work and what happens to interpretation once it is taken up by publics. The case studies explored in Chapters 3 and 4 explicate the connection between rhetorical concepts of knowledge construction as they are applied to practical approaches to object interpretation. Further, both cases emphasize the meaning-making process for publics, highlighting knowledge construction as a means of engagement. Beyond scholarship specifically on place, the case study analyses taken together develop toward a heuristic for situating curatorial intent and interpretation into the greater rhetorical ecology.

What the Case Studies Reveal

The outcome of this research project that rises to primary importance is the imperative to consider every exhibition as inextricable from its rhetorical ecology. By doing so, the axiom that imitation will never result in duplication serves as a warning against modeling exhibitions without contextualizing the rhetorical ecology. The same exhibition design could be acclaimed in one rhetorical ecology and condemned in another. The relational construction of the ecotriangle within a populated rhetorical ecology captures the shapes and movements of each case study's circumstances. This section compares some of the points of curatorial intent within its rhetorical ecology between case studies to extrapolate how this applies to the interpretation process.

Interpretation constructs knowledge, yet the process is highly contingent on the rhetorical ecology. The contingencies point to communication of data, focusing on the moment when

interpretation is put out into circulation. Both case studies made mold-breaking choices in their interpretation of human remains that highlight the key question: what about their rhetorical ecologies was correspondingly unique for these curatorial choices to be appropriate?

From Chapter 3, the skeletons on display at the Wellcome Collection provide a wealth of data that was not included in the exhibition's interpretation. The omission of data that could have provided visitors with a sea of information through which to navigate served a specific purpose to create an unconventionally personal visitor engagement experience. The "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition pushed the boundaries of narrow minimalist interpretation by stripping away context for the individuals on display to focus on the embodied experience of life in London by only providing pathology and place. There are ethical ramifications to deliberate erasure of social and cultural identity markers imbedded in that curatorial choice, though the emphasis on medical pathology was supported by the rhetorical ecology in which the exhibition was displayed. Though this project's scope stays firmly in the pre-ethical architecture of rhetorical construction, the ethical superstructure results from the foundational rhetorical construction. Thus, the rhetorical ecology in which "Skeletons" was developed was as unconventionally unique as the exhibition itself, owing to the mission and reputation of the institutions involved, the highly self-selecting publics of visitors, and the neighborhood in London where the gallery is located. These are just a few of the specific factors surrounding the 2008 exhibition that reflect an unusual rhetorical ecology in which such unusual curatorial choices were appropriate.

In Chapter 4, the *Medieval Dead* documentary series with global distribution over several years has a much looser constraint on rhetorical ecology as far as the timeframe of the exhibition and geographic location but still maintains a structure in terms of the ecotriangle of publics,

objects, and place. The episode “Last Stand at Visby” does not resort to camera tricks or eerie music to create drama but rather relies on the skeletons themselves to prompt emotional reactions of shock at the barbarity of human violence evident on the bones displayed. Focus on specialists engaging in meaning-making as they analyze the skeletons emphasizes the connection between the acts of violence that resulted in the marks on the bones. The medium of documentary adds a filter for the constituency of publics in the rhetorical ecology with a television rating system that can call for viewer discretion based on content inappropriate for all audiences, much the same way that an exhibition can post a content warning. However, the violent subject matter of battlefield archaeology did not make “Last Stand at Visby” a pathos-driven free-for-all of gory reenactments. The restraint of the presentation allowed the objects and the meaning-making process to do the work of engagement, adding weight to the subtle emotional responses of the specialists as they puzzled through the possibility of how the skeletons experienced their death. The resulting emotional engagement of the publics viewing the episode is more authentic and perhaps even more uncomfortable because any artificially heightened drama was stripped away, offering a genuine experience of distress. The approach of simultaneously graphic and restrained utilized in *Medieval Dead* is not appropriate for many other rhetorical ecologies. Creating such a level of discomfort will further limit the audience with which to circulate interpretation. Since war, conflict, and battles are pivotal events to remember in history; rhetorical ecologies must exist that can be populated by those who do not have strong constitutions for gore.

On a final note of comparison, the two case studies presented opposing emphases on life and death, a unique curatorial option that human remains afford more poignantly than other types of material objects. While “Skeletons” emphasized life and engaged with publics through shared living experiences, the battlefield archaeology featured in *Medieval Dead* centers on death and

dying. Both life and death are parts of the human experience, but they evoke very different aspects of mortality in reflection. The stark dichotomy of emphasis highlights the possibility of diverse relationships between publics, objects, and place. Publics utilize and assign significance to places of embodied experience as individuals use their environment to live, forming shared connections of thereness knowledge and embodied interaction with fellow constituents of that environment. "Skeletons" employed those living connections to place as a way to engage with the skeletons' lived experiences. Places of death and burial are not often incorporated into the daily lives of most people, often visited as significant places of memory for deliberate purposes. The *Medieval Dead* documentary introduced viewers to burial places during quotidian moments of daily life, disrupting the divide. Bringing places of death into the home, even at a televised distance, brings the separation of living place and places of death together. As such, the publics of *Medieval Dead* relate to place with a different frame of significance than that of the "Skeletons" exhibition. On two extreme ends of the spectrum, the case studies reveal how the interpretation of human remains profoundly impacts the ecotriangle relationship. To extrapolate, rhetorical construction of objects influences the object-place and object-publics relationship as well as the publics-place relationship, with the potential to redefine the dynamics of the ecotriangle. Rhetorical construction is a powerful process in archaeological interpretation and museum display. Acknowledging interpretation as a form of rhetorical construction, in turn, welcomes cross-disciplinary insight from rhetoric to harness that power.

Interdisciplinary Contribution

Though interdisciplinary in content and contribution, this research approaches archaeological human remains in museum collections from a rhetorical perspective. Attentiveness to legibility turns out to be essenential in order to contribute to all three disciplines

of archaeology, museum studies, and rhetoric. The ambiguities and assumptions pervasive in the discussion of human remains came to light as this research found common ground for rhetorical foundations.

Foremost, the ambiguities of human remains as objects in museum collections was addressed extensively. Rather than justify the assignment of human remains to the established operating assumptions that defined "object," this research sought to unpack what it means to be an object before deciding if human remains were part of that realm. In the process, the term object ended up having so many tacit assumptions attached to its use that the term was reframed to consider three aspects of its interdisciplinary defition: materiality, symbolic significance, and its use by those who interact with it. Through this collective definition, material agency was also expressed as part of an objects' significance, which addresses many of the ambiguities associated with respect and consent in ethical scholarship. Once the assumptions surrounding the term object were sorted, human remains had a much clearer position from which to be addressed. Because of that third caveat of "use" defining objects, this research concluded that archaeological excavation added a new use and significance to the human remains, fitting into the updated definition as objects.

As exemplified, scholarship from the included disciplines blended to find compromise and common ground to establish terms and methods in the first two chapters, maintained through the case studies. However, the narrow scope and size of this project means that many expansive areas of scholarship on human remains from archaeology and museum studies were necessarily truncated to support the focus on rhetoric's potential contributions to the conversations. Two decades of professional experience in the fields raised the questions sought in this research and there are promising implications that will be briefly summarized here.

Archaeology

The two main resulting resources from archaeological work are material objects and the documented analyses of the matrix they were buried in, the latter is arguably most important. The core of archaeological practice is turning dirt into paperwork. The text that results from field notes, analyses, and interpretation bring essential context to the material objects. While it is often expected to make generalized extrapolations from the small data set, this research urges archeological interpretation to also focus on the individual material objects with equal measure. In order to elevate an object to more than a representative sample, material agency refocuses on the relationship between the scholar and the object.

Human remains exemplify the ability for an object to serve the larger cultural narrative for site interpretation while simultaneously uncovering an individual voice. As stated in this research, few people would likely self-identify as a generic representative of their era and equally neither would the individuals whose remains were archaeologically excavated. Yet, this is primarily what archaeology asks human remains to do as a sample set. Recognizing agency in the remains reframes the objects from data tools into collaborators who share information with the researcher. Humanizing the human remains as individuals not only encourages interpretation that focuses on the individual but also provides a practical approach to respectful treatment.

Human remains cannot be understood without context of place nor can interpretation become meaning-making without a public. Ecotriangle points to work in public archaeology but brings all three nodes into active roles. Public archaeology does not happen until the ecotriangle is activated by the inclusion and discourse of publics, identifying another moment of meaning-making when interpretation becomes discourse as it enters circulation.

As the research continued, the concept of place carried many tacit assumptions. Cartainly the material permanence of place implies a static entity, though this research affixed a public memory scholarship lens to consider how conceptualizing place is so contingent on memory and rhetorical construction. This phenomenon of material and imaginary tension is clear when one looks at a map that describes place with political borders. The line on the map seems so absolute but can be erased or shifted with the rise and fall of ideas. Use, names, and dileneations have a surprising plasticity subject to discursive flux, though they continue to rigidly frame how publics interact with place. By exploring the assumptions inherent with the concept of place, the power of rhetorical construction came to light. Place, boundaries, authenticity, and displacement are largely defined, or at least heavily influenced, by the discourse and memory that constructs them. Recognizing the ability of interpretation to construct and maintain the concept of *in situ* place has substantial application to the way archaeological site interpretation is approached.

Museum Studies and Curatorial Practice

The principle of respect is central to human remains ethics but ambiguous to quantify in practice. As it stands in museum studies scholarship, respect is better understood as an intention more than it is applicable into standardized procedure. Material agency and the metaphore that Bentham embodied in a literal sense proposes that remains be given a seat at the table for decision-making. Practically demonstrated in Chapter 3, the issue of naming conventions for the individuals displayed in the "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" exhibition was resolved at such a metaphorical table. Jelena Bekvalac, Curator of Human Osteology at Museum of London's Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, and I considered levels of formality and familiarity ranging from museum identification numbers to nicknames. Being thought of as a number is associated with dehumanizing experiences where it is easy to forget the human value. On the other end, it is

somewhat offensive to call someone by a nickname if they are not well-aquiainted, since this is an act of familiarity and therefore inappropriate. By working through the options as though the individual was part of the conversation, the seemingly arbitrary task of developing a naming convention suddenly had some structure of justification.

The rhetorical framework allows curatorial choices to operate within tenable boundaries. Because of the ambiguities and tacit assumptions endemic to ethical scholarship in museum studies, attempts to translate respect into practice have a prescriptive approach which ignores the complex situational factors that preclude the usefulness of generalities. This research's approach to translating the ethic of respect into actionable respectful practice does not prescribe behavior but rather presents a frame in which to approach questions regarding human remains that can be tailored to a given rhetorical ecology.

Further structure for museum studies work offered in this scholarship is the concept of a rhetorical ecology. Debates like those on human remains are complicated by so many variables multiplied by contextual circumstance that it is often difficult to make meaningful progress through such terrain. Rather than settle for an incommensurable impasse, framing a question or stance within a rhetorical ecology provides a way to account for innumerable influencing factors while addressing a select few. If two pieces of scholarship are accounting for a different set of factors, they can still speak to one aother if the misaligned variables are still accounted for in the rhetorical ecology. Additionally, a rhetorical ecology provides some structure for recognizing the other factors and influences that may act upon a situation without nullifying the argument. Even the most experienced ecologist cannot account for everything lurking in the bushes. Fluency in a particular rhetorical ecology accounts for knowing, or at least acknowledging, the factors

impacting the relationships within, which is a strong vantage point from which to communicate with publics in museum space with focused nuanced interpretation.

Rhetoric

Rhetorical construction in archaeological interpretation of material culture borrows from rhetoric, though some of the complex questions that arise from such interpretation may give rhetoric new ground to consider. As a result of this research, human remains cannot quite be contained by established definitions of object as well as raise questions on the source of material agency for human remains as partially resulting from posthumously awarded human agency, complicating the understanding of human remains as material objects in a post-humanist construct. Human remains reinvigorate conversations on materiality and objects. It would be easy to see the challenges human remains bring up to established understandings as exceptions. Instead, how can human remains further develop the nuances of material definitions in new materialism and object oriented ontology? Far more interesting than remaining outliers or exceptions, human remains can serve as a fit-test to refine definitions and challenge assumptions so that human remains fit within the consturuction, which would result in a more robust stance for materialism.

A rhetorical approach to interdisciplinary questions not only invites cross-disciplinary pollination, it also furthers the boundaries of concepts and their application. Edbauer's rhetorical ecology provided a model for conceptualizing the relationships of factors and actors in this research. The metaphor of an ecology populated by all of these elements with vantage points for researcher observation extended the work of rhetorical ecologies into practical application. Edbauer's work sought to complicate the concept of rhetorical situation to include implications of dynamic relationships in flux. This research utilized rhetorical ecology to capture trends in the

dynamism and situate relational interactions of grounded case studies, practically applying the concept as a means to manage the complexity. While there is value in the interdisciplinary applications, this exercise extends rhetorical scholarship on Edbauer's work.

Archaeology and rhetoric have already opened a bridge for crosspollination of methods and theory through rhetoric *in situ*. This project delivers a specialism from archaeology that has rich resource potential for shared methods and perspectives, battlefield archaeology. Rhetoricians see to contextualize text through embodied practice, which implies that the literature analysis is the primary source and the *in situ* experience augments that analysis as a supplement. My understanding of text here includes all forms of interfacing discourse that do this communicative work but chose to broaden the term "text" inclusively to maintain the implicit relational connection to context, further reinforcing the iterative inseparable relationship between the two. Archaeology challenges that weighting of value with a near-inverse approach. Texts supplement field research but if the two contradict one another, as shown in the Agincourt example of copied maps, the ground truthing is the primary truth, breaking any stalemate of uncertainty. As an archaeologist, I have an ingrained weariness to fully understanding the involved political, social, and personal motivations that color texts. Equally, I find a sense of truth in one's garbage, prioritizing the material findings over the written account in my analysis. The opposing approaches to the same tools can foster a more nuanced approach to both disciplines. Joining archaeology in search of truth in a midden, Enos calls for rhetoricians to get their hands dirty ("Theory, Validity, and the Historiography"). Rhetoricicans may come to find more value in their in situ experience through methods borrowed from archaeologists. As an archaeologist, I certainly have evolved to value textual evidence more, in part because of the tools I have gained from rhetoric that help me navigate the murky rhetorical ecology surrounding past rhetors.

Reflection and Projection

This research explored human remains interpretation by simultaneously zooming in on the moment of meaning-making and zooming out to recognize the complexity of factors that influence the process. The museum exhibition highlights a convergence of publics, objects, and place to capture a moment of meaning-making, forming the ecotriangle. This term was coined here to spare the repetition to restate the relational understanding of publics, objects, and place as equal dynamic forces acting on the process while interacting within a greater rhetorical ecology of additional situational and contingent forces in constant flux. Not only does the term ecotriangle save generous amounts of page space by replacing the previous sentence throughout, it packages the nuances of the refined interdisciplinary terminology developed in this research to understand publics as plural constituencies brought together by shared discourse or public memory with the added dimension of thereness. The ecotriangle also carries a definition of objects as layered with meaning yet also contributors with material agency, and place as a material environment with agency while shaped by imaginary plastic boundaries that shift in concert with public memory flux. The work of this project to construct a relational model and refine defintions was not intended to call for changes of practices in any of the disciplines. Rather, the developed rhetorical structures offer tool to better understand current practices and bring a meta-awareness to the rhetorical constructions of knowledge and meaning already taking place.

As a researcher, my ability to expand on this work is limited by my vantage point for observation of rhetorical ecologies, which is shaped by my experiences and biases. As an archaeologist and museum professional, my education is exclusively British and American. Further, as situated in Chapter 2, I should also subcategorize specifically as a product of

University College London's influence of Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism, which makes my perspective uncommonly biased toward innovative displays of human remains. While I have lived and worked on archaeological sites in North Africa and Central Asia, the directing methodologies on all of those projects were heavily influenced by British archaeologists and archaeological practices, which I identify as reinforcing rather than balancing my Anglo-centric approach to archaeology and museum practice. These examples of researcher bias I identify restrict my potential to expand this research in two main ways. First, I am not familiar enough with the nuances of social, cultural, political, historical, etc., practices of regions outside of my experience to be capable of the high thereness fluency required to analyze a rhetorical ecology. Second, my biases fix me to a particular perspective as I observe and analyze a given rhetorical ecology regardless of my situated fluency. As such, a call to researchers from archaeology, museum studies, and rhetoric creates a potential to expand and challenge this research with different observational positions from which to analyze a greater range of rhetorical ecologies.

In further research, anticipated challenges can refine or refute the heuristic of the ecotriangle developed here, either way working toward the goal of furthering applicable interdisciplinary scholarship between rhetoric and archaeology. For non-Wester rhetorical ecologies, are there different dynamics or other essential factors that would challenge the ecotriangle model? Additionally, further research can consider more explicitly the factors that are major contributing forces within a rhetorical ecology that are not accounted for within the ecotriangle.

Framing case studies in an ecotriangle tested the relational approach. Reconstructing the influences based on the product of the exhibition in retrospective identified factors in the rhetorical that influenced curatorial choices and permitted critique of choices in hindsight.

Further research to test the relational heuristic of the ecotriangle on more case studies in more diverse rhetorical ecologies may develop the applications of such a framework to archaeological interpretation practice.

Beyond testing the heuristic of the ecotriangle with further case study research, this research offers broader implications on the nature of human remains as objects. Beyond this pre-ethical focus on rhetorical construction, conceptualizing material agency human remains while terming them objects has ramifications that may inform or complicate ethical conversations. These case studies only feature skeletons, but other human remains retain more identifying features like clothing, hair, and skin, which can inform race, social class, and in some instances, gender roles. The definition of archaeological human remains as objects developed here can be complicated by considering mummies, bog bodies, etc. Further, there are also human remains in museum collections that do not originate from archaeological contexts. Material agency, objects, and human remains present a potentially deep subject for further research for archaeology, museum studies, and rhetoric scholarship.

This research makes productive strides to approaching archaeological human remains on museum display from a rhetorical perspective while maintaining disciplinary legibility for archaeology and museum studies. Definitions for publics, objects, and place developed via negotiation of cross-disciplinary common ground that interrogated established assumptions and clarified the fundamental starting point. The pre-ethical work herein lays a sturdier foundation upon which disciplinary conversations on the ethics and best practice of human remains display can continue in archaeology and museum studies. Such is the potential of this work, which has only begun to sample the possibilities of rhetoric's role in cross-disciplinary exploration of human remains in museum collections.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF SKELETONS, 2008 "SKELETONS: LONDON'S BURIED BONES" EXHIBITION

This appendix lists the 26 individuals displayed at the Wellcome Collection exhibition "Skeletons: London's Buried Bones" in 2008. The individual is introduced first by the place-focused naming convention used to reference the individuals in Chapter 3 (see methodology for development of this convention), followed by the estimated sex, age of death, approximate year range of burial, and pathological features, ending with a parenthetical reference to the Museum of London catalogue number associated with the skeleton.

1. Merton Priory Monk: male, aged 26-35 years, 1300-1390 CE, Diaphyseal aclasia (#3878).
2. Chelsea Old Church child: aged 11 years, 1700-1850 CE, residual rickets, severe hypoplastic defects on teeth (#230).
3. William Wood of Chelsea Old Church: male, aged 84 years, 1842 CE, endentulous, severe osteoarthritis on both hips and right wrist, DISH (diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis) (#681).
4. Nicholas Adams of Chelsea Old Church: male, aged 78 years, 1827 CE, osteomalacia, bilateral spondylolysis, osteoarthritis, residual rickets, congenital malformation of axis vertebra (#701).
5. Milborough Maxwell of Chelsea Old Church: female, aged 68 years, 1807 CE, osteoarthritis of both hands, infection of left tibia, stable isotope analaysis suggest she may have grown up in the Caribbean (#792).
6. Mother and child of Chelsea Old Church: female, aged 18-25 years, 1700-1850 CE, foetus of 22 weeks present in womb (#161 & #1611).

7. St. Bride's arthritic woman: female, aged 46+ years, 1770-1849 CE, rheumatoid arthritis (#1151).
8. St. Bride's man with broken nose: male, aged 46+ years, 1770-1849 CE, tuberculosis with fusion of the right elbow and lesions on the lower vertebrae, nasal and rib fractures, L4 [26]sectioned (#1739).
9. St. Bride's woman with bathrocephaly[27]: female, aged 36-45 years, 1770-1849 CE, healed sharp force trauma to skull, bathrocephaly, osteoarthritis of hands, L4 sectioned (#1809).
10. St. Bride's man with broken foot: male, aged 46+ years, 1770-1849 CE, rib fractures, nasal and foot fractures, osteoarthritis, Concha bullosa, L6 present, L4 sectioned (#1862)
11. St. Bride's man with broken skull: male, aged 46+, years 1770-1849 CE, multiple blunt force trauma to skull, healed fibula fracture, osteoarthritic of talus, L4 sectioned (#1827).
12. St. Bride's spina bifida patient: female(?), aged 24-45 years, 1770-1849 CE, severe residual rickets, multiple healed fractures, spina bifida occulta, infection on femora, osteoarchtritis of feet, unhealed rib fractures, L4 sectioned (#1903).
13. St. Bride's autopsy woman: female, aged 36-45 years, 1770-1849 CE, extreme build up of calculus on teeth, possible lung infection, post morten craniotomy (#2255).
14. Roman West cancer sufferer: male, adult(?), 100-300 CE, multiple myeloma, fracture of left clavicle, osteoarthritis right shoulder and left wrist (#231).
15. St. Benet Sherehog man[28]: male, aged 36-45 years, 1670-1853 CE, pipe facets, osteoarthritis in big toe, gout, hairline fracture of radius distal articular surface (#557).

[26] L4 refers to 4th lumbar vertebra in the spine. Sectioned refers to a cut, incision, or sample removed.
[27] A benign skull deformity bulge on the back of the head, apparently common in the English population in medieval times and slowly faded from the gene pool.
[28] His photograph is Figure 5 in Chapter 4.

16. Spitalfields man with a broken spine: male, 36-45 years, 1100-1200 CE, bilateral spondylolysis[29], non-union fracture of left ulna, healed fracture left radius, fractures of left metatarsals, osteoarthritis both shoulders (#23722).
17. Spitalfields child: aged 11 years, 1400-1539 CE, congenital syphilis (#6974).
18. Spitalfields man: male, aged 46+ years, 250-400 CE, healed fracture of right femoral neck, tibia and ribs, thoracic complression fracture, sinusitis, osteoarthritis in knee, elbow, vertebrae and clavicles, infection healing in left tibia and fibula (#34147).
19. Roman East man: male, aged 46+ years, 200-400 CE, erosive arthropathy[30], osteaoarthritis hands and legs, rib fractures (#538).
20. East Smithfield plague pit arrow bolt survivor: male(?), aged 36-45 years, 1348-1350 CE, projectile injury in spine – point of projectile embedded in spinous process, L6 present (#5343).
21. Royal Mint woman: female, aged 26-35 years, 1350-1400 CE, green staining on bones due to ground contamination by copper waste of the coin mint (#11090).
22. Cross Bones man: male, aged 36-45 years, 1598-1853 CE, prostate cancer, fracture left fecur, fracture right tibia (talocual), infection right tibia (#6).
23. Cross Bones woman: female, aged 18-25 years, 1598-1853 CE, syphilis, residual rickets (#99).
24. Cross Bones foetus: 36 weeks foetal, 1598-1853 CE, histiocytosis-x[31], lytic lesions on skull (#125).

[29] Spine breakage between vertebrae
[30] Joint disease
[31] Rare auto-immune disorder.

25. Cross Bones baby: aged 9 months, 1598-1853 CE, smallpox, bilateral destructive changes to elbow area (#133).
26. Bermondsey Abbey man: male, aged 46+ years, 1066-1540 CE, multiple fractures – most significantly healed except non-united fracture of right acetabulum, osteoarthritis of both shoulders, unilateral spondylolysis, Os calcis[32] of both calcanea (#3274).

This information has been adapted from the exhibition publication index of skeletons (Sergant).

[32] Broken heel bone on both feet – occurs from impact stress such as landing on your feet from a height fall