Remembering Jim Crow in the Age of Trump: An Analysis of the Rhetorical Functions of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia

Christopher A. House[*]

The first one hundred days of President Donald Trump's rhetoric, controversial policies and executive orders sparked national protests and dialogue on race, racism and institutional racism. It has also stimulated conversation on the role and place of racist iconography and artifacts in the nation at a time when racial attacks and tensions are mounting. Using the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia (JCM) at Ferris State University as a case-study, this paper analyzes one way that racist images and artifacts are being used to create a more honest record of public memory that centers matters of race and culture within broader American cultural and historical memory of the Jim Crow period and in creating rhetorical spaces of dialogue that inspire social change. JCM is examined here as a counter-museum and open resource to the public that encourages visitor participation and dialogic analysis through a moral lens that challenges dominant discourses from the Trump administration and sites of public memory that employ either symbolic annihilation or trivialization/deflection as their main rhetorical strategies in depicting the legacy of America's racial past.

Keywords: Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, African Americans, Racist Artifacts, Donald Trump, David Pilgrim, Rubbish Theory, Repetition and Difference Theory

President Donald Trump's rhetoric and political decisions are sparking national protests and dialogue on race, racism, and institutional racism, and stimulating conversations on the role and place of racist iconography and artifacts at a time when racial attacks and tensions are mounting. Many analysts are now asking whether symbolic artifacts designed to render racial groups as subhuman and inferior should be destroyed, or reclaimed and used in some way to move the needle of racial progress in our nation.[1]

This paper offers an exploration of one way racist images and artifacts are being used to create a new kind of public memory that centers on matters of race and culture within broader American cultural and historical memory.[2] Using the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia (JCM) at Ferris State University as a case-study, I examine: 1) JCM's mission to use objects of intolerance to teach tolerance and promote social justice, and to promote honest dialogue about race through

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[*] Christopher A. House (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh) is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Ithaca College and affiliate faculty in Culture and Communication and the Martin Luther King Scholars Program. He can be reached by email at chouse@ithaca.edu.

[1] Logan Jaffee, "Confronting Racist Objects," *The New York Times,* accessed Dec. 9, 2015, https://www.ny-times.com/interactive /2016/12/09/us/confronting-racist-objects.html

[2] Deborah F. Atwater and Sandra L. Herndon, "The Uses of Public Space as Cultural Communicator: How Museums Reconstruct and Reconnect Culture and Memory," in *Understanding African American Rhetoric*, ed. Ronald L. Jackson, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 69-84.

rhetorical reframing of racist memorabilia; 2) how the space and design of JCM functions rhetorically to refract a painful history of race through a moral lens; 3) how JCM functions as a counter-museum to dominant discourses and sites of public memory that employ either symbolic annihilation or trivialization/deflection as their main rhetorical strategies in depicting the legacy of America's racial past.[3] I argue that how JCM rhetorically negotiates the meaning of racially charged violent histories can be understood within a theoretical framework that borrows from both rubbish theory to explain the shift in social valuation of these artifacts from that of contemptible to a collectible,[4] and from repetition and difference[5] theory to explain how JCM's re-presentation of the artifacts is an act of resistance in the service of social justice. JCM is examined as a counter-museum rather than a traditional museum, in that it is not an expert-centered space but rather encourages visitor participation, dialogic analysis and is an open resource to the public.

JCM is studied here as both a site of public memory and a counter-museum driven by the belief in the possibility of a better future through informed citizens engaged in honest ongoing dialogue. The direct immersion in a visual space filled with demeaning cultural artifacts contributes to a rhetorical undoing of the social fragmentation, isolation, and inequality that Jim Crow cultural artifacts were created to perpetuate.[6] The Jim Crow Museum is worthy of scholarly attention as it houses the nation's largest collection of racist memorabilia and Black Americana produced from the time of segregation, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement right up to the present day.[7] Indeed, it includes contemporary examples of racist memorabilia produced as backlash against the nomination and election of then Senator Barack H. Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America.[8]

Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University

JCM Founder David Pilgrim, Ferris State Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and professor of Sociology, identifies himself as a "garbage collector" of racist memorabilia. He purchased his first racist artifact in the 1970s and continued throughout his undergraduate and graduate education. His collection grew to include wide-ranging racially caricaturized artifacts created between 1870 and 1960. When he joined the sociology faculty at Ferris State in 1991, his collection numbered well into the thousands and was stored in his home. Pilgrim brought the artifacts out of his home only on rare occasions to give public lectures, mainly to high school students. In 1996, Pilgrim donated his collection to Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, and he remains Curator today. The Jim Crow Museum, under Pilgrim's guidance, was founded on the "belief that open, honest, even painful discussions about race are necessary to avoid repeating yesterday's

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[3] Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

[4] Stacey Baker, Carol Motley and Geraldine Henderson, "From Despicable to Collectible: The Evolution of Collective Memories for and the Value of Black Advertising Memorabilia," *Journal of Advertising,* 33, no.3 (2014): 37-50.

[5] Jeffrey T. Nealon, "Refraining, Becoming-Black: Repetition and Difference in Amiri Baraka's *Blues People,*" *Symploké,* 6, no.1 (2005): 83-95.

[6] Amardo Rodriguez, *Communication, Space and Design: The Integral Relationship between Communication and Design* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2005).

[7] Monica E. Patterson, "Teaching Tolerance through Objects of Hatred: The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia as 'Counter-Museum,'" in *Curating Difficult Knowledge*, ed. E. Lehrer, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 55-71

[8] "About Jim Crow," accessed Jan 5, 2017, http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/more.htm

mistakes."[9] Over the next fifteen years, Pilgrim's collection grew to over 4,000 pieces, including caricatured African Americans depicted on everyday items such as ashtrays, fishing lures, and even instruments of terror used against African Americans. All of these items were displayed in a single room and seen by appointment only.[10]

Then, on April 26, 2012, the Museum celebrated the grand opening of its new 35,000 square foot location and opened its doors for the first time to the public. The new 1.3 million dollar gallery's architectural design and exhibition of artifacts and textual sources encourages self-tours. The collection now numbers over 9,000 artifacts, most of which defame and belittle African Americans, and which are presented within the context of the Gallery's seven sections: "Origins of Jim Crow," "Jim Crow Violence," "Jim Crow and Anti-Black Imagery," "Battling Jim Crow," "Attacking Jim Crow Segregation," "Moving Beyond Jim Crow," and "The Learning Center/Cloud of Witnesses." In this paper, I focus on the intersection of public memory and JCM's collection of anti-Black caricatures and imagery; it is the largest such public collection exhibited in the nation.

Public Memory, Race, and Place

The notion of public memory assumes that shared memories and narratives of memories are contested, changed, appropriated, transformed and inflected over time.[11] Scholarly study of "memory" across multiple disciplines theorizes public memory as "activity of collectivity rather than (or in addition to) individuated, cognitive work."[12] Hence, the idea of a "shared understanding" of the past informs this study and other studies of collective memory, social memory, popular memory, cultural memory and public memory.[13] However, two rhetorical strategies are in play – strategies that impact memory, as well as the politics and power that determine how public memory functions, and who decides what is forgotten, remembered, and recalled over time, space, and place.[14] The first strategy is described in Eichstedt and Small's study of Southern plantation museum exhibits of slavery that illuminates how the strategy of symbolic annihilation operates as a mechanism of power in public memory. For example, Eichstedt and Small observed museum tour guides' discussions and museum promotional materials that either minimize or render completely invisible the existence, personal identity, and humanity of both enslaved and legally free African

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[9] David Pilgrim, *Understanding Jim Crow: Using Racist Memorabilia to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice.* (Oakland, CA: Ferris State University and PM Press, 2015), 16.

[10] "About Jim Crow," accessed Jan 5, 2017, http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/more.htm

[11] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); James Pennebaker, Paez Dario and Bernard Rimé, *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997); Marouf Hasian, "Remembering and Forgetting the '"Final Solution"': A Rhetorical Pilgrimage through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, no.1 (2004): 64-92; Nicholas Paliewicz and Marouf Hasian, "Popular Memory at Ground Zero: A heterotopology of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum," *The International Journal of Media and Culture,* 15, no. 1 (2017): 19-36.

[12] Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair and Brian L. Ott, ed., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 5-6.

[13] Dickenson, et al, *Places of Public* Memory, 5-6.

[14] Halbwachs, *On Collective,* 38-40.

Americans. The underlying message is that "slavery and the people of African descent either literally were not present or were not important enough to be acknowledged."[15] Such exhibitionary practices constitute rhetorical acts of symbolic annihilation and racism.[16]

A second strategy that impacts memory is the strategy of "trivialization," whereby the experiences of slavery are trivialized through humor or mockery. One familiar example of this is the "mammy" caricature, that is, the happy, faithful slave and the symbolic and rhetorical notions that the caricature was originally created to support;[17] this and other material objects perpetuated public memory and acceptance of symbolic racism.[18] Having the authority to define and attribute meaning through public memory (or the lack thereof) and through cultural and material symbols in public consciousness is a function of power.[19] In the Jim Crow South, elite White males exercised power in their ability to manipulate and appropriate symbols concerning Black people.

Discerning JCM's aim and mission in this way is in keeping with a larger political tradition of Black-centered museums that critique the relationship between power, place, and race and the politics of representation.[20] JCM's collection, preservation and exhibitionary practices of anti-Black artifacts and racist imagery is an explicit "rejection of the 'ivory tower' model of scholarly life,"[21] in favor of operating as an open resource to the public. As part of this analysis of JCM, I examine Pilgrim's self-identified role as a "facilitator and activist," and I explore why and how JCM can be understood as a counter-museum rather than a traditional museum.

JCM as a Counter-Museum

Scholars of "the new museology" question and challenge traditional museum practices, i.e., classificatory and exhibitionary practices that exclude underrepresented groups in museum collections and exhibits.[22] The new museology marks a shift in function from maintaining "museums as elite temples built by the authority of select experts" to establishing more inclusive and inviting forms of dialogue and exchange particularly as they curate "difficult knowledge" that center racial horrors as part of a larger collective history. Patterson, a proponent of the new museology, explains, "as crucibles of history, museums have the potential to not only represent but also inform social attitudes, public opinion, and political debates. Because of the scale and the scope of its impact, nowhere is such work more important and necessary than in regard to the 'difficult knowledge' that comes out of the perpetuation of mass atrocity."[23] Patterson uses the term "counter-museums" to designate "museums that seek to engage visitors as active participants in the dynamic, continu-

[15] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations,* 105.

[16] For example, see Amy Elizabeth Ansell, *New Right, New Racism: Race and Reaction in the United States and Britain* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

[17] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations*, 147.

[18] Ansell, *New Right,* 7.

[19] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London: Routledge, 1991), 68.

[20] For example, see Andrea Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Derrick Brooms, "Lest We Forget: Exhibiting (and Remembering) Slavery in African American Museums," *Journal of African American Studies* 15, no. 2 (2011): 508-23.

[21] "Values," accessed January 15, 2017, http://ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/values.htm

[22] Patterson, "Teaching," 55.

[23] Patterson, "Teaching," 56.

ing memorial process as opposed to presenting them with fixed ossified history through the creation of monolithic, static representations of the past."[24] Counter museums reject didacticism and instead promote dialogue as guests are seen as "visitor-participants" and are "encouraged and led to turn *themselves*—their values, their assumptions and beliefs, their community, their society—into objects of scrutiny. The process of analysis can be private, internal, shared and dialogic."[25] By this definition then, JCM can be rightfully studied as a counter-museum. JCM's aim is to promote a dialogue that will, in Pilgrim's words, "change the way Americans talk about race."[26]

Pilgrim sees a dual role for the Museum, that of both facilitator and activist. As facilitator, JCM stimulates dialogue and discussion, encouraging visitors to think more deeply about the underlying assumptions, messages and readings that the visual, visceral impact of exposure to these artifacts may invite.[27] Pilgrim views facilitation of such exploratory reflection and dialogue as a critical part of the JCM mission. As activist, JCM's role is to "advocate, correct, proselytize, and tell students/visitors what to think" about the artifacts and exhibits.[28] Thus, a tension emerges. Consider that, for some, JCM's re-presentation of racist artifacts raises ethical questions concerning the museums' role in normalizing anti-Black violence and anti-Black attitudes. Patterson's inquiry is germane to this paper, as she asks:

> How can experiences of brutality and suffering be presented without minimizing, sensationalizing or reigniting the sentiments behind them? Should painful materials be dutifully relegated to the dustbins or dark drawers of museums' storage facilities? If not, how can museum practitioners confront or display such content in ways that serve to diffuse or allay the divisions between people rather than reifying and perpetuating them?[29]

JCM takes the stance that racist artifacts represent a call to action, and by collecting, exhibiting, and facilitating discussion around them, that they are promoting social justice.[30] In reframing of public memory and shifting rhetorical discourse in the service of Black descendants of Jim Crow, JCM re-signifies items of "difficult knowledge" in ways that endow new social meaning and pedagogical value to them within competing histories and rhetorical visions for the future.[31]

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[24] Patterson, "Teaching," 65.

[25] Patterson, "Teaching," 66.

[26] Pilgrim, *Understanding,* 25.

[27] Some questions asked by Pilgrim and the museum's docents include: "What do you see?" "What do you see that makes you say that?" "what does this mean to you?" "can you see how someone would view this differently?" "what can I do to address racism?" and "what role have blacks played in perpetuating anti-Black caricatures and stereotypes?" and "is segregation alone racial line always indicative of racism?" For more questions that JCM asks, see Pilgrim, *Understanding*, 32-35.

[28] Pilgrim, *Understanding*, 34.

[29] Patterson, "Teaching," 56.

[30] Baker, et al., "From Despicable," 37-50.

[31] Michael Harris, "Memories and Memorabilia, Art and Identity: Is Aunt Jemima Really a Black Woman?" *Third Text,* 12, no. 44 (1998): 25-42; Eric King Watts and Mark Orbe, "The Spectacular Consumption of 'True' African American Culture: 'Whassup' with the Budweiser Guys?" *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 19, no.1, (2002): 1-20; David Procter, "The Dynamic Spectacle: Transforming Experiences into Social Forms of Community," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76 (1990): 117-133.

Anti-Black Memorabilia, Black Meaning-Making, and Rhetoric

The JCM collection includes popular culture anti-Black caricatures, such as: "picaninny," "Tom," "Sambo," "coon," "mammy," "Jezebel," and "tragic mulatto." Dirks and Mueller maintain that these artifacts were produced, first and foremost, by racist Whites, and that White consumption "assisted in the maintenance of a White supremacist racial hierarchy since its American conception."[32] Even so, racist artifacts and material artifacts of racial violence displayed in JCM are sites of symbolic struggle. In other words, these artifacts hold different meanings for different people over time. Hence, I recognize that the Museum may play out differently to Black and White visitors. Still, the fluidity and diversity of discourses and meanings surrounding racist memorabilia speak to the dynamic process of social construction of collective memory, as enshrined in material artifacts by both dominant and non-dominant groups. That collective memory is often questioned, contested, shared, and passed on. In other words, even in correctly identifying the original intended consumer audience of racist memorabilia as racist Whites and those sympathetic to their causes and ideologies,[33] it is equally important to realize that near the turn of the 21st century almost half of all collectors of these historic artifacts were Black.[34] For instance, Pilgrim and other prominent African American public intellectuals, celebrities, and civic leaders—e.g., Henry Louis Gates Jr., Oprah Winfrey, and Julian Bond[35]—refashioned these artifacts toward a variety of ends (like subversive or oppositional) and also in ways that reaffirm dominant racist ideologies.

This shift in social value of caricatures for Pilgrim and other African American collectors can be understood through Baker, Motley, and Henderson's framework of rubbish theory, i.e., the evolution of economic, symbolic, and aesthetic value associated with material objects from the past that attempt to explain changes in the present purposes of these objects.[36] Baker, et al., maintain that as collective memories surrounding material culture objects change, social valuation of the objects is transformed by reframing narratives surrounding the objects. So whereas during the 1960s and 1970s when many White people viewed the caricatures as trash that engendered feelings of embarrassment to have in one's possession, African Americans reclaimed the objects through a rhetorical reframing of anti-Black caricatures as "Black Americana," thereby granting social value to them.[37] In this instance, anti-Black caricatures were resignified as symbols of Black progress, self-determination, and Black aspiration. Racist memorabilia was assigned new meanings that provided some sense of orientation for contemporary African Americans as markers that shed insight as to where African Americans have been, where they are now, and where they go from here.[38]

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[32] Danielle Dirks and Jennifer Mueller, "Racism and Popular Culture," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Racial and Ethnic Relations 2007,* ed. Hernan Vera and Joe Feagin (New York: Springer, 2007): 117.

[33] Maurice M. Manring, *Slave in a Box: the Strange Career of Aunt Jemima* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Cheryl Thurber, "The Development of Mammy Image and Mythology," in *Southern Women: Histories and Identities,* ed. Virginia Bernhard, et al. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992): 87-108. Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Patricia Turner, *Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994).

[34] P.J. Gibbs, *Black Collectibles: Sold in America* (Paducah, KY: Collectors Books, 1986).

[35] Kyle Husfloen, *Antique Trader Black Americana Price Guide* (Iola, WI: KP Books, 2005).

[36] Baker, et al, "From Despicable,*"* 37-50.

[37] Baker, et al, "From Despicable,*"* 37-50.

[38] James Klumpp and Thomas Hollihan, "Rhetorical Criticism as Moral Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, (1989): 84-89.

Other African Americans appropriated anti-Black caricatures and stereotypes in ways that reflected and reinforced dominant racial meanings and ideologies, for example, in 1970s Blaxploitation cinema, in Jim-Crow-era "bad man" folklore, and in some aspects of hip hop for financial gains.[39] In the analysis that follows, I examine the rhetorical ways JCM and Pilgrim reclaim the visual images and attendant narratives in ways that challenge the racially oppressive intentions.

My analysis suggest that JCM's mission is in keeping with other historical African American cultural productions[40] used as forms of resistance, including slave spirituals,[41] rap songs,[42] and improvisational techniques in jazz.[43] Deleuze calls these forms of resistance "lines of flight" and argues that there are two primary ways that lines of flight function as modes of resistance through repetition: the static: "reterritorializing" of repetition-as-representation and the dynamic "deterritorializing" of repetition with a difference.[44] Repetition with a difference inhabits an accepted form "in order to transform it from within and to deterritorialize it."[45] Therefore, lines of flight grant agency to oppressed groups through a rhetorical framework of escape from oppressive conditions. Lines of flight in Deleuzian thought function as an epistemology of self-definition that empowers marginalized groups to grant ontological meaning to their existence over and against imposed and narrow definitions of being that are based upon current social and historical conditions.[46]

Using a historical and political act of repetition with a difference,[47] Pilgrim re-presents the racist objects, albeit for subversive purposes that seek to improve the human condition. His rhetorical act of repetition with a difference enables JCM to function as a site of resistance against stereotypes, racist ideology, symbolic and institutional oppression, social fragmentation, and structural inequality. JCM fulfills its rhetorical mission and aims toward four important ends: (1) a call to "moral memory," or truth-telling about the history of Jim Crow and contemporary America's relationship to it;[48] (2) a call to "moral identity,"[49] particularly a recognition of African American humanity and affirming representations of African Americans; (3) a call to "moral participation,"[50] that is, representations of African American agency and self-determination in the history of the

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[39] Miles White, *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z: Race, Rap, and the Performance of Masculinity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Kheven Lee LaGrone, "From Minstrelsy to Gangsta Rap: The 'Nigger' as Commodity for Popular American Entertainment," *Journal of African American men.* 5, no. 2 (2000): 117-131; Anand Prahlad, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Folklore* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016).

[40] Bonnie Mitchell and Joe Feagin, "America's Racial-Ethnic Cultures: Opposition within a Mythical Melting Pot," in *Toward the Multicultural University*, ed. Benjamin Bowser, Terry Jones and Gale Auletta (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 65-86.

[41] Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (Oxford: University Oxford Press, 2013).

[42] Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Cultural in Contemporary America* (Lebanon, NH.: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

[43] Amiria Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: William Morrow, 1963).

[44] Giles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 25.

[45] Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987*)*, 34.

[46] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 25.

[47] Nealon, "Refraining, Becoming-Black," 83-95.

[48] Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 220-21.

[49] Brown Douglas, *Stand*, 223.

[50] Brown Douglas, *Stand*, 223-225.

Black struggle for full citizenship and equality; (4) a call to "moral imagination"[51] through dialogue, by way of an absolute belief that race relations in America can be better. I devote the balance of this paper to representative artifacts and key exhibits, while walking the reader through a "sequential locomotion"[52] of the seven visitor sections of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Following the lead of others,[53] I likewise assess what the overall rhetorical effect is of that sequence.

JCM call to Moral Memory

The Origins of Jim Crow Section

Kelly Brown Douglas asserts moral memory "is to recognize the past we carry within us, the past we want to carry within us, and the past we need to make right."[54] Righting the past is much more than offering apologies for the sins of bygone eras and social actors, or even "guilty verdicts for killers of innocent black children."[55] Rather, she argues, "to right the past is to acknowledge the ways in which our systems, structures, and ways of being in society are a continuation of the myths, the narratives, the ideologies of the past and then to transform these present realities."[56] "*The Origins of Jim Crow*," the first section of the Museum, uses popular culture artifacts to promote an awareness of the legacy of Black minstrel shows, the origins of the Jim Crow character and persona and other blackface characters including the "zip coon," "Jim Dandy," "Sambo," "coon," and "dandies" as part of a response of White southerners to the emancipation of African Americans. For instance, one section called "THE FATHER OF MINSTRELSY" prominently features a wall-size replica copy of sheet music for the 1832 song "Jim Crow" by White performer Thomas Dartmouth Rice. Here visitors learn that Rice was one of the first White individuals in the country to perform in blackface and popularize the "singing, dancing, grinning buffoon" Jim Crow persona before domestic and international White audiences. This exaggerated and stereotypically ascribed meaning of anti-Blackness persona gained added social meaning and significance in the culture as it circulated in public life.

Photos of both White and Black individuals performing in blackface before national audiences cue visitors to a history of African Americans who colluded in their own oppression as some African Americans appropriated and perpetuated anti-Black personas in performances for personal financial gain. Authentic make-up kits from The M. Stein Cosmetic Company of New York and the Denison's Make-Up Guide and other artifacts, such as, bottles of burnt cork grease and shoe paint, used by Black and White performers to darken their skin to exaggerate the features of African Americans are found in the "Blackening Up" exhibit. The "Popularity of Minstrel Shows" exhibit connects the origins and racial logic of Jim Crow anti-Blackness to its earliest mediated and commercialized forms since the 1830s and as a result of the advent of television, radio, and motion pictures.

Placards explain that as dominant media storytellers, elite Whites produced and disseminated a mediated, hegemonic depiction of Blackness as entertainment i.e., something not to be taken

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[51] Brown Douglas, *Stand*, 225-226.
[52] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 43.
[53] For example, see Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Between 'Crockery-dom' and Barnum: Boston's Chinese Museum, 1845-47," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2004): 271-307.
[54] Brown Douglas, 221.
[55] Brown Douglas, 221.
[56] Brown Douglas, 220.

seriously, that played a central role in the internalization, socialization, and normalization processes of anti-Black attitudes. The commercialization of which served financial, social, economic, and political interests of Whites. A key artifact illustrates the point. On "The Lord's Prayer," a 1953 album produced by Columbia records, there is a recorded version of a minstrel song performed on *The Amos & Andy Show* radio program of the time. Artifacts like this help to create a material record of the widespread acceptance of anti-Black attitudes and ideologies in that era.

These exhibits and artifacts promote visitor discussions concerning social identity formation and the social construction of racial categories, such as Whiteness and Blackness, how assigned social meanings have changed over time to serve the interest of those in power and how racial scripts were internalized and informed dominant thinking about who and what Black people were at various historical moments.[57] Such discussions raise important questions for visitors to consider. For example, given the racial transformation currently taking place in America, indicating that by year 2050 America will be a majority Black and Brown nation, what might it mean to be White or Black in 2050 and who has the power to ascribe/assert/impose those meanings? Exhibiting the historical role that media, as a social institution, played in the "extensive scaffolding" [58] of the Jim Crow legacy allows for additional discussion of the current role and responsibility of media in the perpetuation of racial stereotypes, in light of the limited roles given to African Americans that oversimplify and/or condense characters.[59] Further, discussion that probes why Black actors playing these stereotypical roles disproportionately win Academy awards can be fruitful.[60]

JCM employs additional material artifacts and historical documentation in the "*Origin of Jim Crow*" section to demonstrate the evolution of the term Jim Crow from a persona and form of entertainment to becoming tantamount to institutional forms of legalized segregation. Collectively exhibited in a display case are authentic and reproduced material artifacts from major social institutions of government, religion, healthcare, and so forth, that reflect a culture of Jim Crow segregation that regulated virtually every aspect of Black and White social relations. For example, signs exhibited for "WHITES" and "COLORED" racialized space including bathrooms, burial grounds, swimming pools, and seating sections also legalized, demarcated, and concretized the boundaries of Whiteness and Blackness.

Deconstructing this history positions visitors to better recognize legalized segregation as another mechanism of power, specifically as a means of inclusion and exclusion based on race and racial meanings by which Whiteness as "cherished property"[61] is defined, enforced, and maintained against Black outsiders. Other material artifacts reveal deep inequalities and the inferiority of Black facilities in that they were underfunded, poorly kept, often lacked basic equipment and were less conveniently located than those for Whites. Visitors are thus encouraged to empathize with African Americans who were victims of legalized and institutional racism – and that racism had real material, psychological, and physical consequences that impacted African American life chances. Remembered this way, JCM invokes moral memory through dialogue concerning the Jim

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[57] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

[58] Pilgrim, *Understanding,* vi.

[59] Jakes Harwood and Karen Anderson, "The Presence and Portrayal of Social Groups on Prime-Time Television," *Communication Reports,* 15, no. 2 (2002): 81-97.

[60] For example, see Ed Guerrero, *Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012); Tamara Therese Johnson, "The Impact of Negative Stereotypes & Representations of African-Americans in the Media and African-American Incarceration" (Afro-American Studies 0014, University of California at Los Angeles, 2012); retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8xm9j2kf

[61] Brown Douglass, *Stand,* 40.

Crow past and continued institutional investment in, for example, Whiteness[62] in law and public policy that underpins present-day racialized disparities in criminal justice, wealth, education, healthcare, and life expectancy.[63]

To strengthen JCM's call to moral memory, a textual sign, "SEGREGATION WAS PERVASIVE" signals the beginning of another rhetorical experience that produces a higher-level visual effect. Here visitors stand in front of a 10-to-12 foot high by 10-to-12 foot long wall on which are written, from top-to-bottom, numerous examples of segregation laws and policies, for example, laws that prohibited Black and White interactions in pool and billiard rooms and intermarriage. A placard explains that segregation laws inscribed on the wall are only a "sample of the thousands of laws that existed during the Jim Crow period."[64] While standing at the wall pre-recorded voices read aloud examples of laws through a speaker positioned overhead. Just as the first voice completes reading a law, a second voice simultaneously begins to read a different law followed by a third voice that joins in and simultaneously reads another law. This pattern continues until multiple voices are heard reading numerous examples of segregation law, codes, and policies over and against others.

The visual and auditory elements together produce a heightened affective rhetorical experience in two important ways. First, the pre-recorded, cacophonous auditory readings of laws, codes, and policies is JCM's attempt to recreate for visitors a first hand experience akin to the psychological confusion and overwhelming sense of powerlessness that these laws exacted on African Americans, and the consequent human inability to maintain accurate knowledge of socially arbitrary laws, yet alone to comply with the ever changing laws across social, political, and geographical boundaries. These changes often happened without warning to the benefit of Whites in power that needed them changed.[65] Consequently, the sight-and-sound rhetorical effect provides visitors with a framework by which to understand Jim Crow oppression as being pervasive, restrictive, hierarchical, internalized[66] and to underscore the resulting psychological burden that Jim Crow segregation exacted on African Americans.

Equally important, the wall itself can be seen as a metaphor. Jim Crow laws were mechanisms of social control that facilitated social distance between racial groups and social inequality, that is, a structural wall of segregation erected to impede the progress of emancipated African Americans on the path toward full citizenship. This exhibit also stimulates discussions on the ways in which segregation laws justified and legitimized subsequent anti-Black violence, the threat of anti-Black violence and the criminalization of Black bodies.

Jim Crow Violence Section

The second section of the Museum, "The Violence Room" contains graphic and gratuitous examples of physical, psychological, and symbolic artifacts displayed to tell the truth about the horrors of Jim Crow anti-Black violence. For instance, adjacent to the wall of segregation is a replica

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[62] George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

[63] For example, see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

[64] "The Origins of Jim Crow," accessed Jan 10, 2017, http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/origins.htm

[65] Brian Norman and Piper Kendrix Williams, *Representing Segregation: Toward an Aesthetics of Living Jim Crow, and Other Forms of Racial Division* (Albany: State University of New York Press 2010).

[66] Lee Anne Bell, "Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education," in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, ed. Maurianne Adams, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 22-23.

lynching tree standing approximately 10-to-12 feet high and 6-to-7 feet in circumference. Prominently hanging from one branch is a noose. The imposing presence of the stand-alone lynching tree and noose rhetorically positions visitors to understand the role that violence played in the maintenance of the racial hierarchy. That is to say, lynching and the threat of lynching were prime rhetorical tools Whites used in the South against Blacks. JCM's representation of this rhetorical device signifies the fate of Black people who 'got out of their place' in the Jim Crow racial hierarchy.

Historical documentation of instruments of terror used against Black bodies observed in one exhibit case supports such a rhetorical reading. For example, whips, chains, clubs and other instruments of terror line the case. This exhibit also documents the origins of the "Black brute" caricature, the emergence of which signals a shift in post-Reconstruction ascribed meaning of anti-Blackness, focusing on a demonized Black masculinity and mythologies of Blackness as criminality steeped in White fear and paranoia that became the justification for violence against Black male bodies.[67] A sign, "Lynching as Social Control," strengthens this aspect of moral memory. It reads, "At the beginning of the 20th century, much of the anti-Black propaganda found in journal newspapers & novels focused on the stereotype of the Black brute. The fear of Black men raping White women became public rationalization for black lynching." On display are original novels from the period that reinforced this pathological obsession with the idea of Black rapists,[68] like the 1965 novel *The Sin Smugglers* by Tony Calvano and Thomas Ramierz that depicts a Black man groping, chasing, and attacking a White woman. A monitor positioned on a nearby wall loops a short four-minute video montage that chronicles several attendant forms of racialized violence enacted on Black bodies from the 1860s until more recent times. The visual effect of the video takes on additional meaning as it is set to the music of prominent Black artists John Coltrane, Sam Cooke, Mahalia Jackson, and Billie Holiday, for example, as the latter sings the 1939 anti-racism song, "Strange Fruit."

Thus, JCM exposes a racial logic: absent the institution of slavery, the violent, menacing, Black brute sexual predator rapes White women thereby transgressing the boundaries of Whiteness, most directly threatening White racial purity and superiority and, therefore, warranting the extra-legal violence portrayed in exhibit photographs.[69] Discourses that shaped beliefs held by many southern Whites purported that Black men "had incorrigible desire to rape White women"[70] become mythology. Consequently, the myth of the Black brute became known as the "new Negro crime."[71]

The smallest exhibit in this section is a collection of artifacts, e.g., Klan robes, a membership application and a "White man's bible" from the White supremacist hate group, Ku Klux Klan, alternately referred to as the Invisible Empire. The positionality of the Klan exhibit strategically following the video montage of lynching can be read as JCM's attempt to visually highlight the Klan's historical and present role in American history and in creating and perpetuating the myth of the "new Negro crime." Visitors are thus able to discern how the mythology made for effective

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[67] Angela Davis, *Violence Against Women and the Ongoing Challenge* (Lanham, MD: Kitchen Table, 1985).

[68] Stephan Taltly, *Mulatto America: At the Crossroads of Black and White Culture* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 53-54.

[69] Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

[70] Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 142.

[71] MacLean, *Behind the Mask*, 142.

rhetorical motivation to incite violence against Black men.[72] JCM also uses lynching postcards and anti-Black violence through forms of common household play and/or Carnival games, for example, "Hit the Coon," and "African Dodger," as a rhetorical strategy to communicate the widespread circulation of the psychological and symbolic threat of violence and the everyday items of intolerance that supported a culture of anti-Black violence. JCM's lesson to visitors is clear: violence to Black bodies was normalized and the threat of anti-Black violence was ubiquitous.

Moral memory demands that we understand how the Jim Crow past shapes the present and continues to reassert itself in increasingly violent ways because of our collective failure to take seriously the history and legacies of Jim Crow anti-Black violence.[73] Two particular artifacts attempt to demonstrate a continuity of Jim Crow mythologies that pathologize Black male bodies in the 21st century. First, and on display, a "Run Nigger Target" produced in 2012 reflects the image of an afro-wearing Black male in a running posture as a shooting target. Located on JCM's website is a narrative regarding the second artifact, the "Trayvon Martin Target" read:

> In the first half of 2012, extensive media coverage and public attention have focused on the polarizing saga of the death of Trayvon Martin and the trial of George Zimmerman. While people around the nation remain divided on their views of this case, one has to wonder whether there could possibly be any positive outcome from the creation of a shooting target depicting a deceased young man. The man responsible for designing and selling the target admitted that his goal was to make money by capitalizing on the controversy of the case, and he reportedly sold out of all the targets within two days. The target is no longer available."[74]

These artifacts, in particular, facilitate awareness and conversations on the legacy of anti-Black violence against Black bodies that get 'out of their place' and a continued necessity of Black resistance to anti-Black violence, laws, and images. Such exhibits raise important discussion questions concerning, for example, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to the shooting death of 17-year-old African American Trayvon Martin by White Hispanic George Zimmerman. JCM's rhetorical call to moral memory helps us understand why many view the recent highly publicized deaths of unarmed African Americans such as Martin as "legalized twenty-first century lynchings."[75] When re-contextualized within the Jim Crow history of legal segregation and anti-Black violence, Zimmerman's defense in shooting Martin that invoked his legal right to "Stand your Ground" encourages further discussion around the question: can we understand historical acts of Jim Crow anti-Black violence as part of a longer history of Stand Your Ground culture[76] designed to preserve the boundaries and wages[77] of Whiteness?

Jim Crow and Anti-Black Imagery Section

In the third section of the Museum, JCM documents the wider social/cultural contextual dimensions of anti-Black imagery, namely caricatures, as a primary rhetorical strategy of Southern Whites that is commonplace in public and private spaces. Several exhibits in the "Jim Crow and

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[72] MacLean, *Behind the Mask*, 146.

[73] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 224.

[74] "The Trayvon Martin Target," accessed Feb 1, 2017, http://www.ferris.edu
/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/dontstop/trayvontarget.htm

[75] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 222.

[76] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 113-132.

[77] W.E.B Dubois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1935), 700.

Anti-Black Imagery" section, e.g., "The Chicken Coon Inn," "Racism in the Kitchen," and "Racism in Cartoons" exemplify the rhetorical impact of anti-Black caricatures. In another instance, the "Racism on the Lawn" exhibit illustrates how material artifacts were used to racialize space, for example, in the stereotypical "Jacko" and "Cavalier" [78] style lawn ornament with exaggerated Black features. JCM further demonstrates the recalcitrant nature of Jim Crow anti-Black images as, for example, a few of the reproduced examples on display reflect a pink hue to avoid charges of racially insensitivity in a "post-racial" society marked by the election of the first African American President, Barack Obama. Ironically, one overtly racist example displayed was created in 2012 and is, in fact, an anti-Black lawn jockey caricature of Obama. In displaying this piece, JCM urges critique of the notion of a "post-racial" society and a rhetorical call to moral memory that Jim Crow constructions of anti-Blackness remain operative in present society. As such, this exhibit allows for discussions of the possible rhetorical meanings that the election of Obama held within a country where notions of anti-Blackness still matter. Said differently, this exhibit raises questions for discussion such as: can the election of Obama be viewed by some as an act of Black transgression of White space? Similarly, could then the election of Trump be viewed as reclamation of White space?

The "Caricatures of Black People" exhibit is the largest display case in the Museum and it is literally packed with hundreds of material, commercial, and popular artifacts and examples that reflect the major anti-Black caricatures: the "coon," "Tom," "Picaninny," "Jezebel," Sapphire," and "Tragic Mulatto." From the sheer number of objects displayed in the case, visitors gain a better perspective of the widespread acceptance, commercialization, and ample private and public ownership displays of these items. For the sake of brevity, I limit discussion of this section to a few artifacts that portray Black women's sexuality as unbridled and with sexual proclivities dangerous to White society. For example, the array of artifacts of the Jezebel stereotype (e.g., authentic and reproduced cocktail mixers, eroticized figurines, and key chain bottle top openers), in essence, positions visitors to understand how Black women were reduced to sexual objects. Other artifacts presented here provide more historical examples of African Americans who appropriated images of anti-Blackness, in many cases, for personal financial gain. For instance, artifacts from the 20th century represent adaptations of the Jezebel stereotype in Blaxploitation films like *Foxy Brown* and the Jezebel likeness is linked to products such as packages of "Brown Sugar" pantyhose.

This exhibit promotes understanding of how anti-Black images and strategies functioned as ideological justification and controlling[79] narratives to support the domination of Black women and Black women's sexuality, and helps to rhetorically establish JCM's call to moral memory. In particular, exhibits in this section educate visitors on how anti-Black caricatures functioned as mechanisms of social control "employed to punish Black women who violate the societal norms that encourage them to be passive, servile, non-threatening, and unseen."[80] As such, this exhibit encourages visitor discussion of how these historic constructions of Black femininity may have informed the actions of arresting officer, Brian Encinia, in the 2015 high profile arrest and subsequent death of African American woman Sandra Bland, in Waller County, TX. In his report, Encinia described Bland as "combative and hostile" during a confrontation that quickly escalated when he threatened, "I will light you up" as Bland asserted her rights. In framing her actions as "combative and hostile" and commanding her to "obey him" many protested as they perceived

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[78] Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[79] Collins, *Black Feminist,* 1990.

[80] "The Sapphire Caricature," accessed January 29, 2017, http://ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/sapphire/

Encinia's choice of words as an attempt to draw upon cultural memory and rhetorically frame Bland and her actions as that of Sapphire, the angry Black woman.[81] Understood this way, JCM contributes to discussion of the legacies of anti-Black female caricatures and stereotypes that continue to diminish Black women's agency, voices, and civil rights at the intersection of race, class, gender, and, in many cases, sexual orientation.[82] JCM's call to moral memory of Jim Crow segregation, anti-Black violence and anti-Black images rhetorically positions visitors to acknowledge that the past is with us and it is not the past.[83]

JCM Call to Moral Identity and Moral Participation: Past

Battling Jim Crow Segregation Section

The "*Battling Jim Crow Segregation*" is JCM's fourth section. It makes a rhetorical call for moral identity, the recognition that "every human soul has infinite value,"[84] and challenges the dehumanization of African Americans.[85] Continuing a trend found among other Black museums,[86] JCM rhetorically employs the theme of African American triumph through resistance as the substratum of moral identity. Much has been written about Black art as resistance[87] and several examples are displayed. The "Art as Fighting Racism," "Art as Resistance," "Art as Discontent," and "Images as Propaganda" exhibits contextualize examples seen here within a longer history of Black resistance and African American agency. These examples demonstrate two key rhetorical strategies: repetition with a difference and uses of photography, in particular with actual images of African Americans who lived during the Jim Crow era. For example, artist Lester Whites' piece, "Serving This," re-presents the widely recognizable Cream of Wheat chef 'Tom' caricature, Rastus, but White re-contextualizes it in the service of Black resistance. As opposed to conforming to the stereotypical 'Tom', i.e., the happy servant who aims to meet the needs of White people, White's Rastus holds a bowl of Cream of Wheat while sticking up his middle finger in defiance to onlookers. Rendered this way, the Rastus image challenges notions of Black contentment with servitude.

As a historical tool of African American resistance[88] Pilgrims' own artwork, specifically the "Styling" collage and "What Do You See" panel, utilizes the photographic lens as a rhetorical

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[81] For example, see Ivie Ani, "Sandra Bland and the Trope of the '"Angry Black Woman"'" *New York Times*, July 27, 2014, accessed Feb 11, 2017, http://nytlive.nytimes.co/womenintheworld/2015/07/27/sandra-bland-and-the-trope-of-the-angry-black-woman/

[82] Sonja M. Brown Givens and Jennifer Monahan, "Priming Mammies, Jezebels, and Other Controlling Images: An Examination of the Influence of Mediated Stereotypes on Perceptions of an African American Woman," *Media Psychology*, 7, no. (2005): 87-106.

[83] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 222.

[84] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 87.

[85] Brown Douglas, *Stand*, 223.

[86] Brooms, *Lest We Forget,* 2011.

[87] bell hooks, *Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992); Celeste-Marie Bernier, *African American Visual Arts: From Slavery to the Present* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan and Diane S. Hope, eds., *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008).

[88] For example, see Deborah Willis, *Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2008); Dora Apel, *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Maurice Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, *Pictures of Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

strategy to counterbalance caricatured depictions of African Americans. Photos of everyday African American families, children, and individuals engaged in everyday activities stimulate critique of racist propaganda, promote recognition of African American moral identity, and exemplify Black humanity. JCM's rhetorical uses of actual photos of African Americans from the Jim Crow era taps into human sensibilities and calls forth identification through shared humanity[89] and consequently "sympathetic understanding."[90]

Moral identity through a shared humanity liberates African Americans from Jim Crow strategies of dehumanization and invalidation, and also liberates White people from the myth of White superiority. Brown Douglas argues, "a moral identity is one that is relieved of pretension of superiority. It lets go of any myths that suggest that one people is more valuable than another or that one people is chosen by God while another is not."[91] Visitors are thus able to better recognize the continued oppression and suffering of African Americans and how moral memory promotes solidarity in the struggle for social and racial justice for African Americans. Visitors also gain understanding that moral memory is necessary if one is to enter into solidarity with the oppressed.[92]

Attacking Jim Crow Segregation Section

The fifth section of the Museum, "Attacking Jim Crow Segregation," connects themes of Black resistance to Black triumph, Black agency and Black self-determination evidenced by the demise of de jure Jim Crow segregation with the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The "Achieving Despite Resistance" exhibit features examples of African Americans who achieved and excelled during the height of Jim Crow violence and segregation. Photos of African Americans seen here represent the highest levels of Black excellence and heroism (e.g., Thurgood Marshall, Zora Neal Hurston, and Joe Lewis), alongside photos of lesser-known, everyday African Americans citizens serving in the Civil War, in politics, and as Black thinkers, politicians, military leaders, athletes, and musicians. The diverse images of Blackness challenge dominant and essentialist representations of Jim Crow Blackness.

The "Civil Rights Movement," including the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, is JCM's main rhetorical strategy in this section and receives special attention as its own exhibit. For instance, busts of Martin Luther King. Jr. and Malcolm X, respectively, and figurines of African American women of the movement, like Rosa Parks, are found here. In another display case is an authentic ink pen President Lyndon Johnson used to sign the 1964 Civil Rights Act and original "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" buttons worn during the 1963 March in DC. Also on exhibit are 1950s and 1960s copies of the popular African American *JET* magazine that reported extensively on the struggle of African Americans for civil rights and the March on Washington.

JCM's collective presentations of these artifacts communicate African American agency and self-determination in leading their own struggle for civil rights. Brown Douglas names this collective action moral participation. This exhibit stimulates understanding of the success of the movement, namely how through moral participation African Americans living in the Jim Crow era

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[89] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).
[90] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 223.
[91] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 223.
[92] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 223.

changed the realities of their day because they engaged in the struggle of their day[93] and of how African American resistance has taken form and continues to take form.

JCM call to Moral Participation & Moral Imagination: Present

Moving Beyond Jim Crow Section

"Moving Beyond Jim Crow" is the second to last section of the Museum and it functions rhetorically as a call to moral participation, i.e., a call to the present generation to engage in the struggle to end present-day oppression.[94] The themes of (re)production, commodification and dialogue guide visitors' rhetorical experience in "The Battle Continues" exhibit in that achievement is not the same as full equality. For one, and as seen in this section, the production, consumption, and appropriation of anti-Black ideologies and images continue in the present day and have cash value,[95] particularly when linked to products and popular artifacts consequently commodifying and making them to varying degrees profitable investments. For instance, the placard "Racism as Commodity", states: "All of the objects in Jim Crow Museum have market value. In 2011, there were more than 50,000 collectors of Black Americana, a category that includes racist artifacts. Generally, the more racist an object is, the higher the price it commands."

During my visit to JCM in 2016, a guide informed me that Pilgrim has a budget from Ferris State to continue purchasing more caricatures to add to JCM's holdings. Moreover, visitors learn of transnational implications of the production and commodification of anti-Blackness as another textual source states most artifacts purchased in 2011 were made in other parts of the world including "Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Japan, Mexico and Taiwan."[96] Consistent with JCM's mission, "The Battle Continues" exhibit communicates to visitors the specific processes of (re)production that make possible the present-day commodification of anti-Black images when old images are made new again and when new images are created. Said differently, old major archetypal anti-Black images are made new again when they are reproduced on new items displayed, for example, on clocks, piggy banks, figurines, T-Shirts and then sold.[97] JCM uses examples of misogynist lyrics of some hip-hop artists to illustrate how some African Americans continue to appropriate major anti-Black caricatures, e.g., hypersexual, violent, and dangerous males, for personal economic benefits. Additional artifacts illustrate the creation of new anti-Black caricatures as Halloween costumes and forms of play.

Considerable exhibit space is given to the display of new anti-Black images and caricatures produced in response to the election of Barack Obama. For example, a box of Obama Waffles, an Obama Monkey t-shirt, and bumper stickers that read, "We're Planting Melons in the White House Garden" and "Where's Lee Harvey Oswald When you Need Him?" are exhibited. A t-shirt bearing striking resemblance to the iconic 2008 Obama "Hope" themed t-shirt read "Rope" and a noose is superimposed around Obama's neck. The representational strategy of placing this image of a hanged African American male, albeit the future president of the US, serves JCM's larger rhetorical purposes as it taps into visitors' memory of the implications of the noose hanging from the

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[93] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 224.
[94] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 224.
[95] Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment,* 1998.
[96] "New Racist Forms," accessed Feb 3, 2017 http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/newforms/
[97] "New Racist."

lynching tree in the "Jim Crow Violence" section and urges further discussion of the notion of a "post racial" America.

These artifacts and others serve as the rhetorical underpinning of JCM's call to moral participation, that is, a call for visitors to engage in the struggle as a rhetorical "commitment to freedom, love and life."[98] Such engagement is not solely driven by a fuller knowledge of the past, but also in response a call to moral imagination, a vision of a better future.[99] The call to moral imagination is rooted in awareness that current systems of oppression are not 'natural' but rather are products of social construction. JCM's prime rhetorical tool of dialogue rooted in moral imagination is perceived as a necessary step for ending racism in all its forms and for realizing social justice. Dialogue, then, for the creators of JCM, is the medium through which visitors imagine a new world that is free of individual, structural and internalized oppression.[100]

The Cloud of Witnesses Section

The "Learning Center/Cloud of Witnesses" is a unique section of the Museum where visitors both begin their tours by watching a twenty-two minute introductory video by Pilgrim and end their tour by sitting in dialogue against the backdrop of the "Cloud of Witnesses" painting. The mural is JCM's last rhetorical tool used to encourage moral imagination through dialogue. Painted in 2012 by Jon McDonald, the mural honors and reflects the likenesses of seventeen civil rights "witnesses" who paid the ultimate sacrifice (moral participation) while struggling toward freedom (moral imagination).[101]

The "Cloud of Witnesses" painting is best examined and understood in relationship to the biblical text and context from which the phrase is taken if one is to fully grasp the rhetorical potential. Hebrews 12:1 reads, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin, which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."[102] Contextually, this passage is preceded by a recounting of the histories of several biblical characters who dared to believe that their lives and societies could be better (moral imagination) and subsequently acted upon those beliefs (moral participation) and made their societies better. Moral imagination disrupts the notion that the world in its current state is acceptable and therefore calls for actions informed by an "in-breaking of the future into the present."[103] In other words, the vision of a better tomorrow influenced, shaped and informed the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of the biblical characters. That said, JCM's rhetorical argument is crystalized: the legacy of Jim Crow continues, racism continues and anti-Black caricatures and images remain in circulation. The "witnesses" and other everyday African Americans believed that their realities could be better. They struggled toward that vision and, in part, achieved it.

The rhetorical call to moral participation is thus clearly discerned in JCM's use of the phrase "cloud of witnesses" to inspire dialogue and a collective sense of responsibility as a first step

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[98] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 224.

[99] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 224.

[100] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 225.

[101] On the panoramic mural painted above the dialogue area are: Johnnie Mae Chappell, Michael Henry Schwerner, James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Rev. James Reeb, Delano Herman Middleton, Samuel Ephesians Hammond Jr., Henry Ezekiel Smith, Viola Gregg Liuzzo, Medgar Evers, Ben Chester White, Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

[102] Heb. 4:12, NASB.

[103] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 225.

toward shaping a better future today. This exhibit functions rhetorically to communicate that the work toward full equality did not end in 1964. In a word, the struggle continues! This raises visitor awareness of the rhetorical and political nature and power of honest dialogue that builds toward moral imagination and empowers present generations to act and work as if that better future is already present.[104]

Conclusion

In 2016, Trump claimed, "African-American communities are absolutely in the worst shape that they've ever been in before. Ever. Ever. Ever."[105] As my analysis has shown, JCM's representation of racist artifacts and its rhetorical calls to moral memory, moral identity, moral participation, and moral imagination challenge rhetorical strategies like this that annihilate and trivialize the atrocities of Jim Crow and African American heroism that make up the African American history in American history. JCM's rhetorical exhibition and history of the African American experience through repetition with a difference is a necessary and critical line of flight in the age of Trump, especially when, case-in-point, Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, recently called historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) "real pioneers of school choice" rather than to acknowledge the history of Jim Crow segregation laws that gave rise to HBCUs. However, as demonstrated above, artifacts presented in JCM work to resist these rhetorical strategies by documenting how Black students were not given a "choice" to attend all White schools as a direct result of legalized racial discrimination in education. In an age of 'alternative facts' JCM can inspire activism and facilitation in motivating moral imagination to create a better future — at a time when policies, executive orders, and practices of the White male power elite seek to marginalize Black folks and other minority groups, including women, Muslims and immigrants. JCM is adding an additional room for the purpose of displaying items that defame these and other minority groups and has created two traveling exhibitions, "Hateful Things" and "Them: Images of Separation," that showcase material artifacts produced to denigrate these groups.

Rhetorical strategies discussed above allow us to better grasp the profound relationship between communication, space and design represented in JCM, as it is an open rhetorical space of memory in which diverse people are brought together in honest dialogue of the past, present, and in collective struggle toward a better future, a future that Jim Crow ideology, images, and laws sought to prevent. In sum, JCM functions rhetorically to bring people together in solidarity, where Jim Crow culture and laws attempted to keep people apart. As a counter-museum, JCM creates spaces that promote communication, and the rhetorical function of JCM contributes to the development of the human condition, which includes recontextualizing, unpacking, and problematizing racist propaganda through a moral lens.

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[104] Brown Douglas, *Stand,* 225.

[105] Jeremy Diamond, "Trump: Black Communities in Worst Shape "'ever, ever, ever,'" *CNN.com* Last modified September 20, 2016 http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/20/politics/donald-trump-african-americans-election-2016/