

December 2016

# Decolonizing African-american Museums: a Case Study on Two African-american Museums in the South

Anastacia Jonique Scott  
*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.uwm.edu/etd>

 Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Library and Information Science Commons](#), and the [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Scott, Anastacia Jonique, "Decolonizing African-american Museums: a Case Study on Two African-american Museums in the South" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1414.  
<https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/1414>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by UWM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UWM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [open-access@uwm.edu](mailto:open-access@uwm.edu).

DECOLONIZING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUMS: A CASE STUDY ON TWO  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUMS IN THE SOUTH

by

Anastacia Scott

A Dissertation Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in Africology

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2016

## ABSTRACT

### DECOLONIZING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUMS: A CASE STUDY ON TWO AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUMS IN THE SOUTH

by

Anastacia Scott

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2016  
Under the Supervision of Professor Doreatha Mbalia

This dissertation seeks to understand how African-American museums' exhibits help individuals gain their sense of racial identity through public memory. In an era where the United States is supposedly "post-racial" African-American museums are flourishing. As institutions serving an important role in preserving the collective memory of African-American people in the US, African-American museums evoke questions of representation within the larger US narrative that confirm the persistent saliency of race in society, and therefore continue to have a public function in maintaining and developing a racial African-American identity (Jackson 2012; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Wilson 2012; Golding 2009). My research is focused on the following question: What impacts do African-American museums have on their patrons? An exploration of museums provides a lens through which to examine larger questions around power, representation, and race in the African-American community. In order to illuminate these larger questions I utilize a decolonial framework. A decolonial framework helps me answer my research question in two ways: 1) to explain the political and economic context these museums operate in and 2) to understand the impact the museums have on the patrons' thinking within this political and economic context.

© Copyright by Anastacia Scott, 2016  
All Rights Reserved

It is in  
Him that I  
live,  
move,  
and have my being.  
Acts 17:28

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
CHAPTER	
I. Introduction.....	1
Schools of Thought in Africology.....	2
Culture and Society Tradition.....	3
Political Economy Tradition.....	11
Decoloniality .....	20
Data Collection.....	22
Sites for Data Collection.....	26
Data Compilation.....	27
Methodology.....	27
Limitations.....	28
Chapter Summaries.....	28
II. Case Study # 1: Houston Museum of African-American Culture.....	31
History of the Museum.....	31
Museum's Online Presence.....	34
The Museum Visit.....	34
Governance and Management.....	36
Audience Awareness.....	37
Evaluation.....	38
Content.....	38
Collections.....	40
Interpretation Communication.....	41
Design and Production.....	43
Ergonomics.....	45
The Data.....	46

III.	Case Study #2: Tubman African-American Museum.....	60
	History of the Museum.....	60
	Museum's Online Presence.....	61
	The Museum Visit.....	63
	Governance and Management.....	65
	Audience Awareness.....	66
	Evaluation.....	67
	Content.....	68
	Collections.....	69
	Interpretation Communication.....	70
	Design and Production.....	72
	Ergonomics.....	74
	The Data.....	75
IV.	Data Analysis and Results.....	95
	Cultural, Political, and Economic Context of US Museums.....	95
	Historicizing Black Museums.....	99
	Description of Themes.....	104
	Data Analysis.....	106
	Social and Racial Consciousness.....	107
	Instilled Racial Pride and Identity.....	115
	Moved to Action.....	129
	Concluding Remarks.....	131
V.	Summary of Findings and Conclusion.....	133
	Summary of Findings.....	133
	Concluding Perspectives.....	135
	Representations of African-American Enslavement.....	135
	African Americans and Historical Trauma.....	141
	Museums as alternative spaces.....	146
	REFERENCES.....	153
	APPENDICES.....	160
	Appendix A: Structured Interview Questions (A).....	161
	Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Plan.....	162
	Appendix C: Behavioral Recording Sheet.....	164
	Appendix D: Visitor Behavior Patterns.....	165
	Appendix E: Structured Interview Questions (B).....	166
	CURRICULUM VITAE.....	167

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Heck of A Job.....	113
Figure 2. Fanonian Definition of Race.....	111
Figure 3. Angelitos Negros.....	114
Figure 4. From Africa to America.....	128
Figure 5. Harriet Tubman, 1911.....	128



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Age distribution of visitors at HMAAC.....	47
Table 2. Gender distribution of visitors in ABOLITIONISTS.....	47
Table 3. Group gender composition in ABOLITIONISTS.....	48
Table 4. Time visitors spent in ABOLITIONISTS.....	52
Table 5. Summary for attraction power and holding power in ABOLITIONISTS.....	53
Table 6. Group size of visitors in ABOLITIONISTS.....	54
Table 7. Distribution of visitor behaviors in ABOLITIONISTS.....	54
Table 1-A. Age distribution of visitors in Tubman.....	77
Table 2-A. Gender distribution of visitors in Tubman.....	77
Table 3-A. Gender group composition in Tubman.....	78
Table 4-A. Time visitors spent in Tubman.....	82
Table 5-A. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	83
Table 5-B. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	84
Table 5-C. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	85
Table 5-D. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	84
Table 5-E. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	86
Table 5-F. Summary of attraction and holding power in Tubman.....	87
Table 6-A. Group size of visitors in Tubman.....	88
Table 7-A. Distribution of visitor behaviors in Tubman.....	88

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HMAAC	Houston Museum of African-American Culture
Tubman	Tubman African-American Museum

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is in Him that I live, move and have my being. I would like to thank my family, friends and parents in particular for funding my data collection trips first and foremost!!! Without their continued support and encouragement this would not have been possible. I would like to thank my family and especially my little sister, Lonnie, for her presence and support throughout this process. Jason, I don't know what I would do without you. Your love, support, humor and presence have been pivotal to my progression and life in general. Thank you for sharing your life with me. Arieuna, thank you for being you. I appreciate all that you have done and continue to do and be in my life. Thank God for Besties!! You have shown me the most gracious generosity since the day we met at 14 years of age. I love you and may your presence in my life continue to shine bright. Jess, GIRL!!!! WE MADE IT!!! DU!!! Thank you for your brilliance and honesty and support and encouragement throughout this process!!!! I love you always!!! Estrella, you have been a GEM in my life!!! Thank you for your hospitality on countless occasions; your boundless generosity; your kindness; your humble demeanor; I thank the heavens that I met you. Our sisterhood in solidarity is genuine and unbreakable. I appreciate you more than you know. Crystal, words cannot express what you've given to me. We've been through hell and back. Thank you for your countless contributions to my life both professionally and personally.

Special thanks to my mentor Professors from Dillard University: Professor Mtangulizi Sanyika, Dr. Winona Somerville, and Dr. Alan Colon for planting the seed. Without you all recognizing my propensity for graduate school it would not have possible.

There is so much beauty in setting high standards for students and nourishing those talents you see in them. Thank you all for taking the time to do that. Professor Mtangulizi Sanyika, thank you for my intellectual development and pushing me to reach my potential. Dr. Alan Colon, thank you for all the impromptu meetings in your office and the friendship it spawned into even now. Special thanks to the Global Issues Honors Consortium at the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change (ICGC) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Shout out to Dr. Rose Brewer!!!! Thanks!!!! You're amazing!!!! GIHC watered my seed.

Dr. George Barganier, you saved my life (figuratively and literally)!! I appreciate your genuine spirit. Thank you for pouring into me. I am indebted. Your continued support and instilling enthusiasm and fire towards this project is invaluable. Dr. Doreatha Mbalia—THANK YOU!!!!!! You stepped up at a time when I most needed you and you have handled everything so graciously and professionally. For that I am grateful. I appreciate your embodiment of immaculate professionalism for which I will model my professional decorum after.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank the staff of the Tubman African-American Museum and the Houston Museum of African-American Culture. Thank you all so much for graciously hosting me during each data collection trip. I appreciate your openness and transparency for the interviews as well as the tours of your museums and collections.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This dissertation seeks to understand how African-American museums' exhibits help individuals gain their sense of racial identity through public memory. In an era where the United States is supposedly "post-racial" African-American museums are flourishing. As institutions serving an important role in preserving the collective memory of African-American people in the US, African-American museums evoke questions of representation within the larger US narrative that confirm the persistent saliency of race in society, and therefore continue to have a public function in maintaining and developing a racial African-American identity (Jackson 2012; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Wilson 2012; Golding 2009). My research is focused on the following question: What impacts do African-American museums have on their patrons? An exploration of museums provides a lens through which to examine larger questions around power, representation, and race in the African-American community.

In order to illuminate these larger questions I utilize a decolonial framework. A decolonial framework helps me answer my research question in two ways: 1) to explain the political and economic context these museums operate in and 2) to understand the impact the museums have on the patrons' thinking within this political and economic context. As a nonreductionist framework, decoloniality is particularly useful for examining the interstices of these processes. In order to address my research question, I am going to first survey canonical works in the Africological tradition that have looked at questions around Black consciousness and the Black condition. Then, I will engage in an overview of the decolonial framework and the ways in which it helps me answer my research question.

As an Africologist, I am trained to “discover, recover, construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct knowledge pertaining to the subject matter of the discipline” (Van Horne 2007, 106). Moreover, Van Horne asserts, “Within the domain of its intellectual contents, the matter of cultural survival is of the utmost importance” (2007, 108-109). Therefore, the role of an Africologist is to conduct research with the intention of reconstructing and revitalizing the context in which African peoples and their descendants reside in. Africology emerged out of the field of Black Studies, which is characterized by a Black Intellectual tradition to describe, correct and prescribe knowledge pertaining to people of primarily African descent. Africology extends the tradition through its objectives to: 1) *discover* a formal introduction to the intellectual establishment and its readership; 2) *recover* the documentation or dissemination of the overlooked, disengaged, and ignored history and life experiences of peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants; and 3) *construct* new goals for research undertaken, *deconstruct* what is taught, by whom, for whom, and how it is taught, and *reconstruct* new paradigms and assumptions governing research on peoples of primary African origin and their descendants (Van Horne 2007; Cole 2004).

### **Schools of Thought in Africology**

There are two schools of thought in Africology: 1) Culture and Society and 2) Political Economy. Culture and Society argues that explanations of and solutions for the Black condition revolve around culture and psychology, whereas Political Economy argues explanations of and solutions to the Black condition revolve around economic relations or structure. I first cover how scholars in both schools have thought about the Black condition

and then engage in a discussion on the ways in which more recent theories on the colonality of power offer a more comprehensive interpretation of the Black condition.

### **Culture and Society Tradition**

In the first Africological objective to discover— formal introduction to the intellectual establishment and its readership—scholars in the Culture and Society tradition have talked about slavery in a way that documented the experiences of both Africans and the ensuing African-American culture that developed as a result of enslavement. Michael A. Gomez (1998) expands on the discussion of African retentions as cultural survival in his work, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Gomez uses primary and secondary literature of both Africans and Americans to document the transformation of Africans into African-Americans. Centering on the experience of Africans who were kidnapped and sent to the colonial and antebellum American South, Gomez traces their collective identity and their efforts to move from ethnicity to race (Gomez 1998, 4). The subject of the Middle Passage is explored in great detail throughout Charles Johnson's (1990) novel, the *Middle Passage*. Set in 1830, the novel offers an interesting fictional historical account of the slave narrative. The novel centers on the protagonist, freedman Rutherford Calhoun, who inadvertently boards an illegal slaver ship in an effort to escape being blackmailed into marriage to Isadora Bailey. Both of these works looks at the subject of slavery from the perspective of culture and the psychological impact that experience had on African-American culture as a whole and the protagonist in *Middle Passage* in particular. Within this tradition, scholars sought to discover retentions and experiences within the African diaspora to introduce those humanizing experiences to the intellectual establishment and its readership.

For the second Africological objective to recover knowledge pertaining to peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants, scholars in this tradition have addressed the issue of the condition of Black women in depth. Black women writers have addressed this issue extensively in their documentation of Black women from the point of view of Black women. Gloria T. Hull and Barbara Smith's discussion of the growth of Black Women's Studies began with the acknowledgement that "Like any politically disenfranchised group, Black women could not exist consciously until we began to name ourselves. The growth of Black women's studies is an essential aspect of that process of naming" (2001, 144). Much like Black Studies as a whole, the work of various Black women writers acknowledges the stereotypes and multitude of oppressions that affect Black women's lives. Hull and Smith describe Black women as having an "embattled position" and "African American women have been historically portrayed in literature, scholarship and media as the intellectual and moral inferior to [the] 'destructive white male habit of categorization'" (2001, 144-145). The authors also recognize that there is racial, sexual, and class oppression that systematically denies Black women's existence. Mary Helen Washington concurs with these sentiments in saying,

Stereotypes about black women abound like weeds in this society. It is common practice to make slick, easy generalizations about them. The white media have been in on the act for a long time, of course. . . . People other than the black woman herself try to define who she is, what she is supposed to look like, act like, and sound like. And most of these creations bear very little resemblance to real, live black women. (Washington 1975, ix)

In their descriptions of the positionality concerning black women, these Black women scholars are recovering the very existence of black women and their stake in society. The scholarly inquiry into the subject area of Black women is in itself Africological in the



recovery of a figuratively nonexistent and distorted existence. Washington's contention throughout her text was to recover the stories of Black women writers that have been excluded from literary anthologies—black and white. She addresses this by presenting a collection of short stories by and about black women that will present a more appropriate lens to explore and depict the lives of Black women. Washington stresses the recovering of Black women writers:

It is incredible that major black women novelists such as Toni Morrison, Nell Larson, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks, Dorothy West, Ann Petry, Paule Marshall, Alice Walker, and Margaret Walker are almost never taught in college-level American literature courses and rarely mentioned in women's-studies courses. (1975, ix)

Washington's effort to recover these literary works, as well as to recirculate and disseminate such writers' works, is Africological in her valuing of the works as a matter of cultural survival. The author's description of the importance of Black women writers and their stories demonstrates the urgency in the need to address this issue,

So many countless generations have been deprived of the insight and sensitivity of these writers. . . . What is important about the black woman writer is her special and unique vision of the black woman...The black woman writer has looked at the black woman from an insider's point of view and tried to [recover] what happened to the black woman ...That these writers have firsthand knowledge of their subject ought to be enough to command attention and respect...This, then, became the focus of this collection: the black woman as seen from the special angle of the black woman writer. (Washington 1975, x)

Washington's recognition that the Black woman writer offers a special and unique vision demonstrates the descriptive aspect that recovers Black women's stories from the point of view of Black women.

Hull and Smith argue, “Our legacy as chattel, as sexual slaves as well as forced laborers, would adequately explain why most Black women are, to this day, far away from centers of academic power” (2001, 145). Despite the aforementioned disempowered position of Black women, Hull and Smith explain that Black women have created and maintained their own intellectual tradition and have embodied a creative, intellectual spirit coupled with the practical ability to make something out of nothing. Lastly, “In a totally antagonistic setting. . . have tried to keep [their] own visions clear and have passed on the most essential kind of knowledge, that which enabled [them] to survive” (Hull and Smith 2001, 145-146). Hull and Smith prove Africological in their recovering of Black women through Black Women’s Studies, which serves a descriptive function by presenting Black women’s lives and experiences from the point of view of Black women.

The third Africological objective—to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct—is addressed through scholars in this school of thought focusing on the restoration of identity and self-esteem. Their efforts address the thrust to construct new goals for research, deconstruct what and for whom it is taught, and reconstruct new paradigms and assumptions governing the research. In this fashion, scholars have made a concerted effort to position Black scholarship to advance the cultural survival of people of primarily African origin and their descendants. Michael Thelwell (1969) offers the perspective that “The black experience is not merely one of political and cultural oppression. . . . it also includes psychological and intellectual manipulation and control of African Americans by the dominant majority”(709). Scholars have studied issues such as education to understand one of the sources of oppression and to restore the identity of peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants.

Thelwell continues, “When Black students enter predominantly white institutions they are indoctrinated in a process of psychological and cultural suicide fostered by the covert racism and cultural chauvinism, which informs the intellectual and scholarly establishment” (1969, 706). The author attributes a large portion of the psychological and intellectual oppression to the system of indoctrination that is also known as the American educational system. By understanding this feature of oppression, Thelwell constructs new questions into the history and life experiences of African descended people being educated by and about people other than themselves. Carter G. Woodson (1972) speaks to this very process of indoctrination in his work *Mis-Education of the Negro*. Woodson documents the history of Negro education from the Reconstruction period forward to support the argument that others have improperly administered education to the detriment of black people.

No systematic effort toward change has been possible, for, taught the same economics, history, philosophy, literature and religion which have established the present code of morals, the Negro’s mind has been brought under the control of the oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man’s thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. (1972, xiii)

Echoing the views of Thelwell, Woodson attributes one of the major sources of oppression within the scope of the educational system. Woodson’s effort to study the educational system and the effect it had on the African-descended population is Africological because it reconstructs a psychological ailment from the point of view of an African descended-person. Woodson not only recognizes the effect the American education system had on himself, but his research possesses a unique lens to the sensitivity of a population that would not have otherwise been acknowledged.

This injustice will only be resolved when African Americans take ownership of creating the input and defining the outcome of education. The scholar resumes, “The education of any people should begin with themselves . . . no one can be thoroughly educated until he learns as much about the Negro as he knows about other people” (Woodson 1972, 32, 136). Woodson offers to reconstruct the African person’s sense of identity through the knowledge of self. Woodson proposes the advancement of racial education through the development of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to reexamine the fundamentals of education, religion, literature, and philosophy that had been instilled in them by the American educational system. This development reflects an Africological component through the ongoing study of cultural survival.

In Frantz Fanon’s 1952 work republished in 2008, *Black Skin, White Masks*, the scholar demonstrates the need to reconstruct the ways in which oppression affects the Martinician population psychologically. Fanon does this by diagnosing the psychological disorders that plague the Martinician population. He postulates that the people of color in Martinique suffer from Negrophobia, which is an inferiority complex and a “so-called” dependency complex. Negrophobia has its origins in the “collective unconscious” of Martinique that states that “black = ugliness, sin, darkness, and immorality,” while “everything that is opposite of this black behavior is white . . . the Antillean is a slave to this cultural imposition. After having been a slave to the white man, he enslaves himself” (2008, 169, 168). As such, the inferiority complex is the cognitive result of being socialized into a society that subscribes to the very psychological schema that is detrimental to one’s self-esteem.

Similar to Thelwell and Woodson, *Black Skin, White Masks* reconstructs the psychological aspect under which African descended people live. Fanon contends that there is a dependency complex that resulted from the 20 year span of the metropole department heads and school inspectors working in the colonies to desperately “make a white man out of the black man” and “in the end they give up and tell him: you have undeniably a dependency complex regarding the white man” (2008, 191). According to his interpretation of the dependency complex, the oppressed had no choice but to internalize the skewed sense of self as it was a part of their societal socialization from the schoolhouse to the home environment. Fanon’s work serves as a model in reconstructing those psychological effects of oppression that would not have been revealed had they not been from the point of view of a person of primarily African origin.

Most notably, Molefi Asante proposes a philosophical construct for the development of the entire field of African American Studies. In his seminal work, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, Asante defines Afrocentricity as “a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. In regards to theory, it is the placing of African people in the center of analysis of African phenomena” (Asante 2003, 2). Asante’s theory reconstructed a lens by which scholars can analyze peoples of primarily African descent and their descendants. Van Horne (2007) concurs,

Afrocentricity recenters Africa in the rise, growth and development of society and civilization globally; it repositions Africans and their descent as subjects rather than as mere objects in the evolution and revolution in ideas and societal structures from the Agrarian Age through the Information Age; and it redirects the consciousness of those who have, for whatever reason(s), marginalized Africa. (116)

In Africology, afrocentricity is thus of much corrective, restorative, and prescriptive value, paradigmatically pointing one in new directions vis-à-vis Africans and their descent over innumerable cross sections of historical time (Van Horne 2007, 116).

Similarly, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) conceptualize the Black condition in terms of racial theory. The authors argue to extend beyond previous racial theories that were shaped by existing race relations in any given historical period (Omi and Winant 1994, 11-12). The authors elucidate that previous racial theories have explained race and racial dynamics in the US by relying on one of three central categories: 1) ethnicity, 2) class, and 3) nation (11-12). Ethnicity theory emerged in the 1920s as a challenge to then predominant biologicistic and Social Darwinist concepts of race. Well into the mid-1960s, ethnicity theory was challenged by class- and nation- based paradigms of race (12). The class paradigm of race explain race by reference to economic processes (24). The nation-based analysis of Black oppression and resistance has informed minority-based political movements and analyzed the realities of racial separation and white supremacy (36). As such, Omi and Winant define “*racial formation* as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (55). Omi and Winant’s work is Africological in its effort to reconstruct how race and race relations are viewed in the US. Relatedly, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2010) expands on racial theory by developing the term “color-blind racism” to describe “a new racial ideology [that emerged] in the late 1960s” (16). According to Bonilla-Silva (2010), colorblind racism is framed by four dominant themes: (1) abstract liberalism, (2) biologization of culture, (3) naturalization of matters that reflect the effects of white supremacy, and (4) minimization of racism and discrimination. Whites articulate their race-related views when applying the

abstract liberalism frame by using elements of political liberalism (equal opportunity, meritocracy, equal rights) and economic liberalism (free market, competition, individuals' preferences, little government intervention) to rationalize racially unfair situations.

Biologization of culture is the racialized explanation of blacks' inferior status in United States as the result of their natural endowments or different cultural values.

Naturalization of matters that reflect the effects of white supremacy is essentially attributing all factors to the high levels of inequalities except the effects of white supremacy. Minimization of racism and discrimination is when racially apparent matters are explained as (1) aberrations committed by the few ignorant 'racists' who are still out there or (2) blacks' own doing. Colorblind racism essentially functions as a justification for racial inequality and the nonrecognition of white privilege (Bonilla-Silva 2010, 25-49).

Bonilla-Silva's work is Africological in furthering the restructuring of how race and race relations are viewed in the US. Scholars within the Culture and Society school of thought have thought about the Black condition in terms of culture and psychology which presented as Africological in the way they approached their studies to discover, recover, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge pertaining to peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants.

### **Political Economy Tradition**

According to the Political Economy school of thought, the Black condition can be explained through economic relations. Scholars in this tradition have addressed the first Africological objective to discover by explicitly linking slavery to the global economy to start. Beginning the discussion of slavery, scholar Eric Williams asserts "slavery was not

born of racism: rather racism was a consequence of slavery” (Williams 1994, 7). In his book *Capitalism & Slavery*, Williams attributes the condition of the African descended population as the result of an economic condition. The scholar concurs with Gibbon Wakefield’s assertion, “The reasons for slavery...are not moral but economical circumstances; they relate not to vice and virtue but to production” (Williams 1994, 6). The use of African unfree labor as the primary source of labor in the New World was due to failed attempts for sustained labor by American Indians and European indentured servants for various reasons.

Williams suggests, “A racial twist has thereby been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon” (1994, 7). The remainder of the text brings insight into the dynamics of the British involvement and benefit from slavery. Williams uses quantitative and qualitative data to accomplish an economic analysis of what makes the profitability margins for the British Empire and ties them to the slave trade and colonial extractions. Williams’s text is Africological in discovering the African’s contributions to the global economy as unfree laborers. Although the Africans did not individually gain measure from t industrialism, *Capitalism & Slavery* explicitly linked slavery to the global economy in ways that were unknown to the academy and its readership.

In like manner, Walter Rodney (1972) expands upon Williams’ premise in his text *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Rodney argues that underdevelopment is uneven human social development. He uses a comparison of the development of Europe to that of Africa as the primary way to explain underdevelopment. He builds upon Eric Williams’s economic analysis by applying a Marxist theoretical framework to understand and relate his claim. His work is Africological in his call to action for Africa to break from European



capitalism for cultural survival. Whereas Williams discovered how the British Empire directly benefitted from slavery, Rodney argued how Europe as a whole benefitted from unfree African labor. Such works prove Africological in discovering the contributions of Africans and their descendants to the global economy and introducing such a perspective to the intellectual establishment and its readership.

C.L.R. James (1963) also utilized a Marxist framework to document the history of the San Domingo colony and the subsequent Haitian Revolution. For James, the people of the San Domingo colony encompassed the following groups that played an evolving role in the Haitian Revolution: the planters (white elites/ big whites), the French bourgeoisies (French governmental representatives), the petit *blancs* (middle class/small whites), the mulattoes, the free people of color, the Black slaves, and the maroons. In this Marxist treatment of the San Domingo colony of France, James chronicles the constant struggle for political power, labor power, and freedom for each of the groups. Toussaint L'Ouverture brilliantly saw the weaknesses in France's power and maneuvered quite well in his strategies for insurrection. Since Haiti was excommunicated by most of the world's powers upon reaching independence from France and knowledge of the Haitian Revolution was virtually banned throughout the world, producing such a work was Africological in discovering and introducing the details of the historical event to the intellectual establishment and its readership.

Oliver Cromwell Cox (1964) believed that an understanding of capitalism was essential to a theory of race relations. *Capitalism as a System* was part of a series of research on capitalism beginning with attributing the genesis of the system to the two thirteenth century establishments located primarily in the Mediterranean and in the Baltic.

Thereafter, Holland emerged as a strong center and, finally, Britain emerged as well. Upon this final establishment of the system under Britain, “the whole world became integrated into an interdependent, rhythmic unity with a single major nucleus” (Cox 1964, 3).

Furthermore, within this established system that “reached its highest state of perfection between 1870 and the First World War,” several roles are played. He introduces the roles that the different nations/countries play in the international or “integral order” (Cox 1964, 4). Leaders, subsidiaries, progressives, dependent(s), and passives all play an integral part in the system of capitalism. This concept resembles the components of world systems theory in how many of these nation-states have since moved up or down in the ladder of roles since the 1960s when this book was written. Oliver Cox was Africological in discovering a global analysis of the Black condition to account for the economic structure in which African-descended folk lived.

For this tradition, scholars have fulfilled the second Africological objective to recover through their perspectives that add contributions to global history that had previously been overlooked, disengaged and ignored. In 1915, W.E.B. DuBois recovered African and African-American history from the racist interpretations of his contemporaries that claimed that Africa and its descendants did not contribute significantly to humanity and the global order of things. Rather, DuBois offered a treatment of human civilization that included a sophisticated description of pre-colonial Africa, countered arguments that African descended folks were naturally predisposed to being enslaved, and offered a narrative that countered the concept of pure races. Overall, DuBois’s *The Negro*, is Africological in recovering the disengaged African and African-American history.

Similar to C.L.R. James and Walter Rodney, St. Claire Drake and Horace Cayton (1945) in their work *The Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* conduct a study that traces the African American population in the Chicago metropolitan area from the 1830s to the twentieth century. The scholars accomplish this endeavor through a Marxist framework that tells a tale of the American class and caste system between historical actors such as native-born Europeans, foreign-born Europeans (encompassing the European laboring class, business class and employer class) and the African American population (inclusive of former slaves, fugitives and freedmen and freed women) conflicting in competition for space and class interests. Drake and Cayton's study is Africological through the process of recovering African-American history by documenting African-American migration to the Chicago area in particular and African-American urbanity in general.

Scholar Patricia Hill Collins recovers the condition of Black women with her political economic analysis of the controlling images of Black womanhood. The dominant ideology of the slave era fostered the creation of several interrelated, socially constructed controlling images of Black womanhood, each reflecting the dominant group's interest in maintaining Black women's subordination (Collins 2009, 79). Collins posits there are four predominate controlling images that constitute the "political economy of domination fostering Black women's oppression" (2009, 76). These "ideologies of domination" of Black womanhood are the stereotypical images mammy, matriarch, welfare mother, and the Jezebel.

The first controlling image applied to US Black women is that of the mammy—the faithful, obedient domestic servant. The mammy was created to justify the economic

exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women's longstanding restriction to domestic service. The second controlling image of Black womanhood is the matriarch—aggressive, unfeminine women who are “bad” mothers (Collins 2009, 82-83). While the mammy typifies the Black mother figure in white homes, the matriarch symbolizes the mother figure in Black homes (Collins 2009, 83). Collins asserts, “The Black matriarchy thesis argued that African-American women who failed to fulfill their traditional ‘womanly’ duties at home contributed to social problems in Black civil society” (Collins 2009, 83; Moynihan 1965). The matriarch is a symbol for bad Black motherhood where her necessary time away from home to provide for the household due to the instability of Black male gainful employment and presence is considered the contributing factor to their children's school failure.

The third controlling image is the welfare mother (Collins 2009, 86). Like the matriarch and mammy, it is created to justify gender and economic oppression. The image of the welfare mother provides ideological justifications for intersecting oppressions of race, gender, and class. The welfare mother is also considered a bad mother that, unlike the Matriarch, loathes the thought of working and is considered by the dominant group as a threat to political and economic stability. African-Americans can be racially stereotyped as being lazy by blaming Black welfare mothers for failing to pass on the work ethic (Collins 2009, 87).

Lastly, the fourth controlling image is the Jezebel—whore, “hoochie,” or “hoe.” The Jezebel is characterized as a sexually aggressive woman. This image is used to control Black women's sexuality. Collins contends, “Historical jezebels and contemporary ‘hoochies’ represent a deviant Black female sexuality” (Collins 2009, 89). As such, the Jezebel's

function to relegate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women provided a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by White men typically reported by Black slave women (Collins 2009, 89). With the development of the controlling images of Black womanhood analysis, Collins's work is Africological in recovering the condition of Black women that have been historically overlooked, disengaged and ignored by the intellectual establishment.

In the final Africological objective to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct, scholars in the Political Economy tradition have re-evaluated goals for research, for whom it benefits, and new paradigms and assumptions regarding people of primarily African origins and their descendants. In *Women, Race & Class*, Angela Y. Davis (1981) constructed a Marxist feminist approach to formulate a concise narrative about the complex relationship between race (white supremacy and anti-black sentiment), women (white women and the suffrage movement), and class (the bourgeoisie and the working class). The beginning of the book links the relationship between the anti-slavery movement and the inception of white women's rights. Davis notes, "During the pre-industrial era, the economy itself had been centered in the home and its surrounding farmland. . . . When manufacturing moved out of the home and into the factory, the ideology of womanhood began to raise the wife and mother as ideals...they were destined to become appendages to their men, servants to their husbands" (1981, 32). In the efforts of the two rival manifestations of capitalism (the South and the North) to reconcile, it was at the expense of the lowest in society. "Northern capitalists sought economic control over the entire nation. Their struggle against the Southern slavocracy did not therefore mean that they supported the liberation of Black men or women as human beings" (74).

The politics of it all were to the benefit of the bourgeois class. And by bourgeois class, it is meant white men and their female extensions known as their wives. If the owning class had to use racism to get the working class whites to unite against their interests, so be it. Middle class women used the analogy of slavery to resist the oppressive nature of marriage while the working class white women resisted the low wages and poor working conditions of factories. "The anti-slavery movement offered women of middle class the opportunity to prove their worth according to standards that were not tied to their role as wives and mothers"(39). Although the women's movement started in unison with the anti-slavery movement, there was a shift in its agenda for the lack of recognition that the "white worker in the North, his or her status as 'free' laborer, notwithstanding, was no different from the enslaved 'worker' in the South: both were victims of economic exploitation" (65). Black women's leadership was spawned as the anti-Black violence movement because the white women's suffrage movement silenced lynching and violence. *Women, Race, & Class* presents itself as a model for understanding the Black condition by constructing new goals for research. Davis's work illuminates the Political Economy tradition that highlights how the economy impacts the Black condition.

Scholar Cedric Robinson (1983) deconstructs the ways in which Black consciousness is viewed. Robinson segments his text based on the two programs for revolutionary change: 1) Marxism and 2) Black Radicalism. The scholar locates the beginnings of the black radical tradition with first the slave rebellions across the world system including Haiti, the British West Indies, North America and Brazil. Thereafter, Robinson highlights the need to correct the entire Western "scientific," "academic," and armchair knowledge about peoples of African descent. Robinson then profiled each

generation of revolutionaries that participated in Black radicalism as an African “negation of Western civilization” (Robinson 1983, 73). In true Political Economy fashion, Robinson complicates the discussion by examining how each generation of revolutionaries responded to the global system for its freedom.

Aime Césaire’s 1955 text, republished in 2000, *Discourse on Colonialism*, is credited as the “third world manifesto” (Kelley 1999). Césaire’s text presents itself as a model for new paradigms and assumptions as it contributed to an international movement in Black consciousness. While American poets and writers were speaking of “Black Power,” Césaire was contributing to the development and fortification of the “Negritude” movement. According to Césaire, the savage act of colonialism “works to decivilize the colonizer” (Césaire 2000, 35). Because of the violence that has to take place to “civilize” a territory, the colonizer in its humane form becomes inhumane. The scholar elaborates that human contact is reduced to “relations of domination and submission” that translates into “a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production” (Césaire 2000, 42). These social relations are thus not conducive for one to be considered a human with natural needs and emotions. He postulates that,

‘Colonization= thingification’ [which in turn drains] societies of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out. . . . [and] natural economies that have been disrupted—harmonious and viable economies adapted to the indigenous population—about food crops destroyed, malnutrition permanently induced, agricultural development oriented solely toward the benefit of the metropolitan countries; about the looting of products, the looting of raw materials. (Césaire 2000, 42-43)

Césaire’s acknowledgement of the way in which the economy has shifted at the expense of natural human development is Africological in its influence on the international Black

consciousness movement to reconstruct new paradigms and assumptions from a cultural deficiency paradigm to understanding the societal influences on people of primary African origins. In sum the Political Economy school of thought has addressed the Africological objectives to discover, recover, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge pertaining to peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants by looking at the structures in which they live and how those structures influence their lives. Overall, the two schools of thought that make up the Africological tradition helps me understand those questions of culture (Culture and Society) and those questions of structure (Political Economy) as they relate to the Black community. Going forward, I will engage a discussion of how coloniality helps me answer my research question.

### **Decoloniality**

Although the two schools of Africological thought help to answer both questions of culture and structure combined, it is necessary to advance the field by applying a theory that reconciles this dichotomy of culture versus structure. Henry Louis Gates and Manning Marable (2006) in "A Debate on Activism in Black Studies," calls for Black Studies to "continually change itself to understand contemporary black America" by "interpreting the new socioeconomic, cultural, and global forces at work rapidly restructuring African-American communities as well as Africa and the black diaspora" (99). Decoloniality refers to a critical theoretical and epistemological framework that seeks to provide a critique of Eurocentrism from the perspective and lens of those who have historically been marginalized and oppressed, globally. Henceforward, coloniality as a concept recognizes race is structure rather than superstructure. Scholars of coloniality understand race as the



organizing principle of other forms of social classification and thus this theoretical intervention provides particular clarity to the analysis of this data (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2005 Grosfoguel 2003, 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). As such, coloniality illuminates three points of theoretical distinction: 1) Racial meaning is one of dehumanization; 2) Coloniality locates race in the historical project of colonialism; and 3) These racial meanings survive colonial administrations.

In utilizing the decolonial framework I am reconciling the false dichotomy of culture versus structure within the Africological tradition. The false dichotomy inhibits the way we understand the Black condition and by bridging this gap we have a more sophisticated understanding of the Black condition. Decoloniality is useful for answering these larger questions of power, representation, and race in the African-American community by employing the coloniality of power and knowledge to illuminate the economic and political context in which African-American museums operate. Further, decoloniality is a paradigm that will advance the Africological objective to restructure knowledge pertaining to people of primarily African origin and their descendants. In line with the future prospects of Black Studies as postulated by Gates and Marable (2006), decoloniality helps to understand race as a global concept and not just a symptom of the economic system. The authors note, “Black Studies is challenged to raise hard new questions about the meaning of race in American life” (Gates and Marable 2006, 100). Although scholars such as Marable, Omi and Winant have emphasized race as a concept, decoloniality treats race as the constitutive element that emerged in unison with the modern world system. In this manner, it solves the problem of binaries and allows for understanding local particulars as well as global phenomenon in a nonreductionist way.

## **Data Collection**

I employ qualitative methods of data collection, specifically, ethnographic methods in the form of 1) semi-structured and structured interviews, 2) participant observation and 3) visitor observation study. Combined, these methods triangulate to ensure the validity of findings. These methods will be useful in observing the museum patrons' response(s) to the museum's programs and exhibits.

### **Semi-Structured and Structured Interviews**

In conducting the actual interviews, I did not utilize the "objective"—distancing—approach as traditional social science would have me do. Instead, I engaged in transactive and proactive dialogue (Dunbar, Rodriguez, and Parker 2002) and creative interviewing which is in essence a mutual exchange of dialogue and disclosure that encourages elaborative responses on the part of the interviewer. This process is to ensure that my presentation of their responses uncovers their authentic voices (Dunbar, et. al. 2002) and includes them into the human story as agents of knowledge (Hill Collins 2009). By eliminating distancing from the interview, I am humanizing the interaction and thereby reconstructing the assumptions about the way in which one should conduct data collection.

The "objective" goal in research and analyses that have previously been done as it relates to black women and men using positivist methodological approaches requires the researcher to throw an "empty perceptual space" (Carroll 2008) between themselves and what he or she is researching. Positivist methodological approaches are problematic for researching persons of color. This requires the researcher to shelve their identity as they seek to conduct objective research. The reality of the situation is that the environment that

we live in shapes us all, and eliminating the “empty perceptual space” would require self-disclosure on the part of the researcher to facilitate trust and rapport (A. Young 2004). This will put the participants at ease about the outsider positionality that they may perceive about me.

### **Participant Observation**

Moreover, the participant observation will allow for the assessment of the museums’ programs and exhibits against measures of the Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence (Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums 2012). The Alliance Professional Networks, including the Curators Committee (CurCom), the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE), and the Education Committee (EdCom), developed the Standards for Museum Exhibitions and the Indicators of Excellence. By exhibit, it is meant: “The localized grouping of objects and interpretive materials that form a cohesive unit within a gallery” (Dean 2002, 3). The standards and indicators were designed to represent the core requirements for museums and to be adaptable to museums of all types and sizes. They are used in the Alliance’s Accreditation and Museum Assessment Programs, and other discipline-specific standards and assessments across the field; they inform the Annual Excellence in Exhibition Competition recognizing outstanding achievement in the exhibition format from all types of institutions offering exhibitions to the public (Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums 2012,1).

The Standards for Museum Exhibitions outlines seven major categories of what constitutes effectiveness for each category: (1) audience awareness, (2) evaluation, (3) content, (4) collections, (5) interpretation/communication, (6) design and production, and (7) ergonomics (Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums 2012,2-5). I use these standards of excellence in my descriptions of the exhibits.

Indicators of Excellence are the ways in which exhibitions achieve excellence by surpassing standards of practice or by “introducing innovations that stretch boundaries of accepted practice” (Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums 2012,5). As such, specific indicators of exhibition excellence include the following: (1) has innovative exhibit design, (2) offers a new perspective or new insight on a topic, (3) presents new information, synthesizes and presents existing knowledge and/or collection materials in a surprising or provocative way, (4) includes audience voices in a new or innovative way reflected through design or content, (5) is particularly beautiful, exceptionally capable of engendering a personal, emotional response, and (6) evokes responses from viewers that are evidence of a transforming experience including but not limited to: “It was haunting.” “I’ll never see XXX in the same way again” “It sent shivers down my spine.” “I finally got it!” (Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums 2012,5).

### **Unobtrusive Visitor Observation**

In addition, the unobtrusive visitor observation study enable museum practitioners to evaluate the effectiveness their exhibits and programming, more specifically, the effect of their curatorial intent on the patrons’ perception or learning outcomes. Conducting unobtrusive visitor observation(s) will provide the raw data to enrich the study and privilege the responses of the patrons to balance my interpretive observations from

participant observation and field notes. I will also take field-notes and keep a reflexivity journal as I am doing ethnography.

Andrew Pekarik notes in “Studying Visitors and Museums Better,” “the aim of studying visitors should be to deeply understand other people, to respond to their needs, to make evident the respect we feel for them, and to express the ideal of service that motivates our work” (2007, 131). As such, museum practitioners utilize this method to get a better understanding of their patronage in order to provide a more relevant experience for them. I employ this method because I too desire to understand how the visitor will experience exhibits and programming at my selected sites.

Moreover, Pekarik asserts the two impulses beyond a visitor observation study is to describe the audience in terms of demographic characteristics and to evaluate the museum’s exhibits and programming to determine how the contact with the program or exhibit has affected visitors (Pekarik 2007, 132).

When conducting the fieldwork, I will note the visitor behaviors observed including but not limited to: reading labels (bending to read, on tiptoes to read, being read to, adjusting glasses, sitting on haunches to read); looking at graphics only; looking at objects in cases; talking to other members in the group; manipulating a video or flip or other interactive exhibit element.

In an effort to have my research become a more practical means for the promotion of the interests and advancement of African-descended people throughout the Diaspora (Van Horne 2007, 110-117), I plan to share with the staff from my dissertation sites my assessment of their exhibits and programming to use as a source of evaluation at their discretion. Similar to most institutions that are made up of primarily people of African-

descent, these staff members may lack the sufficient funding to outsource program and exhibit evaluations.

### **Sites for Data Collection**

I will collect data from two sites: (1) the Houston Museum of African American Culture in Houston, Texas and (2) the Tubman African- American Museum in Macon, Georgia. I chose these sites for their potential for offering a unique perspective within the context of the American South. As a part of the ethnic museums category, these museum sites are particularly fruitful for providing a lens outside of the major museum narratives that have historically marginalized and classified African and African-American history as primitive or in temporary exhibits. From their inception, the epistemic location of these museums positions them to be critical of the hegemonic perspectives in how they represent the subaltern perspective. Studying African-American museums will serve as a way to dismantle the power relations and conceptions of knowledge in museums.

Additionally, I would like to document lesser-known museums for their overall contribution to African-American life and history. The unobtrusive visitor observation study at each museum will entail observing a total of (50) visitors at one of their permanent exhibits over a period of extended stay. Additionally, I will also conduct participant observation and ethnographic interviews at the other exhibits and programs outside of the chosen exhibit to conduct the visitor observation study to enrich and diversify findings.

## **Data Compilation**

When transcribing the fieldwork data, I will include both my reflexive journal and my field-notes into the analysis. I will strive toward capturing the authentic voices of the participants by acknowledging all of the possible social and historical influences that they may have on myself as a researcher and on the participants themselves (Dunbar, et. al. 2002).

## **Methodology**

As Africologists, we are trained to:

Discover, recover, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledges pertaining to... the life histories and life prospects of peoples of primary African origin and their descent transgenerationally, transmillennially, and universally. (Van Horne 2007, 105-106)

I intend to address this model of research by constructing more analysis of African-American museums in particular and understanding their value in public memory at large. Further, this project will elucidate the ways in which social institutions impact racial identity and development.

Feminist scholar Donna Haraway's (1988) contends that our knowledges are always situated; the reality of the situation is that the environment that we live in shapes us all, and it would require self-disclosure on the part of the researcher to facilitate trust and rapport (Young 2004). Further, in decolonial theory, Grosfoguel confirms that "the disembodied and unlocated neutrality and objectivity of ego-politics of knowledge is a western myth" (2009, 15). Patricia Hill Collins concurs: " Because researchers have widely differing values, experiences, and emotions, genuine [positivist] science is thought to be

unattainable unless all human characteristics except rationality are eliminated from the research process” (2009, 255).

This project will employ an interpretivist framework over positivism—which seeks to “reduce ideas and social phenomena into small categories and variables that can be measured” (McDougal III 2014, 45). Instead of beginning the study with a definitive hypothesis, I intend to generate a theory or at the very least, initiate a discussion, from my data collected. Eliminating the empty perceptual space will put the participants at ease about the outsider positionality that they may perceive about me. Omitting the distance between the participant and myself is an appropriate description for how my Africological interpretivist framework will eliminate the “objective” notion in positivist methodological approaches.

### **Limitations**

The scope of this study is to survey two museums to discuss the themes that will surface as they relate to interpretive frameworks and exhibition narratives. I will not have the resources to visit all of the African-American museums in the United States; therefore my study will not be a comprehensive evaluation. Other limitations will include budgetary and time constraints as I have only three to six months to complete this data collection.

### **Overview of Chapters**

This dissertation will be divided into four chapters: (1) Introduction; (2) Cases Studies: Institutional Development, Institutional Ethnography and the Data; (3) Data Analysis & Results; and (4) Summary of Findings and Conclusion. This dissertation seeks to



understand how African-American museums' exhibits help individuals gain their sense of racial identity through public memory. In an era where the United States is supposedly "post-racial" African-American museums are flourishing. As institutions serving an important role in preserving the collective memory of African-American people in the US, African-American museums evoke questions of representation within the larger US narrative that confirm the persistent saliency of race in society, and therefore continue to have a public function in maintaining and developing a racial African-American identity (Jackson 2012; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Wilson 2012; Golding 2009).

In Chapter One I introduce my research that is focused on the following question: What impacts do African-American museums have on their patrons? Thereafter, I survey canonical works in the Africological tradition that have looked at questions around Black consciousness and the Black condition. Then, I engage in an overview of the decolonial framework and the ways in which it helps me answer my research question. Chapters Two and Three examines the institutional development of, governance and maintenance of, standards for excellence of, and visitation data results for two museums: The Houston Museum of African-American Culture in Houston, Texas and the Tubman African-American Museum in Macon, Georgia. Background data such as the history and governance of each museum will help to contextualize the visitor's experience. I present such data in tabular form (i.e., quantifying the data), which makes the data easier to access and assess.

In Chapter Four, first I explore the cultural, political and economic context in which these museums operate. Second, I utilize the Africological tradition to discuss the ways in which these two museums have impacted the patrons' thinking within this context. Lastly, I utilize the theoretical concept of "coloniality" to analyze these themes and situate them in

relation to a longer trajectory of the Black Intellectual tradition and longstanding African-American political interventions. Chapter Five presents the summary of findings as well as a discussion of African-American enslavement, historical trauma and museums as alternative spaces for minorities.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Case Study # 1: Houston Museum of African-American Culture (HMAAC)**

This chapter examines the institutional development of, governance and maintenance of, standards for excellence of, and visitation data results for the Houston Museum of African-American Culture in Houston, Texas. Background data such as the history and governance of this museum will help to contextualize the visitor's experience. Presenting such data in tabular form (i.e. quantifying the data) makes the data easier to access and assess. My objective is to analyze the data in tabular form presented here in the next chapter using the decolonial framework to help me answer my research question in two ways: 1) to explain the political and economic context these museums operate in and 2) to understand the impact the museums have on the patrons' thinking within this political and economic context. Since the museums' exhibits contain African-American history and culture, visitors are able to interact with this subject matter in multisensory ways. By recording comments overheard and conducting a few exit interviews, I categorize themes from the data to determine the impact, which will be discussed in full detail in the data analysis chapter.

#### **History of the Museum**

The Houston Museum of African-American Culture (HMAAC) in Houston, Texas, was formally organized in 1999 by the administration of Houston's first Black mayor, Lee P. Brown. The museum's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), John Guess Jr., stated, "In [Brown's] second term when he could, much like Obama, do whatever he wanted to do. . . . he called for. . . an African-American museum and an African-American archival library" (2015). The

museum has been in existence since 2000, holding its exhibits and programming at various venues around the city; however, it was housed in a designated building under the leadership of the current CEO in 2009. John Guess Jr. explains,

Part of his [Former Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown] building up this cultural landscape or supporting a cultural landscape, which is to say, we need an African-American museum and an African-American archival library. This city [the City of Houston] is not a great city without our [African-American population] inclusion. And so the African-American archival library is part of the library system here, it's at the Gregory School...a school that educated freed slaves. And that was funded with city money. And then this museum, the Houston Museum of African-American Culture, was to be funded by private donations, private, corporate, foundation, etc., individual funds. We just never got them! And that's why I was called in in 2009 to lead this effort because of my contacts and the wherewithal to make this a tangible effort that we're now transitioning into a sustainable one. (2015)

Therefore, in 2009, John Guess Jr. was commissioned to find a building and start the exhibitions and programming. The existing building was purchased in 2009; the exhibits and programming were completed at other cultural institutions, such as Houston's Museum of Fine Arts and the Menil Collection. The Houston Museum of African-American Culture opened its doors to the public in February of 2012, offering its full series of annual exhibitions and programming. The museum's initial name was the Houston African-American Arts and Cultural Center, which John Guess Jr. changed to the Houston Museum of African-American Culture. He also changed its mission. According to him,

Okay so one of the things when I got in charge of this project...I changed...the mission, and...because our mission mirrored other institutions, African-American institutions in that it focused primarily on African-Americans in a particular city, and it was, in most cases historical...And so I changed this one to being a contemporary museum that uh was African-American, and to the extent that on any given day you'll always see African-Americans but as a museum that we would be the museum we wanted other museums to be. And so we featured other genders, or rather, other races and ethnicities. Our primary goal is to have discussion on, as a contemporary museum, is to have discussion of issues of our time. And those discussions, generally, have revolved around women, have revolved around LGBT, have revolved around Africa, have revolved around Latin America, and have

revolved around African-Americans. And we, as a contemporary museum, we've done symposia...we've, we pride ourselves on exhibitions that make people talk, and our community comes in to these, to the exhibitions that we do and they talk. And somehow out of that talk we hope that people begin to talk about making things better and solving the problems that exist for us today. (Guess Jr. 2015)

According to Guess, HMAAC's original mission was based on historical interpretations of African-American art and artifacts. HMAAC's new mission is to collect, conserve, explore, interpret, and exhibit the material and intellectual culture of Africans and African-Americans in Houston, the state of Texas, the Southwest and the African Diaspora for current and future generations.

The museum is open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On Thursdays, the museum does not close until 8:00 p.m. It is closed on Sundays because the museum doubles as Galilee Community Baptist Church that holds worship services at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and bible study at 6:00 p.m. In disclosing the dual purpose for the building, the CEO says, "Because it's the Black community!" Although the admission prices on the front door are listed as five dollars for adults and three dollars for children and seniors, visitors are informed that admission is free once the staff greets them. The Houston Metropolitan demographics are as follows: forty-four percent Latino/a, twenty-six percent Euro-American, twenty-three percent African-American, six percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and one percent other racial and ethnic backgrounds (US Census Bureau 2012). The number of annual visitors is 30,000 on average.

## **The Museum's Online Presence**

An online presence is the museum's point of first contact with many of its visitors. As a potential visitor, my first step is to look up information about the museum such as hours of operation, admission prices and address. HMAAC has a website as well as a Facebook page and Twitter account. Its website content contains information about the mission, staff, hours of operation, current exhibitions and upcoming events. HMAAC's Facebook page has 8,048 likes, 4,545 visits recorded, and 518 people talking about it. It is rated four point six stars out of five by reviews from 140 Facebook users. The Facebook page was last updated in November 2016 discussing events, guests and exhibitions. Its Twitter page has 4,154 tweets, 1,227 followers, and 2,930 likes. HMAAC is not mentioned explicitly on the City of Houston's website; however, it is mentioned on two of the referred sites from the Cultural Affairs Office: [artshound.com](http://artshound.com), a service of Houston Arts Alliance, and the website for the Houston Museum District.

## **The Museum Visit**

The museum is located in the museum district of the Houston metropolitan area. Upon my arrival, I noticed there is signage in the immediate four-block radius indicating the museum's location and in the front of the museum posted in the grass. Parking is free and located in the lot on the left side of the museum building. There is also street parking available. When I walked over to the entrance from the parking lot I noticed the building's exterior is white stucco with modern architecture. The left side of the building is a dome with multiple, large, one-way mirror window panels overlooking the museum's parking lot. The right side is a traditional rectangular shape. Approaching the front door of the museum there is a banner hanging on the left side of the building marketing its current exhibit. The

museum front is entirely tinted glass with the museum's logo written atop the entrance doors. To the right of the entrance doors are the gallery hours and admission prices.

When entering the building I see the admission's desk with HMAAC merchandise on display. Next to the admission desk on the right is a donation box with a sign saying DONATIONS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. The senior docent/curatorial assistant greets me with friendly hospitality. He is dressed business casual. After introductions, I am asked to fill out the sign-in sheet located on top the admission desk. Other items on the admission desk included the Houston Museum District Association pamphlet on the left, flyers advertising HMAAC's film series on the right, and an acrylic sign holder advertising a local catering company on the far right corner of the desk. On the wall directly behind the admission desk is the title label for the current exhibit: ABOLITIONISTS: Different Eyes Seeing the Same Reality. When I was done signing in, the senior docent gave me an overview of the ABOLITIONISTS exhibit on display and the flow of it. In a friendly southern drawl, he instructed to visit the Bert Long Jr. gallery to the left of the atrium area first, then on to the Main gallery whose entrance is along the left wall of the Video gallery, and finally to view the looping clip in the Video gallery last.

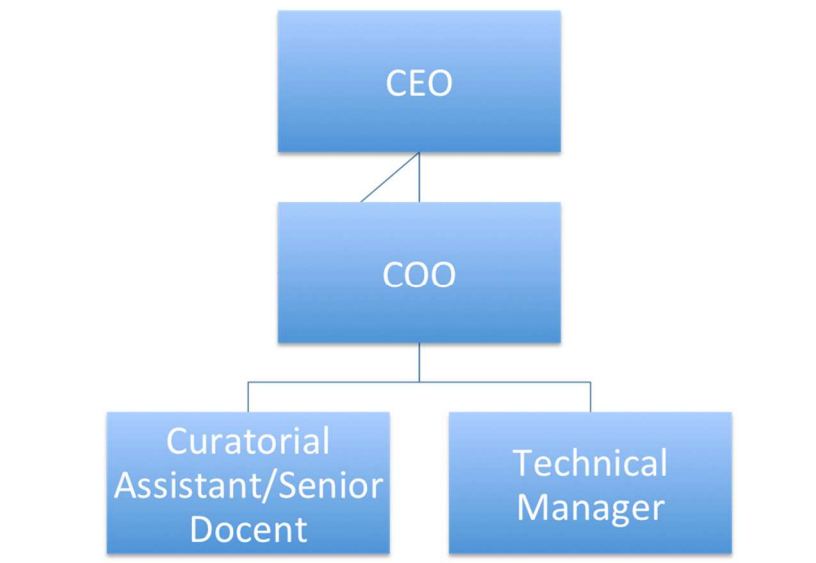
The museum has four exhibit spaces: the Main gallery, Bert Long Jr. gallery, the Video gallery, and Masterpiece gallery. The Video gallery always has a video component looping with chairs for the visitor to sit and view. The Bert Long Jr. gallery features local artists four times a year. The ABOLITIONISTS exhibit utilized three of the galleries: the first exhibit was the Bert Long, Jr. exhibit featuring editorial cartoons; the second was the Ti-Rock Moore exhibit in the Main gallery; and the third was the looping video excerpt of Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren's, "Getting to the Point" speech in the Video

gallery. Taken together, all three components reflected the ABOLITIONISTS' theme of Euro-Americans seeing and acknowledging the lived reality of being African American in America.

### **Governance and Management**

The museum is owned by the City of Houston, which formally organized it in 1999. HMAAC has a board of directors, chief executive officer (CEO), chief operating officer (COO), curatorial assistant/senior docent, and technical manager. The board of directors governs at the top of the hierarchy administering general policy. Chief Executive Officer, John Guess Jr. manages the organization, which has the authority to develop and administer policy and programs, spend funds, hire people, and raise money. The Chief Operating Officer, TaShon Thomas, is second-in-command and the main operations person to pay the museum's expenses, monitor the scheduling of events, maintain the logistics, oversee the Technical Manager and Curatorial Assistant/Senior Docent, and ensure that the facility is in good order. As disclosed by the COO, although the hierarchy is there, because the staff is so small the division of labor ends up being circular—everyone does everything.





### 1. Audience Awareness

*The exhibition is developed with an articulated understanding of the intended audiences' prior knowledge, interests, learning styles, attitudes, or expectations about the topic and the experiences planned for visitors.*

In an effort to understand how the staff develops its exhibits, it is necessary to ask if there is a target audience. The CEO responds, "The target audience are people who see culture as part of their transformation and upliftment, so that can be any number of people. So our target audience in Houston are primarily low to moderate income. . . . That could be anywhere from twelve to seventy" (Guess, Jr. 2015). When asked about HMAAC's target audience, the Curatorial Assistant and Senior Docent adds, "People who are curious about another culture" (Dominic Clay 2015). As such, when they select artists and exhibits to bring in they have those factors in mind. As the CEO would say, " Quality. Now. And something to say"(Guess, Jr. 2015). That said, when they develop exhibits, they determine a

particular impact they would like to have on the visitor as opposed to targeting particular populations.

## 2. Evaluation

*Evaluation studies are conducted during development and/or after opening the exhibition to understand its impact on audiences in relation to the project's goals.*

There were no formal evaluation studies used to develop the exhibition on ABOTLITIONISTS. The museum primarily used its own criteria for choosing the exhibits they like to bring in. Furthermore, they utilize reviews from local and national press to determine their next exhibit. In line with their contemporary mission, they are constantly seeking works that reflect, "What's going on today. . . . Our exhibitions are based on contemporary phenomenon, what's going on now" (Guess, Jr. 2015). Additionally, the entire staff also frequently interacts with their patrons in a very personable manner that reveals topics that visitors care about.

## 3. Content

*Content is thoroughly researched and vetted for accuracy, relevance to exhibition theme/s, and the current state of topic knowledge.*

The content of the exhibit titled, "ABOLITIONISTS: Different Eyes Seeing the Same Reality," consisted of three components, all of which were curated to convey the big idea that "non-black eyes [that] see the same injustice [as] seen by African-Americans" (Houston Museum of African American Culture 2015). As previously mentioned, the ABOLITIONISTS exhibit utilized three of the four galleries: the exhibit featuring editorial cartoons of Clay Bennett was located in Bert Long, Jr. gallery as the first stop; the second stop was the Ti-

Rock Moore exhibit located in the Main gallery; and the third stop was the looping clip of Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren's "Getting to the Point" speech located in the Video gallery. Per the docent's instructions to visit the Bert Long Jr. gallery first, I viewed the Clay Bennett editorial cartoons in the Bert Long Jr. gallery featuring commentary on contemporary US race relations including poverty, oppression, the Confederate flag, the church shooting in Charleston, SC, and police brutality. The 12-15 cartoons enlarged on poster board were very pointed commentary that made me laugh out loud and ponder deeply on the content. The editorial cartoons of Clay Bennett displaying the sharp satire and humor around race relations in America was very relatable to visitors because it did not require too much reading but a sense of humor.

My next stop in the Main gallery featured Ti-Rock Moore's raw and critical interpretation of race relations using some unique objects such as a crucifix, a basketball, a gold chain, and a plastic teacup set among others. One would assume that such graphic depictions of race relations would have been produced by one who had experienced racism. Ti-Rock Moore utilized mixed media heavily to convey her messages that critique how the federal government handled the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, American consumerism, the prison industrial complex, stereotypes, racial profiling, and the murders of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, among other topics in the recent events that ignited the Black Lives Matter movement. Further, the mixed media pieces contained in Ti-Rock Moore's exhibit were as common as a basketball and a gold chain that worked to create an image to convey her theme. The objects selected were everyday objects seen in our society but together they formed an exhibit carefully crafted by the artists to reveal her theme.

My last stop was to view the looping clip in the Video gallery showing Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, discussing the three historical injustices to African Americans: violence, disenfranchisement, and the systematic stripping of wealth. Further, Warren offers commentary on solutions to address these issues in our time. The video was well suited to engage audiences in this day and age because we live in a highly technical social media age. I thought the video component was a nice touch to engage audiences with the content desired. I spent about an hour and a half in the exhibit and roughly five to ten minutes at each object in the Main gallery and fifteen to twenty seconds at each cartoon in the Bert Long Jr. gallery, and I watched the thirty-five minute video in full.

#### 4. Collections

*The selection and presentation of objects furthers the intellectual content of the exhibition.*

The museum's curatorial assistant disclosed, "Our purpose is not to archive or keep a steady collection we own. Our mission is to bring national works here to be shown" (Clay 2015). Therefore some of the pieces, if not most, that HMAAC does have in its possession were donated by some of the artists to show appreciation. As such HMAAC operates as a non-collecting institution dedicated to presenting the best and most exciting international, national, and regional artists, exhibitions, collections, and film series with subject matter pertaining to or about people of primary African descent. Since nothing is ever on permanent display, they have no concurrent conservation issues pertaining to their permanent collection. Further, with the collections they do bring in, their galleries are equipped for climate control. Security measures are taken by the staff's presence during business hours and the buildings alarm system during the afterhours period. In regards to

the objects for the ABOLITIONISTS exhibit, the Ti-Rock Moore exhibit was on loan from the artist; the Clay Bennett cartoons were blown-up and placed on poster board along with the licensing permission from the artists and the video was taken from the C-SPAN public archive. In sum, ABOLITIONISTS was a curated collection of two traveling exhibits and a public video that addressed the African-American injustice as seen by Euro-Americans theme.

## 5. Interpretation/Communication

*The information/message of the exhibition is clear and coherent. If not, there is a good reason why not.*

ABOLITIONISTS contained title, introductory, caption, donor, and credit labels (Serrell 1996). The curatorial assistant utilized a variety of techniques for presenting content. There were labels and videos. The title label is located immediately behind the admissions desk to indicate HMAAC's current exhibit. Dean notes in *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice* in regards to exhibition design, "Use strong visual impact to 'hook' visitor curiosity. Bright colors, large graphics, varied shapes, and similar visual elements will attract a visitor's attention" (2002, 55). HMAAC mimics that principle with its title label that has abolitionists written in black, bold, all-caps letters with the letters I-S-T written in red. One of the key elements of design is value—the quality of lightness or darkness (Dean 2002, 31). ABOLITIONISTS used the highest value—white—as the background color to the wall that the title is posted on. Donor logos are attached to the bottom of the title label. Dean continues, "For design purposes, values are important for emphasis, orientation, and attraction" (2002, 33). As such, by placing the red letters on the white wall the visitor is immediately drawn in and curious about the content not only because of the bright colors

but also how the word “abolitionists” will elucidate itself throughout the exhibit. The tile label with the use of warm color gave an inviting feel to the exhibit space.

For the first and second components (Clay Bennett editorial cartoons and the works of Ti-Rock Moore), there were credit panels giving the background of the artists. The credit panels functioned as orientation panels because they gave a short biography of the artist whose work the visitor is viewing. Per the suggestion of Beverly Serrell (1996), introductory or orientation labels should be 20-300 words and both the panels meet the criterion (33). The other introductory labels for the video gallery and the main gallery have a large, bold fonts and also met the criterion of 20-300 words. The remaining caption labels to accompany the objects in the main gallery conformed to the criterion for caption labels being between 20-150 words (Serrell 1996, 33).

In sum, the labels conveyed a clear sense of the communication objectives for each space and object. They were long enough to express ideas clearly yet short enough to engage and hold the reader’s attention. The interpretive strategy employed was an overall theme that bonded all three components around the same content. The orientation label highlighted the reason for each component’s inclusion in the exhibit as well as the orientation panels for the each space. It was stimulating intellectually, emotionally, and socially, and there were an abundant opportunities for establishing personal, meaningful connections with visitors. The objects selected were so relevant and pointed in support of each communication objective that it sometimes took the visitors breath away. I observed many visitors contemplate on several of the objects on display. Visitors were able to take home a handout of the orientation panel as a form of documentation associated with the exhibit. There were also glossy stock card flyers advertising the exhibit for visitors to

spread the word as well. All in all, the labeling was clear and offered an inviting feel to the exhibit space.

## 6. Design and Production

*The selection, design, and production of interpretive media effectively and engagingly communicate content.*

First, as visitors moved from one component to the next, there were clear physical markers posted. Because the sections were located in three separate designated galleries, these markers were necessary. Secondly, the content of each component was effectively presented: each exhibit component gave the visitor a different feel, depending on the flooring, wall color and structure that supported and enhanced the ideas, themes, and tone of the exhibit. For example, in the first module, located in the Bert Long Gallery, the space was circular in structure mimicking the circular right portion of the building. The flooring and walls were painted all black as to highlight the editorial cartoons. Also, blown-up editorial cartoons on poster board offered a grandeur presence against the background of the all black room. In this way, the visitor's sole attention was on the punch line for the cartoons as there were no other distractions. All in all, the design of this gallery was well thought out and executed.

The next module, featuring artist Ti-Rock Moore was located beyond the title label wall to the left in the Main gallery. The exhibit's introductory panel was located in the video room. It could be a bit confusing at first, because at the first module, the first thing the visitor reads is a biography of the person the Bert Long gallery is named in honor of. On the opposite wall was the orientation panel of the artist that created the editorial cartoons. It

was not until the video room that the visitor reads ABOLITIONISTS' introductory panel. One could easily assume that the orientation panel was for that room only as opposed to introducing the big idea for the exhibit (Serrell 1996, 33).

At any rate, the Ti-Rock Moore exhibit that made up the second module of the exhibit employed an unstructured approach to traffic flow where, "Upon entering the gallery, a person may choose his or her own path without a suggested route that is right or wrong" (Dean 2002, 55). Moreover, the exhibit aligned with the standard that reflects, "A suitable approach for strongly object-orientated exhibitions. It allows visitors to move at their own pace and decide their own priorities" (Dean 2002, 55). Finally, the visitor exited the main gallery back into the video gallery to view a speech by US Senator Elizabeth Warren covering the theme of African-American injustice as seen by Euro-Americans. The caption labels along the wall were large font and minimal in terms of color, as the focus of this exhibit was watching the video clip. The chairs were set up for visitors in such a way that they were able to view the content behind the chairs without disturbing other visitors sitting to watch the film. The ABOLITIONISTS exhibit's spatial organization enabled visitors to move through the space at their own pace and to contemplate the serious content at their leisure. However it was balanced out with plenty of floor space for the patrons to move in either direction without interrupting the path of other patrons. There was only the entrance and exit doors located between the main gallery and video gallery to mark the boundaries of the exhibit.



## 7. Ergonomics: Human comfort, safety, and accessibility

*The exhibition is designed such that the experience of the visitor including their physical, intellectual, and social well-being is taken into account.*

The exhibition was designed such that the experience of the visitor including their physical, intellectual, and social well-being was taken into account. Not only was the exhibition spaced for accessibility, but also, the restrooms were in the atrium area across the hall from the admissions desk and on the second floor. They were clearly marked for visitors' convenience. The physical space was large enough to accommodate audience members of varying sizes and abilities to navigate and interact with the exhibition. The labels were legible and short enough to hold attention. The labels were in clear spaces and placed in comfortable spaces to view.

I am considered average height at 5'4", and I did not have to bend or extend my neck up too much to view an object. However, some of the more popular pieces had caption labels placed on the floor forcing visitors to bend or squat to read. This is not conducive for folks in wheelchairs who must strain to read a label on the floor. Also, it was an inconvenience for visitors to bend down and read labels on the floor. I observed many viewers bending down for an extended period of time.

However, there was good use of wall space for most objects. There is no location where a space on a wall was either too crowded or too bare. In summary, it is important to understand the scope of the museum and its exhibit on display to understand the intent and the potential impact it may have on the patrons. The aforementioned details about HMAAC will aid in the evaluation of the impact in the data analysis portion of the dissertation.

## **The Data**

### *How many visitors observed over how much time?*

The target audience for ABOLITIONISTS is a general audience (youth and adults). In order to understand the kind of activity in which visitors were engaged when stopped at an exhibit, I observed and recorded their behaviors. For ease and accuracy in assessing these behaviors, I have divided the ABOLITIONISTS exhibit into twenty-five distinct areas. I observed one exhibit area over the period of November 19, 2015, to December 12, 2015, from Wednesday to Saturday, 11:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. On Thursdays, I extended my observation time until 8:00p.m. I requested a copy layout of the exhibit from the curator then I numbered each object on display. Then I designed a chart to record the age, gender, group size, behaviors, and gallery attendance for a total of fifty visitors. Finally, I created a behavioral recording sheet to log my observations.

### *Demographics of Visitors Tracked*

#### *Age*

Visitors of all ages were observed in ABOLITIONISTS. For tracking purposes, visitors who appeared to be twelve years of age and older were followed. Younger visitors, children with school groups, and visitors on a guided tour were not followed since their movements were not self-directed. Visitors who were tracked were categorized by a range of their presumed age according to how they appeared when observed. The sample from HMAAC consisted of ninety-nine percent African-American visitors. Table 1 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 1: Age distribution of visitors at HMAAC.**

<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
12-19	3	6%
20-29	17	34%
30-39	15	30%
40-49	8	16%
50-59	2	4%
60-69	5	10%
70-79	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

*Gender*

Visitors who were tracked were categorized by their presumed gender according to how they appeared when observed. More females than males were represented in the sample. Table 2 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 2: Gender distribution of visitors in ABOLITIONISTS.**

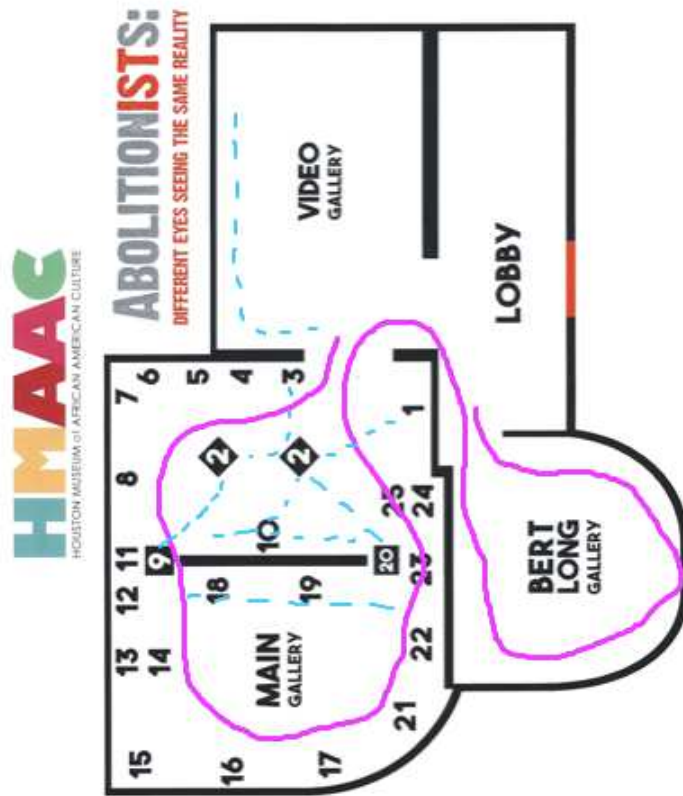
<b>Gender</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
male	20	40%
female	30	60%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

The skewed gender data may be explained in the following way. This occurrence can be related to the fact that there were no pairs observed that were two males. Of the visitors that had a group size of more than one person, ninety-three percent of the pairs observed were one male, one female or two females. Table 3 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 3: Group gender composition in ABOLITIONISTS.**

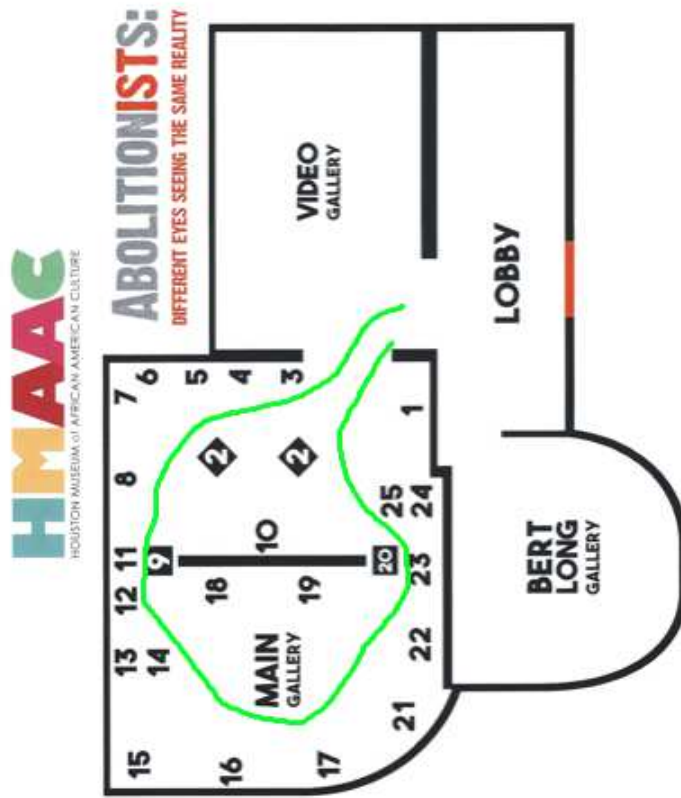
<b>Groups composition by gender (more than 1 person)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
groups with one male, one female	30	70%
groups with two females	10	23%
groups with two males	0	0%
groups with three or more	3	7%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

*What paths do visitors follow through the exhibit gallery?*



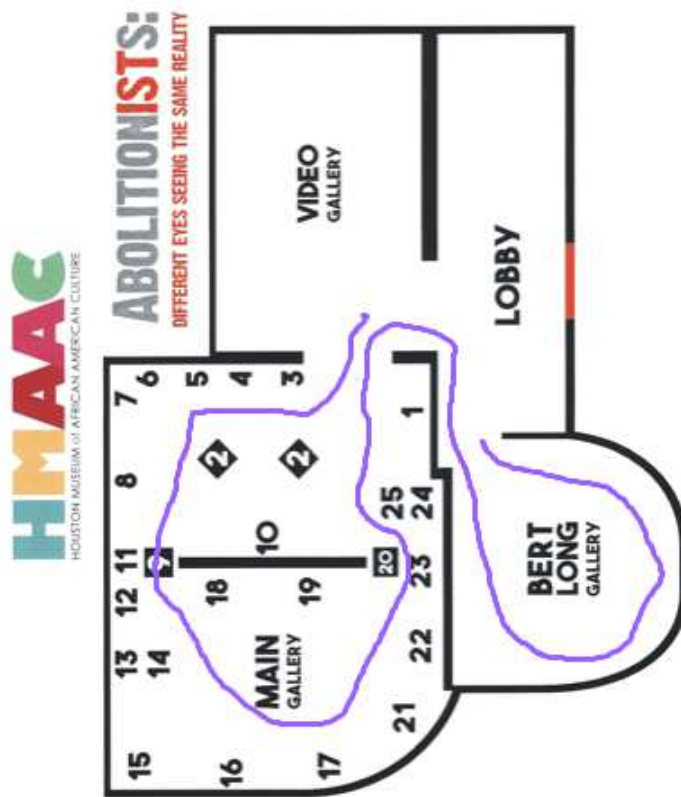
**Pattern A**  
**46 percent**

The most common path followed by forty-six percent of visitors was Pattern A. This path includes the Bert Long Gallery, the Video Gallery and the Main Gallery. While the visitors all followed the basic pattern indicated by the solid line there were variations in the path indicated by the dashed lines.



**Pattern B**  
**32 percent**

Pattern B is the pathway that covers the Main Gallery only. Visitors followed a path that was a strict circular path through the Main Gallery without going through the Video Gallery or the Bert Long Gallery.



**Pattern C**  
**22 percent**

Pattern C represented the path followed by visitors who visited both the Bert Long Gallery and the Main Gallery with no variation from the path indicated by the solid line.

*How much time do visitors spend in the exhibit?*

The greater time spent in an exhibit reflects greater interest. Time spent by visitors in ABOLITIONISTS ranged from fifteen seconds to forty-four minutes. The average time spent in the gallery was nine point thirty-seven minutes. More than half of the visitors tracked spent twenty minutes or less in ABOLITIONISTS. Twenty-four percent (12 of 50) of visitors spent twenty-six minutes or more in ABOLITIONISTS. Of these, sixty-seven percent (8 of 12) are female patrons. Forty-four minutes was spent by one visitor in ABOLITIONISTS. The next highest time was thirty-nine minutes spent by a male and female pair. The lowest time spent was fifteen seconds by one visitor. Table 4 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 4: Time visitors spent in ABOLITIONISTS.**

<b>Time (in minutes)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
1-5	6	12%
6-10	12	24%
11-15	14	28%
16-20	6	12%
21-25	0	0%
26 & above	12	24%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

*At which exhibit cases do visitors spend the most time and the least time?*

The ability of an exhibit to get a visitor to stop is called an exhibit's "attraction power." The ability of an exhibit to hold the attention of a visitor is called an exhibit's "holding power" (Shettel 1968, 50). The more time visitors spend at an exhibit, the greater the power of the exhibit to hold the attention and interest of a visitor (50). The most successful exhibits are those that attract visitors to stop and then, hold their interest (50).



There were five of the twenty-five areas observed which had high attraction power and high holding power. The exhibits with the greatest attraction and holding power were (5) Separate But Equal, (6) Eat Crow, (16) Angelitos Negros, (17) Deadly Weapon, and (25) Profile This II. Profile This II had the greatest holding power. The average time spent at (25) Profile This II was 24 seconds. Table 5 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 5: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in ABOLITIONISTS.**

Exhibit Area		People who stop at the exhibit		Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)
		%	actual #	
<b>1</b>	One Size Fits All	6%	3	5
<b>2</b>	Cracka Please	8%	4	6
<b>3</b>	Heck of a Job	12%	6	11
<b>4</b>	Can I Get A Witness	8%	4	6
<b>5</b>	Separate But Equal	20%	10	10
<b>6</b>	Eat Crow	22%	11	12
<b>7</b>	Sweet Sixteen	8%	4	5
<b>8</b>	Emanuel	4%	2	20
<b>9</b>	The Last Stand of the White Man	6%	3	5
<b>10</b>	Possession	10%	5	11
<b>11</b>	White on Black	4%	2	4
<b>12</b>	Fly Over	14%	7	12
<b>13</b>	Selective Amnesia	4%	2	4
<b>14</b>	Oh I Wish I were in the Land of Cotton	4%	2	4
<b>15</b>	Domestication of Animals	0%	0	0
<b>16</b>	Angelitos Negros	26%	13	12
<b>17</b>	Deadly Weapon	22%	11	15
<b>18</b>	Black on Black	8%	4	6
<b>19</b>	Racism Fatigue...Really?!	6%	3	4
<b>20</b>	Profile This	6%	3	5
<b>21</b>	As the reigning order becomes weaker it will present itself as more and more permanent	10%	5	14
<b>22</b>	Vile	0%	0	0

<b>23</b>	Cracka Ass Cracka	4%	2	5
<b>24</b>	Protect and Serve	12%	6	12
<b>25</b>	Profile This II	30%	15	24

*How does group composition affect time spent in the exhibit gallery? Do people who visit alone spend a longer or a shorter time in the exhibit?*

As expected, most visitors in the sample came to the gallery with someone else. Visitors who came alone tended to spend more time—averaging sixteen minutes—in the gallery than visitors who saw the exhibit with a group. The average amount of time spent by visitors in a group of more than one was eight minutes. Eighty-six percent of all visitors sampled were groups. Table 6 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 6: Group size of visitors in ABOLITIONISTS.**

Group Size	# of people	percentage
more than 1 person	43	86%
alone	7	14%

#### *Visitor Behaviors in Gallery*

Mostly all (90 percent) of the fifty visitors observed were engaged in meaningful exhibit interaction such as looking at objects, graphics or video, talking, reading, and manipulating objects in order to feel, see, or read. Table 7 represents all of my observations between November 19, 2015, and December 12, 2015.

**Table 7: Distribution of visitor behaviors in ABOLITIONISTS.**

Behavior	percentage
<b>A.</b> Visual (looking at/reading labels)	60%
<b>B.</b> Visual (looking at objects/graphics/video)	26%
<b>C.</b> Verbal	20%

<b>D. Manipulative with experience to feel/see/read</b>	4%
<b>E. Browsing</b>	10%
<b>F. Taking a photo/video</b>	34%
<b>G. Other activity (pointing)</b>	6%

*What are the three most commonly observed visitor behaviors? Do visitors engage in more exhibit-related behaviors than non-exhibit-related behaviors?*

The most commonly (60 percent) observed behavior was stopping to look at objects and read labels. Overall, no exhibit was ignored. Every exhibit area in ABOLITIONISTS was observed to be used by visitors. The next most commonly (34 percent) observed behavior was taking a photo. Visitors were engaged in taking photos of pieces they stopped at. The third most commonly (26 percent) observed behavior was stopping and looking at objects/videos. See table 7. The visitors that were not reading the labels were very contemplative of the objects on display.

*Do they appear to be reading labels?*

Label reading was the most commonly (60 percent) observed visitor behavior in ABOLITIONISTS. The visitors found the content to be engaging and stimulating. Frequent behaviors observed when reading labels were bending down, squatting and leaning in closer to view.

*What were visitors talking about or commenting on in the exhibit?*

Specific indicators of exhibition excellence demonstrated in ABOLITIONISTS include: (1) presenting existing knowledge and/or collection materials in a surprising or

provocative way, (2) particularly beautiful or capable of engendering a personal, emotional response, and (3) evoking responses from viewers that are evidence of a transforming experience. In addition, I have included categories that indicate a sense of racial identity or of Black consciousness.

***Comments overheard at the first component of the exhibit, Editorial Cartoons of Clay Bennett conveyed a sense of racial identity or Black consciousness. Typical comments over heard were:***

“Hmmp,” and “That’s sad.”

“All the white people over there...Ain’t that how it is at school?”

***Comments overheard in the main gallery pertained to racial identity/Black consciousness and particularly beautiful or capable of engendering a personal, emotional response.***

Visitors were concurring with the sentiments of the artists:

“That’s true though,” “So true,” and “It’s powerful.”

“For real”

Visitors were commenting about the aesthetics as well as the exhibit design:

“This is a beautiful show.”

“This is good.”

“I like the wheatgrass.”

“Oh! Like the jail cell dollars.”

“I didn’t even see the coffins.”

“Oh, wow!”

“What does that say?! Oh it’s upside-down.”

## **Exit Interviews**

Using Appendix B, I interviewed (8) visitors upon exiting the exhibit on November 20, 2015. In addition, I interviewed an individual via telephone whose comments I incorporated as well. The interview data revealed that visitors were making comments that reflected a sense of racial identity/Black consciousness; the presentation of existing knowledge and/or collection materials was in a surprising or provocative way; there was a

particularly beautiful presentation capable of engendering a personal, emotional response; and a presentation evoking responses from viewers was evidence of a transforming experience.

***Visitors commented about their emotional response to the exhibit:***

“There’s a little anger involved, you know...the emotional sadness of it that’s present in it. . . . You would think that we’ve evolved in that but we really haven’t”

“I was moved to tears. We had watched it on TV. It was really, really emotional. Provocative. It stirred up a lot of emotion that I really wasn’t prepared for; it just brought up a whole lot of emotions. The fact that the body. It felt like I was really standing there (viewing the body). I probably didn’t need to watch a video. . . (laughter).”

“Very emotional; I felt a gambit of emotions—compassion for the families; angry because it even happened at all. Proud of the people [that] stand up for what’s right even though they’re not African-American.”

“You know, that one right there [3: Heck of A Job]. That shit just brought back memories. Man, that shit just really pissed me off. It just really brought back memories. You know, I wish I could just go through the TV. . . [motioning an action to choke former President George W. Bush on the other side of the television screen] and you know.”

“I think it’s a mixed emotion.”

***Visitors commented about their sense of racial identity/Black consciousness:***

“And then I have my little niece here and [we] explained to her that . . . Mike Brown body in there is a dead man you know. . . . It’s [different] you know and it’s something we usually don’t have to address until we’re older”

“It was very impactful, just a reminder of a lot of things we’ve done. But still!”

“Umm, that it’s real! That all that we suffer and go through as a people. It’s real!”

“There are things you can go back and research on your own. So if you see something, for instance, the video with Elizabeth Warren, that’s something I didn’t know about so I think it gives you an opportunity to kind of delve a little deeper into some issues you may not know about.”

“I would hope it would cause them to think and reassess their priorities. I think it will make people reassess, ‘What am I doing?’ like ‘What am I contributing?’ ”

“For the most part it’s exciting to have uh conscious art that’s centered around Black people...More than anything I think it’s something to be proud of even though the content is alarming still, the fact that the spaces exists”

“So the outcome is sort of obvious in the sense that the issues are ever pressing.”

“On a more positive note, it helped put it in perspective. It takes all of us and not just African-Americans even though that’s who it’s centered on. It takes all of us to make it happen.”

“We have discussions but it’s real; Awww man there’s blood on this thing... It’s Black people’s blood on this thing. . . . This ain’t just a prop this is the real deal... [the visitor observes and touches the Ku Klux Klan garment]. . . . Awww man being so close to the regalia; to actually see the embodiment. . . .I’m apart of a generation that...I don’t participate in that hate shit. . . .”

“Everybody. Anybody, especially young people in particular because it shows that diversity of African-American people versus what they get from TV or social media.”

***Visitors indicated that the exhibit evoked responses that are evidence of a transforming experience:***

“Oh it was deep.”

“That exhibit is, is quite astonishing. It’s very powerful.”

***Visitors commented that the subject matter was presented in a provocative way:***

“Yes! I definitely think it was effective um, it’s very graphic ”

“What I got was information to create my own ideas. So, you know, you see the picture of the KKK (21) or you know even the one with Michael Brown, the re-enactment of his death, you see that it makes you think. There are real emotions that maybe I did not fully understand but I’m looking at it.”

“Yes, I agree. I thought it [was] provoking.”

“Yeah, I really enjoyed it.”

“How powerful art can be in just provoking emotion and change. When you see it on TV and then being able to see it expressed through art it gave it a different feel. Very provocative. Seeing is as the family would. . . this is someone’s brother or uncle or father that it happened to.”

[Angelitos Negros] “That one for sure. I know that it was controversial and some people thought it was offensive. It’s really a team effort of diversity. . . because we’re 11% of the population and we didn’t do it ourselves.”

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the themes gleaned from this data set will guide my discussion in the data analysis portion. The visitation data results for HMAAC indicated that the most commonly observed visitor behaviors were stopping to look at objects, reading labels, and taking photos. Visitors who came alone tended to spend more time than visitors who came as a group. There were five of the twenty-five areas observed that had high attraction power (the ability of an exhibit to get a visitor to stop) and high holding power (the ability of an exhibit to hold the attention of a visitor) (Shettel 1968, 50). The exhibits with the greatest attraction and holding power were (5) *Separate But Equal*, (6) *Eat Crow*, (16) *Angelitos Negros*, (17) *Deadly Weapon*, and (25) *Profile This II*. *Profile This II* by artist Ti-Rock Moore in the Main gallery held the greatest holding power of all. These exhibit cases were particularly pointed and graphic as it relates to race relations and how stereotypes impact the African-American perceptions of self. When I created preliminary categories to organize the visitor commentary, I noticed that visitors at HMAAC had frequent emotional and socially/racially conscious responses to the exhibit. Additionally, they disclosed how provocative and thought provoking the exhibit was. With that in mind, I compiled the preliminary themes you see above. I will use this compilation to inform my data analysis chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Case Study #2: Tubman African-American Museum (Tubman)**

This chapter examines the institutional development of, governance and maintenance of, standards for excellence of, and visitation data results for Tubman African-American Museum in Macon, Georgia. Background data such as the history and governance of this museum will help to contextualize the visitor's experience. Presenting such data in tabular form (i.e. quantifying the data) makes the data easier to access and assess. My objective is to analyze the data in tabular form presented here in the next chapter using the decolonial framework to help me answer my research question in two ways: 1) to explain the political and economic context these museums operate in and 2) to understand the impact the museums have on the patrons' thinking within this political and economic context. Since the museums' exhibits contain African-American history and culture, visitors are able to interact with this subject matter in multisensory ways. By recording comments overheard and conducting a few exit interviews, I categorize themes from the data to determine the impact, which will be discussed in full detail in the data analysis chapter.

#### **History of the Museum**

Tubman's mission is to promote, preserve, and protect African-American Art, History and Culture and to educate the public about the achievements of African-American people. Army veteran, former priest and educator Richard Keil founded the Tubman African-American Museum in Macon, Georgia. In 1981, Keil made a down payment on a deteriorating furniture warehouse with the intention of turning it into an institution that would explore and celebrate the history and culture of African-Americans (Tubman



African-American Museum]). In the words of Richard Keil from his book *Lessons Along the Way: Before, During and After Priesthood*,

Starting a museum wasn't just an act of love and appreciation. It was necessary...There were simply too few repositories of black history. Too few museums reminded people of the contributions, and sacrifices, of African-Americans; too few centers embraced black culture and portrayed African-Americans in a positive light. History books tended to over-look the triumphs of black Americans. (Keil 2015, 292-293)

As a result, the efforts to found the Tubman Museum gained momentum and culminated in the 1985 opening at 340 Walnut Street in downtown Macon, Georgia. The museum operated from the Walnut Street location for thirty years. Upon my visit on December 1, 2015, it had been operating for six months in the new building on Cherry Street.

The museum is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission fees are ten dollars for adults ages eighteen to fifty-four, six dollars for children ages three to seventeen, and eight dollars for seniors ages fifty-five plus, members and affiliates of the military, college students, educators, AAA members and AARP members. Demographics for the City of Macon are as follows: sixty-seven point nine percent African-American, twenty-eight point six percent Euro-American, two point five percent Latino/a, and one percent Asian and Pacific Islander (US Census Bureau 2015). The projected amount of annual visitors is 18, 000 for 2016.

### **The Museum's Online Presence**

An online presence is the museum's point of first contact with many of its visitors. As a potential visitor, my first step is to look up information about the museum such as hours of operation, admission prices, and address. A Google search using the phrase

“Tubman African-American Museum,” yielded the museum’s website as the first hit along with a Google profile located in the right margin inclusive of Tubman’s new address, hours, phone number, and two Google reviews. The second page listed is the museum’s Facebook page. Tubman’s Facebook page had 3,320 likes, 3,338 visits recorded, and was rated four point seven stars by reviews from 110 Facebook users. The page consists of photos from past events and flyers for current events. Its posts were current and future flyers for its most recent and upcoming events. The museum’s website offered user-friendly access to Tubman’s hours and ticket cost. On the homepage there was a “Visit” tab with “Hours and Ticket Cost” as the first option listed. The “Hours and Ticket Cost” page contained additional information such as address and directions complete with an interactive map powered by Google. The visitor can also access the directions through the second tab labeled “Directions” located under the “Visit” tab.

Information about the Tubman Museum can also be found on the City of Macon’s website. The City of Macon’s website features its motto, “where soul lives, ” and six homepage tabs as follows: Things To Do, Events, Restaurants, Hotels, Plan, and About. Tubman Museum is listed under several tabs on the City of Macon’s site including “Things To Do/Top Ten Things To Do/Museums,” and “About/ African-American Heritage.” Under the “Things To Do/ Museums” tab, Tubman is the first listed and credited as the “Largest museum in the Southeast that is dedicated to preserving and sharing the story of African-American, Art, Culture, and History” (Macon-Bibb County Convention & Visitors Bureau 2015). Within the “Things To Do/Top Ten Things To Do” tab there is a headline called “unrivaled museums,” for which Tubman is listed along with the Museum of Arts and Sciences and Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. The “About” tab mentions Tubman under

“African- American Heritage” where a description of the “From Africa to America” mural is present. The other twenty sites mentioned under “African-American Heritage” include three historic districts, three historical landmarks and memorials, five downtown African-American churches, three other sites (such as WIBB Radio Station, Women’s Center, Museum of Aviation), Douglass Theater, Washington Memorial Library, and the museum’s annual major program, the Pan African-American Festival.

### **The Museum Visit**

Upon my arrival at the Tubman African-American Museum I noticed it was centrally located in downtown Macon, Georgia right across from the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. I also noticed that visitors can get to the museum using the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority bus transportation as the city’s main terminal station is located adjacent to Tubman. There was signage on the highway as well as in a four-block radius of the museum. There was designated parking behind the building and two-hour parking in front. The building itself has a unique dome shape atop and a golden exterior equipped with large columns and wood-stained window paneling. My walk from the parking lot to the entrance door was less than a minute. When I walked in I was astonished by the magnificent rotunda architecture. Textile art covers the walls of the rotunda’s perimeter telling the story of the museum, local history, and African-American history at large with the theme of bridging the past and present.

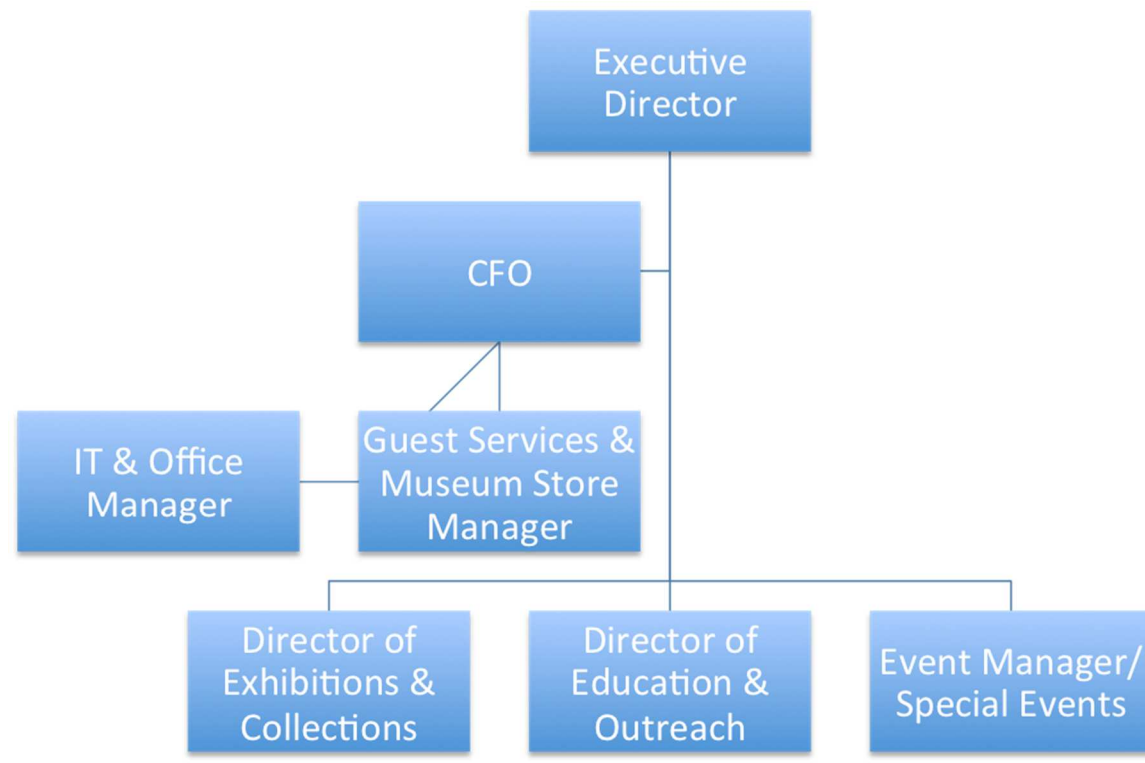
The admission’s window is located near the front entrance doors inside the gift shop. As I was admiring the rotunda I was immediately approached by the admissions attendee and asked, “Do you need some help?” She was a middle-aged African-descended

woman who was dressed business casual. On the counter space just below the window there were pamphlets and brochures from other cultural organizations, foundations and hotels. On the far left side of the counter space was a woven basket for taking comments about the museum; a sign holder containing a freedom of speech and artistic expression statement; a sign that said, THANK YOU FOR VISITING! LEAVE US YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE TUBMAN MUSEUM; and a stack of half sheets with pens for leaving comments.

The Tubman Museum currently has four galleries with room to expand, and they are as follows: three collection galleries (two on the top floor, one on the bottom floor) and a mural gallery (on the second floor). In the atrium rotunda area I saw textile art done by Wini McQueen to chronicle the museum's story and that of African-American life and history at large. The atrium area is free and open to the public to browse; however, in order to see the exhibits in the gallery spaces visitors have to pay admission. The first and only gallery on the first floor features "Black Artists of Georgia." This gallery had forty-nine works on display from forty artists who have been educated, worked or lived in Georgia. The second floor rotunda corridor area is dedicated to visionary and folk art from the works of untrained artists Buddy Snipes and Mr. Imagination. The three galleries on the second floor contain the following exhibits: "Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People"; an exhibit by the National Alliance of Artists from Historically Black Colleges & Universities (NAAHBCU); "From Africa to America"; "From the Minds of African-Americans"; and an exhibit on musicians of Georgia.

## **Governance and Management**

The Urban Development Authority with the City of Macon, Georgia owns Tubman. Their ownership was the result of an arrangement whereby the Urban Development Authority would take ownership of Tubman in order to secure the Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds to complete the interior construction of the new building. The museum has a board of directors, executive director, and a total of seven people on staff with some part time admissions and museum store employees, contracted outreach teachers and housekeeping services. The board of directors operates as the invisible authority creating and administering general policy. Dr. Andy Ambrose, Executive Director, is the head staff person responsible for the daily operations including overseeing the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Directors of Exhibitions & Collections, Education & Outreach, and Event Manager. The CFO directly supervises the IT & Office Manager and the Guest Services & Museum Store Manager, which make up the earned income side of operations.



## 1. Audience Awareness

*The exhibition is developed with an articulated understanding of the intended audiences' prior knowledge, interests, learning styles, attitudes, or expectations about the topic and the experiences planned for visitors.*

According to Tubman's Executive Director, Dr. Andy Ambrose, the target audience centers on the museum's educational goals, membership, and those interested in African-American art, history, and culture. In my interview with Dr. Ambrose, he explained:

Our focus is distinctive and very broad. It's African-American art, history, and culture so it's not limited just to local, to regional or even a national . . . necessarily, so that gives us a wide range of flexibility...But also our mission is focused on education and that's where we put a lot of our resources and, and . . . the focus of our programs, in particular, providing . . . educational experiences and opportunities for students . . . in the local public school system and in schools throughout middle Georgia . . . So that's a key audience...our membership is grown

dramatically since we moved in the new building. And the two key areas in membership are seniors and . . . families, so we're . . . Trying to develop programs that really appeal to and that are a value to those groups as well as our broad membership. (2015)

The Executive Director's sentiments are shared with the Director of Exhibitions & Collections, Jeff Bruce, who concurs that Tubman tries to market themselves to the local schools systems among other groups. When asked, "Who is the museum's target audience?" Bruce responded:

Pretty much anybody and everybody we can possibly get through the doors. . . . [chuckles] Which is everybody. . . . We definitely want to reach out to school age kids and school groups, that's a huge, huge emphasis, for us, getting the school kids, getting the schools to think of us as their partner so that they get their kids into the museum from elementary up through college. So, that's a huge part of our audience. . . . We also want to try and reach out to what they call the creative class...Young people, educated . . . involved in, you know, various kinds of creative fields. (2015)

## 2. Evaluation

*Evaluation studies are conducted during development and/or after opening the exhibition to understand its impact on audiences in relation to the project's goals.*

Curator Jeff Bruce disclosed that evaluation studies were not used in the development of the exhibit. According to him,

As far as audience expectations go, we had definite ideas about that, but we did no studies, we based our ideas on observation and interaction with visitors over time. Experience has been our primary source of knowledge and understanding our audience. (Bruce 2016)

Experientially they made sure to include an exhibit of Harriet Tubman because visitors frequently requested an exhibit on Harriet Tubman at the old building and to their surprise Tubman had nothing on display on Harriet Tubman. It was the assumption that since the museum is called Harriet Tubman that the primary collecting areas would be that of

Harriet Tubman materials. The staff repeatedly disclosed to me that they are simply named in honor of Tubman and not primarily interpreting and collecting items related to Harriet Tubman. For this reason, in the development of the new exhibits in the new building had to include an exhibit paying homage to the woman they are named in honor of. Relatedly, Bruce shares, “We knew that school kids (and their parents) would look to the museum for information or some sort of instruction on black history, which resulted in the exhibits on Harriet Tubman, black inventors and black musicians from Georgia” (Bruce 2016). More so, Bruce disclosed,

The main factors that affected the gallery planning were our desire to show the breadth and depth of the museum’s collections (something we had not been able to do in the history of the institution). . . . We knew that our budget was limited, so we did not try to include digital media in our exhibits. (2016)

### 3. Content

*Content is thoroughly researched and vetted for accuracy, relevance to exhibition theme/s, and the current state of topic knowledge.*

The gallery space that I chose to observe in is on the second floor. It consists of three exhibits, “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People,” “From the Minds of African-Americans,” and the “From Africa to America” mural. The visitor can either enter from the second floor rotunda corridor, which will place them right at the center of the “From Africa to America” mural and “From the Minds of African-Americans” exhibits or from the “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” exhibit because the gallery spaces are connected. There are two wings in this gallery space. The first wing contains the “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” exhibit. The second wing of the gallery space contains



the remaining two exhibits with “From Africa to America” mural on one side and “From the Minds of African-Americans” on the other side. Coming from the “Harriet Tubman” exhibit the mural is on the right and the “From the Minds” is on the left hand side. “From Africa to America” is a nine-panel art mural that tells the story of African-Americans. It chronicles the journey from pre-colonial African society to twentieth century America. The captions for the panels are as follows: (1) African Origins, Traditions and Crafts; (2) Africa Through 19<sup>th</sup> Century; (3) Africans in the Americas; (4) From Slavery to the Black Renaissance; (5) People Who Shaped an African-American Identity; (6) The Struggle for Equality and Civil Rights; (7) Maconites and Other Prominent African Americans; (8) African Americans in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries; (9) and African-American Achievement.

Opposite the mural is “From the Minds of African-Americans,” which displays objects that African Americans have invented or improved. Next to the orientation panel for “From the Minds of African-Americans” is a book of patents that visitors can reference as they move through the exhibit. The objects on display are not the original patented objects but are props used to represent the patented objects as described in the exhibit.

#### 4. Collections

*The selection and presentation of objects furthers the intellectual content of the exhibition.*

Tubman Museum is a collecting institution whose area of collecting incorporates traditional African art, contemporary African-American art (that is both academic/studio art and folk/visionary art), historical artifacts (pertaining mostly to African-American history in the state of Georgia) and an educational resource collection. The museum’s

galleries are climate-controlled and the collections are housed in a climate-controlled vault. Executive Director, Andy Ambrose disclosed, “The collections continued to grow, primarily, interesting[ly] enough, through donations, we have wonderful collections of art, historical artifacts, primarily the result of donations by artists and by collectors. So there’s, it hasn’t been through...a huge acquisition fund” (Ambrose 2015). Security measures are in the hands of the staff during business hours and the buildings alarm system during the afterhours period. There are no pressing conservation issues as the objects on display are in climate-controlled environments and the archival material are properly incased in microenvironments. I did not observe any environmental monitors. In this case it would be hard to monitor the temperature and relative humidity levels for those highly reactant or inherently unstable hygroscopic objects. The gallery space that I observed consisted of objects from the collections in the areas of contemporary African-American art and the educational resource collection.

## 5. Interpretation/Communication

*The information/message of the exhibition is clear and coherent. If not, there is a good reason why not.*

The primary goal of “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” is to depict and interpret Harriet Tubman’s life story and personal papers. The secondary goal is to pay homage to the public figure that the museum is named in honor of. “From the Minds of African-Americans” has the primary goal of providing an educational experience about African-American history. It has the secondary goal to confront stereotypes about African-American achievement and innovation. “From Africa to America” mural has the principal

goal of celebrating the history of African-American art. The secondary goal is to provide an educational experience with the use of the legend providing the historical background and bibliographical profiles to the images on the panels. The three exhibits in the gallery space I observed in contained most of the types of labels listed by Beverly Serrell (1996) in *Exhibit Labels*. There were title, introductory, identification, caption labels and a legend (Serrell 1996). The curator primarily utilized labels for presenting content.

Within the “Harriet Tubman” exhibit, there were chiefly identification labels next to each piece. Quotes were used in lieu of group labels to signify that the group of objects under the quote represents a different juncture in Harriet’s life. The introductory panel was an enlarged short essay of Harriet’s life. It seemed a bit out of place compared to the rest of the brief identification labels and quotes in the rest of the exhibit. It flowed with the rest of the labels in terms of the topic, but it was entirely too long for visitors to transition from reading the identification labels to the short essay version of the introductory label. The legend that accompanies the mural “From Africa to America” is a very appropriate resource for visitors to explore a certain unrecognized figure or historical scene portrayed. Each of the numbered captions aligns with the standards for caption labels, which are 20-150 words (Serrell 1996, 33). The decision to include the mural and legend was very effective. “From the Minds of African-Americans” contained caption labels that were aligned with the criteria for caption labels as well. The introductory panel was well within the 20-300-word range (Serrell 1996, 33).

The interpretive strategy employed in Harriet Tubman was a narrative that was established through the quotes above each set of clustered objects. Ideally, the visitor should follow Harriet from slavery to her work as a leader to her death. The interpretive

strategy for “From African to America” is a chronological narrative of African American history culminating to twenty-first century public figures. The interpretive strategy for “From the Minds of African-Americans” was that of presenting profiles of African-American inventors and a display of the modern day objects they improved or invented.

The content provided a plethora of opportunities for establishing personal and meaningful connections. The objects selected were relevant and pointed in support of each communication objective. For instance, in “Harriet Tubman,” I observed many visitors fascinated with photos of Harriet Tubman and her home. I observed their reverence for the woman that is so central to early African-American history. The mural provided moments to test the visitor’s knowledge of historical occurrences and public figures. At times, it became a fun experience to guess who a person was or time period then check the legend for accuracy.

Finally, “From the Minds of African-Americans” provided those “Ahah!” or “Oh! I didn’t know that!” connections for visitors as they explore items in our everyday lives that have been invented or improved by African-Americans. The content was engaging and intellectually stimulating for individuals and groups of all ages and backgrounds. Unfortunately, however, there was no documentation or supporting programming to accompany the exhibit. Such supporting programming would prove a useful “extended lesson” opportunity for visitors, especially school-aged children.

## 6. Design and Production

*The selection, design, and production of interpretive media effectively and engagingly communicate content.*

As visitors move from one component to the next there are clear physical markers for the transition. With the exception of the panels, the highest value—white—was the background color to the wall that the title labels, quotes, introductory panels, identification labels, etc., were posted on (Dean 2002). For each exhibit component, there is an orientation panel and a title label that signifies that another exhibit has commenced. However, there are a few observations that will interrupt the progressive flow of visitors from one exhibit to the next in the ideal manner in which it was designed. One observation is that there are three entrance/exits doors to the gallery space—two of which are located in the gallery wing where “From Africa to America” and “From the Minds of African-Americans” are. The issue comes when both of the doors enter at awkward spaces in the exhibit. One of the doors puts the visitors at the end of “From the Minds of African-Americans,” which could very well confuse the visitor because they have not read the orientation panel to understand what they are looking at for that exhibit because they are viewing the very last objects in the sequence.

The other doors are located in the middle of both exhibits, which places the visitor in the middle of both exhibits when they walk in—also problematic because the visitor will have no sense of where the exhibits start or finish because they entered in the middle of both. As I have stated before, the “From Africa to America” and “From the Minds of African-Americans” exhibits are on opposite sides of the same corridor. Confusion is highly likely when those visitors that have not entered from the “Harriet Tubman” side of the gallery. They will not see the introductory panels for both the exhibits and assume they are all one exhibit. Aside from those observations, the “Harriet Tubman” exhibit presents its own set of confusing spatial organization. The location of the introductory panel was behind the

title label wall instead of immediately below the title. For example, the visitor can view the entire exhibit without noticing the introductory panel because it is on the opposite wall of the title label. I commonly observed visitors reading the introductory panel at the very end instead of at the beginning.

The design elements provided a casual path for the patron while allowing multiple opportunities for exiting before the whole exhibition has been viewed. The traffic flow was balanced out with plenty of floor space for the patrons to move in either direction without interrupting the path of other patrons. There were clear entrance and exit doors to mark the boundaries of the exhibit. The curator at Tubman also employed an unstructured approach to traffic flow where, "Upon entering the gallery, a person may choose his or her own path without a suggested route that is right or wrong" (Dean 2002, 55). Moreover, the exhibit aligned with the standard that, "A suitable approach for strongly object-orientated exhibitions. It allows visitors to move at the their own pace and decide their own priorities" (Dean 2002, 55). This self-directed type of design can be both positive and negative for a visitor. While it allows them to move at their own pace, determining their own priorities, and at the same time it often undermined the purpose if the design.

## 7. Ergonomics: Human comfort, safety, and accessibility

*The exhibition is designed such that the experience of the visitor including their physical, intellectual, and social well-being is taken into account.*

The restrooms and a water fountain are located on the left wing of the rotunda's atrium once you leave the admissions window facing the back doors. Similarly, the stairs and elevator are located on the right wing of the rotunda. The restroom facilities and elevator are the same for the second floor. They were clearly marked for visitors'

convenience. Both entrances are wheelchair accessible. There are three benches in the rotunda atrium and two benches on the second floor of the rotunda balcony. The physical space was large enough to accommodate audience members of varying sizes and abilities to navigate and interact with the exhibition.

The labels were legible and conducive to visitor comfort and were also placed in comfortable spaces to view. I am considered average height for a female at 5'4", and I did not have to bend or extend my neck up too much to view an object. Patrons in wheelchairs are able to comfortably view the objects. For those taller viewers, I did not witness anyone bending down for any extended period of time for viewing. The object placement was at perfect eyelevel. There was good use of wall space for object positioning as well.

Photography was not allowed in the museum. There was never a moment where a space on a wall was either too busy or too bare. The exits to each exhibit were clearly marked and accessible as well.

In summary it is important to understand the scope of the museum and its exhibit on display to understand the intent and the potential impact it may have on the patrons. The aforementioned details about Tubman will aid in the evaluation of the impact in the data analysis portion of the dissertation.

## **The Data**

### *How many visitors observed over how much time?*

The target audience for three exhibits observed is a general audience (youth and adults). In order to understand the kind of activity in which visitors were engaged when stopped at an exhibit, I observed and recorded their behaviors. For ease and accuracy in

assessing these behaviors, I have divided the three exhibits into three distinctly numbered areas: “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” is numbered 1-17; “From the Minds of African Americans” is numbered 1-31; and “From Africa to America” is numbered 1-9.

In order to understand the kind of activity in which visitors were engaged when stopped at an exhibit, behaviors were observed and recorded. The three exhibits were divided into three spaces and numbered accordingly in each of the areas for ease and accuracy in observing and recording visitor behavior. I observed one exhibit area over the period of December 1, 2015 to February 27, 2016, from Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. I requested a copy layout of the exhibit from the curator then I numbered each object on display. Then I designed a chart to record the age, gender, group size, behaviors and gallery attendance for a total of fifty visitors. Finally, I created a behavioral recording sheet to log my observations.

### *Demographics of Visitors Tracked*

Visitors of all ages were observed in the Tubman Museum. For tracking purposes, visitors who appeared to be twelve years of age and older were followed. Younger visitors, children with school groups, and visitors on a guided tour were not followed since their movements were not self-directed. Visitors who were tracked were categorized by a range of their presumed age according to how they appeared when observed. Visitors ranging from forty years of age and older make up sixty-two percent of the total sample observed while the youth ranging from twelve to twenty-nine make up only thirty percent of the sample. The sample from Tubman consisted of ninety-eight percent African-American visitors. Table 1-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.



**Table 1-A: Age distribution of visitors in Tubman.**

<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
12-19	4	8%
20-29	11	22%
30-39	4	8%
40-49	7	14%
50-59	14	28%
60-69	10	20%
70-79	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Gender*

Visitors who were tracked were categorized by their presumed gender according to how they appeared when observed. More females than males were represented in the sample. Table 2-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 2-A: Gender distribution of visitors in Tubman.**

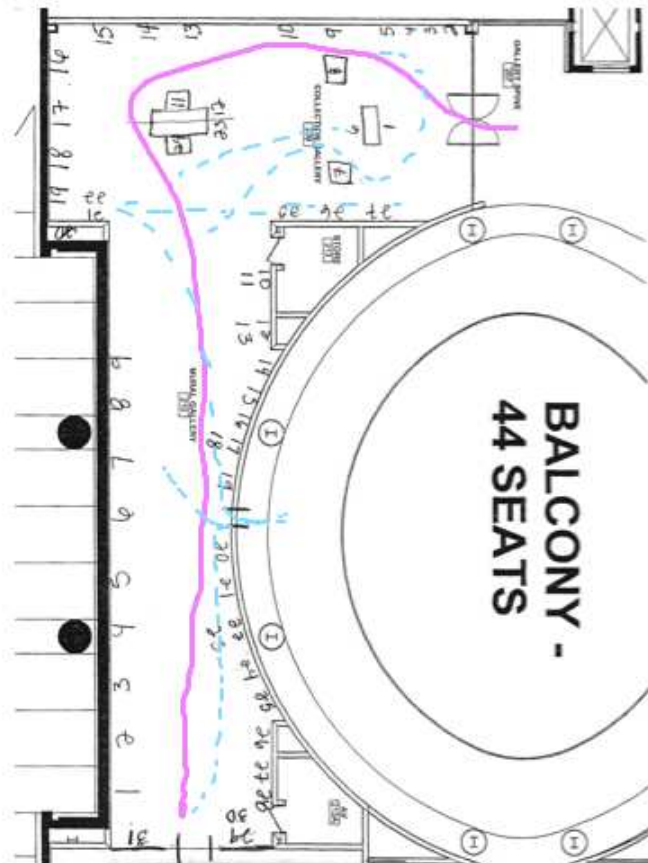
<b>Gender</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
male	14	28%
female	36	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The skewed gender data may be explained in the following way. This occurrence can be related to the fact that there were no pairs observed that were two males. Table 3-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 3-A: Group gender composition in Tubman.**

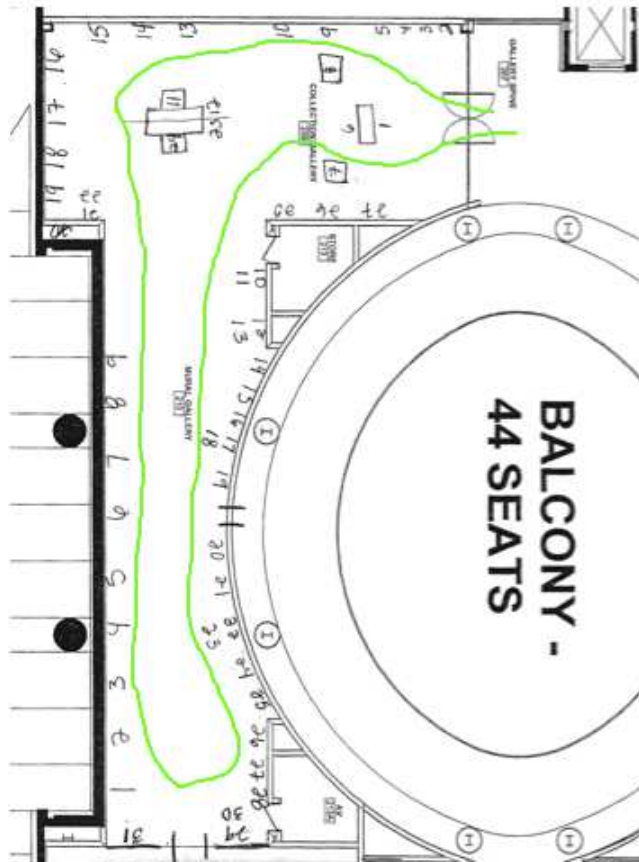
<b>Groups composition by gender (more than 1 person)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
groups with one male, one female	14	33%
groups with two females	6	14%
groups with two males	0	0%
groups with three or more	23	53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

*What paths do visitors follow through the exhibit gallery?*



**Pattern A  
62 percent**

The most common path followed by sixty-two percent of visitors was Pattern A. This path includes passing through all three exhibits in the gallery space. There was variation in the entrances and exits and exhibit stops as indicated by the dashed lines.



**Pattern B**  
**26 percent**

Pattern B illustrates what has been called a “continuous looper” (Yoshioka 1942) when a visitor enters and exits from the same point in the gallery.



*How much time do visitors spend in the exhibit?*

The greater time spent in an exhibit reflects greater interest. Time spent by visitors in Tubman ranged from one minute to thirty-eight minutes. The average time spent in the gallery was fifteen point ninety-five minutes. Seventy-eight percent (39 of 50) of the visitors tracked spent twenty minutes or less in Tubman. Twenty-two percent (11 of 50) of visitors spent twenty-one minutes or more in Tubman. One female visitor in Tubman spent thirty-eight minutes in the gallery. The next highest time was thirty-seven minutes spent by a male and female pair. The lowest time spent was one minute by one female visitor. Table 4-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 4-A: Time visitors spent in Tubman.**

<b>Time (in minutes)</b>	<b># of people</b>	<b>percentage</b>
1-5	5	10%
6-10	10	20%
11-15	16	32%
16-20	8	16%
21-25	1	2%
26 & above	10	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

*At which exhibit cases do visitors spend the most time and the least time?*

As previously mentioned the ability of an exhibit to get a visitor to stop is called an exhibit's "attraction power." The ability of an exhibit to hold the attention of a visitor is called an exhibit's "holding power" (Shettel 1968, 50). The more time visitors spend at an exhibit, the greater the power of the exhibit to hold the attention and interest of a visitor (50). The most successful exhibits are those that attract visitors to stop and then, hold their interest (50). Overall, visitors were very interested in Harriet Tubman's life. Objects

pertaining to Harriet Tubman held the highest attraction power. Forty-eight percent of all visitors stopped at an object pertaining to Harriet Tubman spending an average of forty seconds viewing it. Visitors were most intrigued with the personal papers of the historical figure. The archival Letter to Harriet Tubman from Frederick Douglass had the greatest holding power within the “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” exhibit, with visitors spending an average of sixty seconds viewing the document.

The “From Africa to America” mural held the highest holding power with visitors spending an average of seventy-nine seconds viewing each panel. Visitors spent the least amount of time at the “From the Minds” exhibit with a holding power of eleven seconds. However, nineteen percent of all visitors stopped at each object on display in “From the Minds.” Tables 5-A, 5-B, 5-C, 5-D, 5-E and 5-F represent all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 5-A: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

<b>Exhibit Area</b>		<b>People who stop at the exhibit</b>		<b>Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)</b>
<b>Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People/1<sup>st</sup> Installation<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>%</b>	<b>actual #</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Harriet, 1975</b>	50%	25	<b>35</b>
<b>2</b>	Harriet Tubman, 2007	2%	1	10
<b>3</b>	Three Great Freedom Fighters	0%	0	0
<b>4</b>	Harriet Tubman, 1964	2%	1	10
<b>5</b>	Where You at Harriet?	2%	1	10
<b>6</b>	Orientation Panel	28%	14	42
<b>7</b>	Fierce	0%	0	0
<b>8</b>	Harriet Tubman Doll	2%	1	15
<b>9</b>	<b>Residence of Harriet Tubman</b>	48%	24	<b>41</b>
<b>10</b>	Courageous Black Women	8%	4	16
<b>11</b>	The Resolution and Bill	12%	6	41
<b>12</b>	Letter to Harriet Tubman from	12%	6	60

<sup>1</sup> This was the initial list of objects installed in December 2015. The objects were changed in February 2016. The objects that are highlighted are in both installations.

	Frederick Douglass		
13	The Tubman Home for the Aged	42% 21	43
14	And then we heard the thunder	0% 0	0
15	Harriet Tubman and the U.R., 1952	0% 0	0
16	Harriet Tubman, 2007 (mixed media)	0% 0	0
17	Harriet Tubman, 1911	44% 22	39
18	Harriet Tubman, 1963	4% 2	22
19	Harriet Tubman, 1953	48% 24	39
20	General Affidavit	46% 23	41
21	Harriet Tubman with family, 1887	52% 26	39
22	Bounty Notice	52% 26	39
23	Harriet Tubman Obituary	26% 13	47
24	Concurrent Resolution	22% 11	46
25	Harriet Tubman, H.B. Lindsey	0% 0	0
26	Carrying out the Plan	0% 0	0
27	Forward Together	0% 0	0
28	Tubman Statue	22% 11	15

**Table 5-B: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

Exhibit Area		People who stop at the exhibit		Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)
Left Wall: "I go to prepare a place for you"		%	actual #	
Envisioning Emancipation/2 <sup>nd</sup> Install <sup>2</sup>				
1	Urias Africanus McGill Unidentified Woman	18%	9	22
2	"Nursemaid with her charge"	18%	9	11
3	Slavepen	24%	12	20
4	Fugitive African-Americans	18%	9	22
5	Group at Mr. Foller's Farm	18%	9	18

<sup>2</sup> Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People contained a secondary installment called, "Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery"



**Table 5-C: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

<b>Exhibit Area</b>		<b>People who stop at the exhibit</b>		<b>Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>actual #</b>	
<b>Right Wall: “I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can’t say—I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger”</b>				
<b>Envisioning Emancipation/2<sup>nd</sup> Install</b>				
<b>1</b>	Negroes at Gee’s Bend	32%	16	16
<b>2</b>	Old Slave Day	32%	16	16
<b>3</b>	Emancipation Day	32%	16	16
<b>4</b>	Susie King Taylor, 1902	32%	16	16
<b>5</b>	Freedman’s School, 1865-1870	30%	15	15
<b>6</b>	Townspeople of Nicodemus	38%	19	15
<b>7</b>	Black soldiers outside bombproof quarters Officers of the 114 <sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry	36%	18	18
<b>8</b>	African-American soldier in Union uniform with wife and daughters	36%	18	16
<b>9</b>	Wilson Chinn	32%	16	17
<b>10</b>	White and black slaves from New Orleans, Louisiana Rebecca, a slave girl from New Orleans, Louisiana	30%	15	19
<b>11</b>	D.C. Company E, Fourth U.S.-Colored Infantry	36%	18	18
<b>12</b>	Studio portrait of a servant boy Studio portrait of a teenager Studio portrait of an African-American sailor	32%	16	16
<b>13</b>	Sweet Potato Planting	30%	15	16
<b>14</b>	Slaves of Rebel Gen. Thomas F. Drayton	32%	16	13

**Table 5-D: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

<b>Exhibit Area</b>		<b>People who stop at the exhibit</b>		<b>Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)</b>
<b>Back Wall: "I looked at my hands to see if it was the same person. There was such glory over everything. The sun came up like gold through the tress, and I felt like I was in heaven."</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>actual #</b>	
<b>1</b>	Harriet Tubman, 1953	48%	24	39
<b>2</b>	General Affidavit	46%	23	41
<b>3</b>	Residence of Harriet Tubman	48%	24	41
<b>4</b>	Harriet Tubman, 1911	44%	22	39
<b>5</b>	The Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged	42%	21	43
<b>6</b>	Harriet Tubman with family, 1887	52%	26	39
<b>7</b>	Bounty Notice	52%	26	39
<b>8</b>	Harriet, 1975	50%	25	35

**Table 5-E: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

<b>Exhibit Area</b>		<b>People who stop at the exhibit</b>		<b>Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)</b>
<b>From the Minds of African-Americans</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>actual #</b>	
<b>10</b>	Insect Destroyer	20%	10	12.5
<b>11</b>	Patent Book	20%	10	12.5
<b>12</b>	Ice cream Scoop	20%	10	12.5
<b>13</b>	Egg beater	20%	10	12.5
<b>14</b>	Super Soaker	18%	9	12.5
<b>15</b>	Lawn Mower	16%	8	12.5
<b>16</b>	Heating Furnace	16%	8	12.5
<b>17</b>	Portable Weighing Scale	16%	8	12.5
<b>18</b>	Photographic Printwash	16%	8	12.5
<b>19</b>	Sugar Refining	16%	8	12.5
<b>20</b>	Ironing Board	4%	12	11.25
<b>21</b>	Refrigerator	24%	12	11.25
<b>22</b>	Ice Cream	24%	12	11.25
<b>23</b>	Benjamin Banneker	28%	14	15
<b>24</b>	Mailbox	26%	13	15
<b>25</b>	Pencil Sharpener	24%	12	11
<b>26</b>	Gas Mask	26%	13	15
<b>27</b>	Improvement in Fire Extinguisher	20%	10	15
<b>28</b>	Electric Lamp	24%	12	11
<b>29</b>	Lunch Box	24%	12	11

<b>30</b>	Paint and Stain	10%	12	15
<b>31</b>	Portrait, Wilfred Stroud	16%	8	13

**Table 5-F: Summary of the attraction and holding power for each exhibit in Tubman.**

<b>Exhibit Area</b>		<b>People who stop at the exhibit</b>		<b>Average time spent at the exhibit per stop (in seconds)</b>
<b>Mural</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>actual #</b>	
<b>1</b>	African Origins, Traditions, and Crafts	24%	12	87
<b>2</b>	Africa Through 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	24%	12	87
<b>3</b>	Africans in the Americas	24%	12	87
<b>4</b>	From Slavery to the Black Renaissance	26%	13	73
<b>5</b>	People Who Shaped African-American Identity	28%	14	81
<b>6</b>	The Struggle for Equality and Civil Rights	28%	14	75
<b>7</b>	Maconites and Other Prominent African-Americans	40%	20	75
<b>8</b>	African-Americans in the 20 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> Centuries	44%	22	75
<b>9</b>	African-American Achievement	54%	27	71

*How does group composition affect time spent in the exhibit gallery? Do people who visit alone spend a longer or a shorter time in the exhibit?*

As expected, most visitors in the sample came to the gallery with someone else. Visitors who came alone tended to spend less time—averaging thirteen minutes—in the gallery than visitors who saw the exhibit with a group. The average amount of time spent by visitors in a group of more than one was sixteen minutes. I attribute this to the amount of conversation that was sparked by visitors when they engaged with the exhibit. Eighty-six percent of all visitors sampled were groups. Table 6-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 6-A: Group size of visitors in Tubman.**

Group Size	# of people	percentage
more than 1 person	43	86%
alone	7	14%

*What are the three most commonly observed visitor behaviors? Do visitors engage in more exhibit-related behaviors than non-exhibit-related behaviors?*

The most commonly observed behavior was verbal which includes reading the labels aloud, talking about the exhibit, and engaging in a conversation based on the content of the exhibit. The next most commonly observed visitor behavior was visual through looking at objects/graphics/video. Although they were not reading labels, visitors visually observed most of the objects in the exhibit. The third most commonly observed visitor behavior was visual through looking at and reading the labels. Overall, the visitors observed were engaged in and stimulated by the content of the exhibit. Table 7-A represents all of my observations between December 1, 2015, and February 27, 2016.

**Table 7-A: Distribution of visitor behaviors in Tubman.**

Behavior	percentage
A. Visual (looking at/reading labels)	60%
B. Visual (looking at objects/graphics/video)	70%
C. Verbal	84%
D. Manipulative with experience to feel/see/read	2%
E. Browsing	14%
F. Taking a photo/video	26%
G. Other activity (pointing, talking on phone, texting on phone, tapping feet, taking notes, whistling)	26%

*Do they appear to be reading labels?*

Label reading was the most commonly (60 percent) observed visitor behavior in Tubman. The visitors found the content to be engaging and stimulating. They were really engaged with the legend for the mural and the Tubman artifacts.

*What were visitors talking about or commenting on in the exhibit?*

Specific indicators of exhibition excellence demonstrated in the Tubman gallery include: (1) presenting existing knowledge and/or collection materials in a surprising or provocative way, (2) particularly beautiful or capable of engendering a personal, emotional response, and (3) evoking responses from viewers that are evidence of a transforming experience. In addition, I have included categories that indicate a sense of racial identity or of Black consciousness.

***Visitors indicated that the exhibit evoked responses that are evidence of a transforming experience:***

“When we get back to the house we gon look this up and see...”

“Oh my god!”

“1826 they invented this in slavery”

“He still living Bobby...”

“hmmph”

“Very interesting”

“I can believe it”

“I definitely believe that”

“Yeah”

“Oh my gosh!”

“Hey if I go to Missouri I might go here”;

“I did not know...”

“Wow!”

***Visitors commented about their personal connections to the objects in the exhibit:***

“ This looks like Aunt Alice house”

“Oh! We talked about that when we in class!”

"yall remember this at the other museum?"  
"Boy...I remember them iceboxes there!"  
"Yeah, I remember, those were the good ole days!"

***Visitors commented about the aesthetics of the exhibit design:***

"This is really well-done"  
"This is beautiful John!"  
"This is really cute"  
"Oh that's real!"  
"Oh that's too real!"

**Comments overheard in the Tubman: The Moses of Her People Exhibit**

***Visitors were primarily describing to each other what they saw and read:***

"Oh! 18!" "1892"  
"92...haha"  
"Exact age is not known"  
"This was 1913."  
"Nurse and cook in a hospital"  
"Is that her house?"  
"A nurse, a spy and a scout"  
"Oh...I didn't"  
"Oh, that's her name"  
"Nurse, spy, and scout."  
"Davis...John Davis"  
"She has several"  
"Oh! That was her first husband!"  
"Oh my god! A freedman's school of Edistone Island! Did we know anything about Edistone when we were there?", "No"  
"Oh there's Tubman!"  
"Auburn, NY"  
"The underground railroad"  
"Mmm...haha"  
"I love it!"  
"She was a nurse, a scout"  
"One woman...with the courage..."  
"Can you imagine?"  
"That's where she died."  
"Oh the name of this place is called Tubman"  
"The Moses of her people"  
"How old was she?"  
"I think she was 90-something when she died"  
"She looks older"

## **Comments overheard in the corridor with From Africa to America Mural and From the Minds of African-Americans**

***Visitors were primarily describing to each other what they saw and read:***

"Here's George."  
"George Washington Carver"  
"She's black, she's a model and she's successful"  
"I know her"  
"Where's Beyoncé?", "I know right?!"  
"Bet not be"  
"Okay which one is the reggae guy?", "Is it Marley?", "Bob Marley"  
"Bob Marley"  
"Jamie Foxx"  
"Morgan Freeman"  
"Alice Walker"  
"Oh, Samuel L. Jackson";  
"Michael Jackson"  
"There is Frederick Douglass"  
Little Richard?"  
"And 12 is...[ ]"  
"Hmmp"  
"Donnie McClurkin?!";  
"No, it says 1968"  
"Collin Powell"  
"Stevie Wonder"  
"The fire extinguisher"  
"There were all things that was made on the left side"

***Visitors commented about their sense of racial identity/Black consciousness:***

"I just don't understand them praising it"

"Black people have created better [ ] you know."

"It doesn't help for me to be here and go back to the Jewish school...it builds resentment."

## **Exit interviews**

Using Appendix B I interviewed (4) visitors upon exiting the exhibit on in February 2016. The interview data revealed that visitors were making comments that reflected a sense of racial identity/Black consciousness; there was a particularly beautiful

presentation capable of engendering a personal, emotional response, and a presentation evoking responses from viewers that are evidence of a transforming experience.

***Visitors commented about their sense of racial identity/Black consciousness:***

“Like wow, they went through a lot just for us to be free and yet...we’ve come all these years of freedom and fighting for our freedom and yet the new generation with their eyes closed are taking us back there, slowly. That’s how it made me feel.. Not just my kids but the kids of the future that’s coming. I have a 29-year-old, 27-year-old and a 24-year-old and because of them they’re not paying close attention to what the world is coming to and we’re slowly putting ourself back into slavery without even paying attention. So that’s how it makes me feel it’s just sad. Because, you know, at the end of the day you can almost see us back in that same position because we’re partially there.”

“Proud to be Black and knowing that they were back there in the day to free for make it better for us.”

***Visitors commented about their personal connections to the objects in the exhibit:***

““Wow! My grandma used to have that same fridgerator in her house!’ So that was pretty unique to see that again because that was uh between that fridgerator and it was a washing machine that I wish I could have kept from my grandmothers house that was back in those days.”

***Visitors indicated that the exhibit evoked responses that are evidence of a transforming experience:***

“ I mean I took some pictures so I can go back and read it.”

“Harriet Tubman was very informative...got to read some descriptions of what people really thought about her and what she did...you know the, public schools, they don’t really talk about it but you know she had friends Frederick Douglass you know we don’t think about them (historical figures) having friendships with other people like that we see them as just this pedestal type person who just is a statue but you know it kind of made her come to life a lil bit more.”

“Umm.. the inventions of Black people, of course the camera, I did not know that, like I’m a photographer, I love that but to learn that I got the name pictured so I didn’t forget any of it but a lot of things I definitely didn’t know.”



“Pretty much everything that we use or associated with what we use is invented by a Black person...definitely intrigued, wanting to learn more, like I said I’d like to know more prior to who we were based not just a religious sense but being kings and queens how we ruled our nation and things and how we get more involved around here with bringing that back amongst our own knowledge within our heads not like we gotta go out there and be protesting but like pro-peace not anti-war stuff like that so.”

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the themes gleaned from this data set guides my discussion in the data analysis portion. The visitation data results for Tubman indicated that the most commonly observed visitor behaviors were verbal, visual, and reading labels. Visitors at Tubman were engaged and stimulated by the content of the exhibit space. Visitors who came alone tended to spend less time than visitors who came as a group. The objects pertaining to Harriet Tubman held the highest attraction power—the ability of an exhibit to get a visitor to stop (See Table 5-A; See Table 5-D; Shettel 1968). The “Letter to Harriet Tubman from Frederick Douglass” in the “Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People” exhibit held the greatest holding power—the ability of an exhibit to hold the attention of a visitor (See Table 5-A; See Table 5-D; Shettel 1968). The “From Africa to America” mural held the highest holding power of all three exhibits, with visitors spending an average of seventy-nine seconds at each panel. When I created preliminary categories to organize the visitor commentary, I noticed that visitors at Tubman had frequent discussions of Harriet Tubman’s life. Additionally, they were quite intrigued and engaged with the historical events and public figures on the “From Africa to America” mural. With that in mind, I compiled the preliminary themes you see above. I will use this compilation to inform my data analysis in the next chapter.

The data compiled here contains preliminary themes to explore for data interpretation. The above compilations of visitor commentary is organized in a way that reveals general subcategories that will inform my generation of the overall themes discussed in the next chapter. In the next chapter, I go into detail regarding the political and economic impact these museums exist in then how these museums impact the patrons' thinking within that political and economic context.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis and Results**

In this chapter, I will first explore the cultural, political and economic context in which these museums operate. The purpose of such an exploration is to evaluate the extent to which, if any, coloniality impacted the Houston Museum of African-American Culture and the Tubman African-American Museum. Secondly, I utilize the Africological tradition to discuss the ways in which these two museums have impacted the patrons' thinking within this context. I structure my argument around a thematic analysis in which I describe the prevalent themes contained in the data (Renata Tesch 1990). I utilize the theoretical concept of "coloniality" to analyze these themes and situate them in relation to a longer trajectory of the Black Intellectual Tradition and longstanding African-American political interventions.

#### **Cultural, Political, and Economic Context of US Museums**

The period of museum formation during the mid-to late nineteenth, early- twentieth centuries in the United States was at a moment when Anglo nativism and racism crystalized. Anglo nativism operated on the principle that the Anglo heritage guaranteed the advancement of civilization. The national history formed in the United States was based in the purity and progress of the Anglo citizen alone. Between 1860 and 1925, the foreign-born, descendants of African slaves, and Mexicans migrated in large numbers to areas of industrial expansion. The rapid growth of cities caused a panic among native-born citizens, who began to question the nation's ability to assimilate the newcomers. Anglo

citizens worried that immigrant aliens and others would become a financial burden on cities, cause deterioration of the social environment, inspire subversive and revolutionary ideologies, and in general weaken the nation (Karen Davalos 2001, 36).

While European nations prioritized the creation of museums as cultural technologies and utilized state funding, in the United States there was a class of capitalists that funded the emergence of public museums in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries (Davalos 2001, 41; Donna Haraway 1984, 54) The capitalists who funded the great museums responded to the concerns of the rapid increase in non-European, immigrant populations by building the collections with the intention to restore order as it related to the country's culture (Davalos 2001, 41; Haraway 1984, 54). The museums' exhibitionary complexes were used as a response to the problem of order, cultural order.

As Bennett affirms, "It sought to render the forces and principles of order visible to the populace and transform them into a people, a citizenry" (Tony Bennett 1995, 62-63). The United States citizenry ultimately conferred to its white citizens despite the vast amounts of diversity that made up the overall populace. Anglo citizens, absorbing the ideas of racial superiority, imagined themselves as the only viable option for the nation (Davalos 2001, 36). Leaders of the reform movement began to address the conditions of the city by creating and/or funding public libraries and schools, city parks, auditoriums, symphony halls, museums, and art galleries as places of class reconciliation and democratizations. They believed that the restorative and recreational qualities of books, lectures, arts, music, and nature would diminish the class distinctions that inspired social upheaval. Reformers aimed to transform the city into their image of a modern, civilized, sanitized, and Christian metropolis (37).

Increasingly since the 1870s, the collections of the public art museum have communicated to the visitor a European-centered version of what is referred to as “American” cultural heritage, an authoritative and singular account of taste, and an evolutionary argument for the status quo (38). The great urban art museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Museum of American Art in Washington, DC reflect the universal history of Western civilization in the construction of it that equates the West with ancient Greece, Rome, (a re-appropriated) Egypt, or Renaissance Europe (38). By borrowing from the monumental architecture of ancient Rome and Greece and Renaissance Italy, the US public art museum invents a past of greatness, implying that the United States not only shares in the birth of civilization but also offers itself as the height of civilization. Ultimately, the narrative of triumph, particularly Anglo success, became the cornerstone of many great urban art museums (39).

Within public history museums, the rhetoric offered “sanitized tales of capitalism’s wonders and patriotism’s rewards” omitting the “raw experiences of industrialized capitalism, which include foreclosures, strikes, unemployment, a hazardous work environment, economic depression, and racial and gender inequity” (40). The natural history museum conveyed notions of citizenship through its absence of the Anglo citizen. Natural history museums, such as the Field Museum in Chicago, collected “everything under and in the heavens: animals, plants, insects, minerals, gems, fossils, microscopic organisms, celestial information, and even the art, tools, trinkets, and bones of certain people” (40). What is important to note is that natural history museums usually collected materials of Native Americans, Africans, and Asians, or other colonized people that stood in the path of the nation’s progress and expansion (40). The Anglo citizen is not the subject or

the object of the natural history museum because he is on the side of the civilized, the side that controls the collections—capturing and dissecting them for display. He is absent from the display cases because he is the measure for things and people on display; no animal, object, or non-European person measures up to him (40). The same applies to the anthropology or ethnographic museum, because, although he is also absent from the display cases, he is still the unspoken yardstick for everything on exhibit (41).

Timothy Luke (2002) and Bennett (1995) refer to the aforementioned as the “unseen knower.” For instance, Luke posits that artistic displays can affect political identity by using museum performances to guide individuals and groups through political discourses of self-recognition and self-activity (2002, 2). From this standpoint self-recognition is empowerment. In this instance there also is power in non-recognition of self for the Anglo citizen. The Anglo citizen, by not seeing himself on display at the natural history, anthropology, or ethnographic museum, is empowered to see himself from the side of power, the knower, albeit the unseen knower. Bennett postulates “people . . . [visitors] in seeing themselves from the side of power, both subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power” (1995, 63).

In this way, natural history museums tell a story about the citizens’ conquests, possessions, and desires. The display of subordinate people and cultures is thus the compelling narrative of the heterosexual, white citizen-subject and his achievement (Davalos 2001, 41). Similar to its European contemporaries, public museums in the U.S. employed the classification system that displayed evolutionary progress. For example, in the public art museums the art-historical arrangement determined the “place of each object

in the linear trajectory that leads to the pinnacle of aesthetic achievement—usually impressionist or abstract painting but always European art and artists” (50).

Public museums in the United States were built to support a limited notion of citizenship only embodied through the Anglo citizen. Minority populations were forced to find their identity in museums that were only made for the empowerment of the Anglo citizen. The changing representations of African Americans are rooted in African Americans seeking alternative representations against the backdrop of the national history that inherently excludes their existence.

### **Historicizing Black Museums**

During the late-nineteenth century, physical anthropologists and scientists of the disciplinary complexes stole and preserved millions of Native American objects; however, they did not do the same with African-American objects and artifacts because they were considered unremarkable (Fath Ruffins 1997). Those who were actively collecting African-American materials were social Darwinists who employed evolutionary theory by using collected African-American skeletons to support their claims that Black people were less evolved as a race (Ruffins 1997).

Ruffins (1997) observes that the earliest known attempts to preserve African-American history were through autobiographies of Africans in America known as “slave narratives,” around 1820-1900. After the communities of free Black people grew large enough, they were able to produce Black newspapers and other institutions in the 1820s. The first literary and historical society was founded in Philadelphia in 1828. In 1867,

Hampton Institution started the first African American Museum. Thereafter in 1896, abolitionist Frederick Douglass's Washington, DC home became the first Black historic house (Ruffins 1997).

Mabel O. Wilson (2012) documents the earliest exhibitions of African Americans in the milieu of the world's fairs during the period after Reconstruction. European and American governments hosted world's fairs to bolster their industrial and imperial prowess to other countries. Bennett notes, "The expositions and their fair zones constituted an order of things and of peoples which, reaching back into the depths of prehistoric time as well as encompassing all corners of the globe, rendered the whole world metonymically present, subordinated to the dominating gaze of the white, bourgeois, and . . . male eyes of the metropolitan powers" (1995, 84). They staged these extravagant competitions to ascertain whose economy was the most industrious and to gauge whose society was the most culturally refined, racially evolved, and hence civilized (Wilson 2012, 4).

In addition to inclusion within existing museums, African Americans were able to develop several private libraries and museums at the turn of the twentieth century. The American Negro Academy was founded in Washington DC, in 1897, and the Negro Society for Historical Research was founded in New York in 1902. Two of the most outstanding collectors of this period were Dr. Jesse Edward Moorland and Authur Alonzo Schomburg (4). By the period of the Great Depression, key collections of Black materials were established in federal government repositories by white folklorists with radical or populists sentiments (4).

The exhibitions that featured African Americans, known as Emancipation exhibitions, began after 1910 and continued through the 1960s (4). After demanding



inclusion through protesting white organizing boards and politicians, African Americans actively participated in mainstream world's fairs in the US and abroad. These expositions were organized by African Americans to "commemorate their hard-fought struggle to gain freedom from enslavement" (4). The content of the expositions conveyed narratives of who they were and wanted to become as a counter narrative to the prevailing evolutionary theory of man—specifically, white, heterosexual, middle class man.

Many members of the black elite and intelligentsia that made up the fair builders and organizers of the Emancipation expositions at the world's fairs from 1910 to the 1960s were also pivotal in the emergence of the early grassroots Black museums starting in 1950 (7). A few of those members included activist and journalist Ida B. Wells, scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois, founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and scholar, Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and initiator of Negro History Week in 1926 (Wilson 2012, 7; Andrea A. Burns 2013, 8).

The Black Museum Movement from 1950 to 1980 founded more than ninety African American museums in the United States and Canada. Many of the founders of Black museums were motivated by the need to create positive cultural myths and institutions (Ruffins 1997). In the 1950s and 1960s, many of these people were artists and teachers—such as Elma I. Lewis, who began the National Center of Afro-American artists in 1968, and Margaret Taylor Burroughs, who organized the Ebony Museum of Negro Culture (now the Du Sable Museum) in Chicago in 1961 (Ruffins 1997). After 1964, the founders of Black museums tended to be younger people whose political rhetoric and goals were informed by the civil rights movement. They included: Charles Wright, who established the Museum of

Afro-American History in Detroit (1965): Edmund Barry Gaither, hired by Elma Lewis to direct her museum in 1968; Byron D. Rushing, the first director of the museum of Afro-American History in Boston (1969); and Rev. John Kinard, the first director of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, DC (1967) (Ruffins 1997).

All of these leaders felt that museums could be instruments of empowerment for the local Black community. Most of the newer African American museums started with a mandate from the community for positive education, a group of political activists, and a desire to communicate (Ruffins 1997). During the 1970s, the growth of Black elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels brought Black communities greater government resources than ever before. Thus, this spawned the rapid advancement of Black museums and heritage societies across the nation. The aggregation of the museums led to the formation of the African-American Museums Association in 1978 (Ruffins 1997).

Overall, the creation of Black museums was one of the most important and successful institution-building outcomes of the Black Consciousness Era (Ruffins 1997). Aside from African American representation of themselves at the world's fairs in the late-nineteenth century and in their own grassroots museums in the mid-to late twentieth century, representations of African Americans evolved in mainstream public museums in some ways but not all. In the wake of the Black Consciousness Era, followed by the various other popular struggles pertaining to women's and gay/lesbian rights, these movements challenged academia and elite control of the public museum, pushing for the inclusion of their stories and respective histories in the academy at large and in public museums in particular.

The national and public museum response was a series of “programs, civic commissions, and grievance panels that did not produce radical change” (Davalos 2012, 46). Instead, some public museums “symbolically ‘responded’ by ‘discovering’ and ‘appreciating’ the art of so-called minority and poor populations” (46). The inclusion was short-lived:

Though generously funded in the 1980s and even in the early 1990s, programs, curricula, and exhibitions [pertaining to poor and minority communities had come to a screeching halt because]. . . . by the middle of the 1990s the funds had dried up, demographic profiles of museum goers were only temporarily altered, the collection policies did not change, and individuals of ‘discovered’ populations were not permanently hired to curate or work in arts administration. (47)

For instance, the restoration of the outdoor public history museum at Colonial Williamsburg, which was intended to be historically accurate, ignored the fact that 50 percent of Williamsburg’s inhabitants had been African American (Ruffins 1997). The museum’s interpretive framework was “devoted to heroes of war and capital . . . [and not] the stories of restricted suffrage to landowners, contract labor, and slavery” (Davalos 2001, 40). In the late 1970s, Colonial Williamsburg began to incorporate African Americans into its interpretive framework (Ruffins 1997). However, Davalos asserts that when public museums admit to difference, it is as if inequalities and conflicts between cultures and peoples do not exist. So when Colonial Williamsburg incorporated African Americans curators were willing to tell the story of slaves alongside the story of plantation owners but they were less willing to address class and race conflict (Davalos 2001, 53).

Davalos (2001) discusses another example of the responses that public museums initiated,

Even the frenzy of the 1980s and 1990s to re-model the public art museum to include a gallery or wing for non-Western art does not challenge the European-

centered collection policy or, more important, the unspoken assumption that the entire citizenry traces its heritage to the “West”. Many new galleries and wings still refer to non-European art as primitive or folk art in the art-historical hierarchy. (38)

In the end, the exhibition of so-called primitive art from Africa or the Americas often conceals histories of imperialism, colonialism, slavery, or the most recent form of social inequity, global capitalism (53). In this way while representations of African Americans in mainstream public museums evolved into including them into the museum’s infrastructure due to the large amount of protest, activism and public pressure, by and large, they still remain marginalized, sanitized, supplemental, and inconsequential to the story of how the West was won.

### **Description of Themes**

It is within the above-mentioned cultural, political and economic context of the development of museums in the United States that patrons enter these African-American museums that are steeped in a contested and politicized arena of representational practices. Based on my data compilation from the case studies of the Houston Museum of African-American Culture (HMAAC) and the Tubman African-American Museum (Tubman), I have generated three themes that capture the impact these museums had on its patrons: 1) Social and Racial Consciousness; 2) Instilled Racial Pride and Identity; and 3) Moved to Action.

First, I conceptualize “social and racial consciousness” as interactions with the exhibits that caused patrons to think critically about the current state of race relations in the United States. The visitors’ comments focused on society and the African-American

community as a whole. In these moments, visitors' comments were specifically focused on an assessment of how far the United States has come in terms of race relations. Moreover, visitors' comments reflected an assessment of their racial identity in determining how far African Americans have progressed since slavery.

Second, I utilize the concept of "instilling racial pride and identity" to capture themes related to visitors' comments that reflected a sense of pride in the accomplishments of people with whom they share a racial identity. From the comments it is through the exposure to the life and history of their fellow African Americans that they achieve group self-efficacy and individual self-esteem. Finally, my third concept of "moved to action" captures moments when visitors commented that their interactions with the exhibits galvanized them to engage in political activity beyond their visit to the museum. These inspirations toward political action varied among visitors. While some desired to conduct further research regarding a specific topic from the exhibit, others expressed the need for self-reflection and ethical development in the struggle for social justice. For these patrons, the exhibits evoked a critical reflection of self and community.

The significance of race is central to the visitors' commentary evoked by the exhibits. Hence, this data reinforces the idea that race is a central question in the United States. There are many ways to interpret the data. As I have discussed in Chapter One, there are two schools of thought in Africology. In the data analysis section below, I will discuss in detail the ways in which these theoretical traditions help to explain the data and illuminate larger structural questions of race and equality in the United States. I then utilize the decolonial framework to address my research question and to reconcile these two trends within Africology.

## **Data Analysis**

As I mentioned, coloniality is one concept that sheds light on how participants viewed their interactions with the exhibits. In particular, coloniality is useful for interpreting those moments that caused patrons to think critically about the current state of race relations in the United States. Coloniality as a concept, however, is able to resolve the tension between the two trends within Africology in its analysis of the entanglements of structures of subordination and domination in the capitalist world-system. For coloniality, race is structure rather than superstructure. Therefore, scholars of coloniality understand race as the organizing principle of other forms of social classification, and thus this theoretical intervention provides particular clarity to the areas of data where patrons expressed the saliency of race in their everyday experiences (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2005 Grosfoguel 2003, 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). For many patrons, race continues to be the dominant social force in their lives and coloniality as a concept provides a framework for understanding the resiliency of race in contemporary society. To understand coloniality's usefulness here, it is first necessary to make several points of theoretical distinction:

1) Race is rooted in the historical process of European colonial conquest and is a hierarchical structure that established the colonizer's humanity vis- à-vis the colonial subjects' inhumanity (Barganier 2011). 2) This system of social classification organizes other structures of domination. In colonial society the division of labor, for instance, is organized around questions of race. While Africans and Indigenous people were relegated to coerced forms of labor, whites were given the privilege of wage labor (Quijano 2000;

Mignolo 2005; Grosfoguel 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). In this way, race organizes the division of labor and is not reducible to economic relations. 3) Although coloniality was born out of European colonial rule, it survives the demise of formal colonial administrations (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2005; Grosfoguel 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). Coloniality refers to the structures of domination that emerged from colonialism, rather than colonialism as a system of governance (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2005; Grosfoguel 2003, 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). Therefore, race as a structure—which holds whiteness as the symbol of humanity and racialized subjects as the embodiment of inhumanity—still exists today (Torres 2007). Coloniality understands race as a structure of domination that is built around this question of humanity and that is not reducible to class.

### **1. Social and Racial Consciousness**

As I mentioned, this is one concept that threads through the participants' interactions with the exhibits that caused patrons to think critically about the current state of race relations in the United States. For example, one patron at the Tubman Museum stated, "*It doesn't help for me to be here and go back to the Jewish school . . . it builds resentment.*" Here from her comment we see that race is central to her understanding of how the exhibit has impacted her thinking. Africology scholars in the Culture and Society trend would attribute her comment to understanding, "When Black students enter predominantly white institutions they are indoctrinated in a process of psychological and cultural suicide" (Michael Thelwell 1969, 706). Those in the Political Economy trend would see her comment as a symptom of living in a society in which racism became a consequence of slavery (Williams 1994, 7).

Here each trend illuminates crucial aspects of this data however, coloniality illuminates that: 1) Racial meaning is one of dehumanization; 2) Coloniality locates race in the historical project of colonialism; and 3) These racial meanings survive colonial administrations. The racial meanings in the United States have been ingrained in the culture to reflect Black insubordination. Although the blatant dehumanization of enslavement is eradicated, the racial meanings survive the slave labor system. Now we are able to see the ways in which the concept of coloniality elucidates the data.

Central to many visitors' comments is this question around their dehumanization. As such, the visitor's comment reflects her understanding that racialization is still a process that impacts her, specifically at her educational institution. I assert that it is for that reason that the content of the exhibit "builds resentment" within her. Another moment revealed an assessment of racial identity in relation to the overall progress of the African population in America since slavery. One such visitor at the Tubman Museum shared:

"Like wow, they went through a lot just for us to be free and yet...we've come all these years of freedom and fighting for our freedom and yet the new generation with their eyes closed are taking us back there, slowly. That's how it made me feel. . . Not just my kids but the kids of the future that's coming. I have a 29-year-old, 27-year-old and a 24-year-old and because of them they're not paying close attention to what the world is coming to and we're slowly putting ourself back into slavery without even paying attention. So that's how it makes me feel it's just sad. Because, you know, at the end of the day you can almost see us back in that same position because we're partially there."

In the above comment, this patron's comparison of generations is her assessment of racial progress in America since slavery. Culture and Society would attribute her comments as an assessment of degenerate youth culture, whereas, Political Economy would attribute her comments to the consequence of the post-slavery era. However, coloniality reveals that race is a constitutive element of the economic system. "A systematic racial division of labor



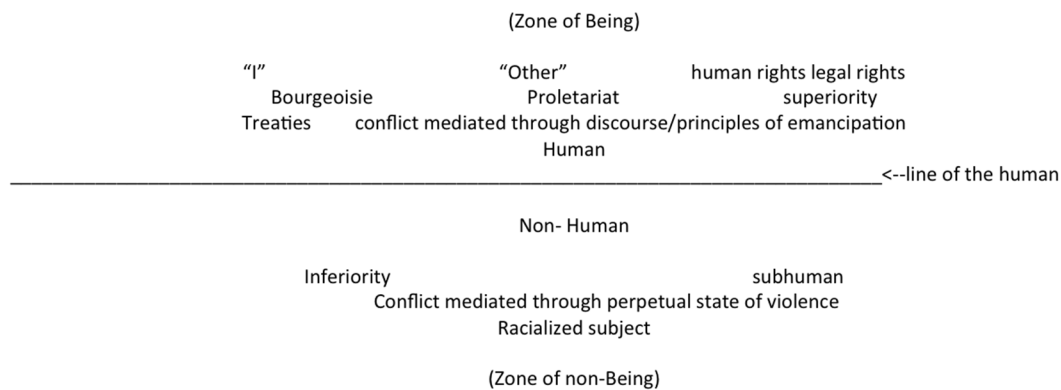
was imposed...the racist distribution of new social identification was combined . . . with a racist distribution of labor and the forms of exploitation of colonial capitalism . . . each form of labor was associated with a particular race” (Quijano 2000, 536-37). Consequently, the lower wages in the present capitalist centers that (“inferior”) races receive for the same work done by whites is attached to the global capitalist coloniality of power (539).

This association of whiteness with wages and colonized/racialized people with unpaid or lower wage labor comprises the basis of labor as a colonial structure of power. As such, since race is located in the historical project of colonialism, then the visitor’s assessment that the “newer generation” of African descended people in America are slowly putting themselves back into slavery is referring to the same racial meanings that dehumanized the African population during slavery. In interpreting her perspective using coloniality, it is not just the youth culture or the consequence of slavery that she is acknowledging; it is race as a dehumanizing aspect of the project of colonialism that survived formal eradication of unfree labor. Similar comments were made at the Houston Museum of African-American Culture (HMAAC). For instance, the social and racial consciousness of museum visitors can be gauged by the comment one visitor made in response to “Heck of A Job,” a short video clip which loops former President George W. Bush’s statement below in regard to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to Michael Brown (affectionately called “Brownie”), the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): “Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job.” President Bush’s comment is significant in light of the poor response by FEMA. Also significant is the museum’s display of this exhibit. The video is attached to a crucifix covered by an American flag that included racial epithets. (See Figure 1.) One such visitor in HMAAC responded:

“You know, that one right there [pointing at Heck of A Job]. That shit just brought back memories. Man, that shit just really pissed me off. It just really brought back memories. You know, I wish I could just go through the TV...[motioning an action to choke former President George W. Bush on the other side of the television screen] and you know.”

In the above comment, the visitor recognized the dehumanized treatment of the Black New Orleanian population on the part of the federal government during the Bush administration. Those who embrace a Culture and Society analysis would interpret this comment as a response to living in racialized society in which political and cultural oppression are ever present. Political Economists would explain this comment as a response to the economic conditions that gave rise to the federal response. Coloniality recognizes that not only is there a culture of Black subordination but that race is a constitutive element to the economic system. In the same way that Black life was seen as a commodity during the slave economy, those racial meanings have survived since emancipation. The anger expressed by this patron is his recognition of his dehumanization despite the discourse of emancipation propagated by the United States. According to the Fanonian definition of race, racial discourse is signified by who is human and who is not. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Fanonian Definition of Race



- Barganier, George. "Coloniality and Modernity in Latin America." Race Matters: Politics and Government in Latin America. Department of Africology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Wisconsin, Milwaukee. 01 Apr 2013. Lecture.

In Figure 2, the Fanonian definition of race is an idea of superiority and inferiority with a structure of power. The line of the human demarcates the idea of superiority and inferiority. The patron's anger is a signal that he recognizes his dehumanization and that he would like to mediate his conflict with former President Bush through violence. Degrees of humanity are determined and regulated through structures of power that mediate conflict among "humans" through a discourse of emancipation that entails treaties, human rights and legal rights. Conflict among "non humans", however, is mediated through violence, leaving life for the non-human a perpetual state of violence.

Other examples of patrons demonstrating social and racial consciousness were those who responded to "Angelitos Negros (Little Black Angels)"—the full-size sculpture of Michael Brown, the eighteen-year-old African- American male fatally shot by a Euro-

American police officer on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri located in HMAAC (See Figure 3). (See the comments below.)

“I was moved to tears. We had watched it on TV. It was really, really emotional. Provocative. It stirred up a lot of emotion that I really wasn’t prepared for; it just brought up a whole lot of emotions. The fact that the body. It felt like I was really standing there [viewing the body].”

“Very emotional; I felt a gambit of emotions—compassion for the families; angry because it even happened at all. Proud of the people [that] stand up for what’s right even though they’re not African American.”

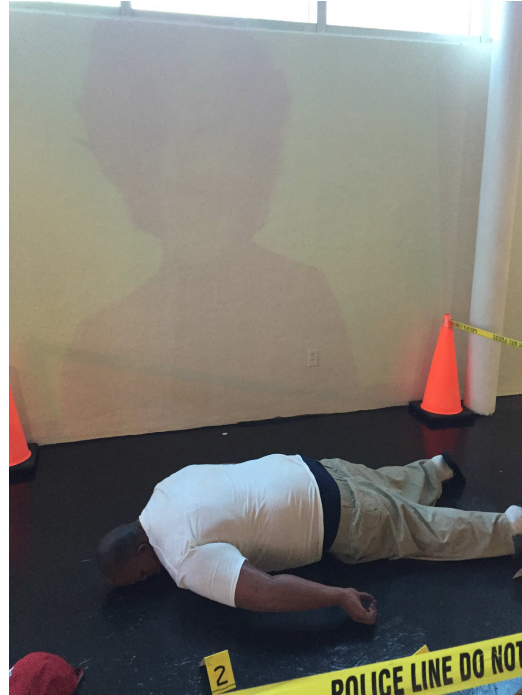
“There’s a little anger involved, you know. . . . the emotional sadness of it that’s present in it. . . . You would think that we’ve evolved in that but we really haven’t.”

In the above comments, Culture and Society would explain these patrons’ views as a reflection of the culture in which they live. Political Economists, on the other hand, would see it as a reflection of the economic system in place that fosters the anti-Black sentiment. Coloniality reconciles these two trends by understanding how the two perspectives work together to provide a more comprehensive depiction. As I have mentioned previously, the emotions expressed by these patrons in regard to viewing the Michael Brown sculpture is a result of their contemplation on the nature of their dehumanization. The sculpture represents one of many extra-judicial murders by the police, which ultimately speak to the state of contemporary race relations. Therefore, visitors commented specifically on United States race relations by saying “Proud of the people [that] stand up for what’s right even though they’re not African American” or “You would think that we’ve evolved in that but we really haven’t.” Thus, these visitors’ remarks not only reveal a sense of social

consciousness regarding race relations in the United States but they reveal their acknowledgement of the blatant dehumanization that still plagues communities of color.

**Figure 1: Heck of A Job. In Abolitionists: Different Eyes Seeing the Same Reality, Houston Museum of African-American Culture.**





***Figure 3: (left) Angelitos Negros. In Confronting Truths, Gallery Guichard (right) Angelitos Negros. In Abolitionists: Different Eyes Seeing the Same Reality, Houston Museum of African-American Culture***

## **2. Instilled Racial Pride and Identity**

This theme deals with visitors' comments that reflected a sense of pride in the accomplishments of people with whom they shared a racial identity. One such instance was when a patron disclosed in the Tubman Museum:

"Proud to be Black and knowing that they were back there in the day to...make it better for us."

In the above comment the patron is acknowledging their shared racial identity with the historical figures discussed in the exhibit. Culture and Society would attribute her comment as evidence of the restoration of the psyche of the individual to counter their psychological and intellectual oppression (Thelwell 1969), whereas, Political Economy would characterize this comment as a symptom of the economic system that she is situated in. The admission of being proud of the accomplishments of others to their benefit is something that is personally meaningful in terms of racial identity.

Studies have found that racial meaning is separate for Black and Euro-descended people. In exhibits on race, most majority museums tended to focus explicitly on culture without talking about the experiences of the people that created that culture (Small and Nimako 2012; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Nimako and Willemsen 2011). As an example, exhibits on African Art, slavery and Black cultural production, whether explicitly or implicitly, will focus on the material culture without talking about the experiences of the people that created or utilized such things. For the patrons at Tubman and HMAAC, the exhibits are not just about the culture; they are about race relations. The component that instills a sense of racial pride and identity is fundamentally different from that of majority

museums. As an example, instead of talking about slavery and highlighting Harriet Tubman as a figure in the Underground Railroad, the Tubman Museum included several photos, quotes, and archival documents about Harriet Tubman's life and one visitor developed this reaction after viewing it:

"Harriet Tubman was very informative...got to read some descriptions of what people really thought about her and what she did...you know the, public schools, they don't really talk about it but you know she had friends Frederick Douglass you know we don't think about them [historical figures] having friendships with other people like that we see them as just this pedestal type person who just is a statue but you know it kind of made her come to life a lil' bit more."

In this regard, the visitor is humanizing this historical figure, which makes her more relatable, and thereby having a more personable experience she can identify with.

Coloniality unveils that Tubman and HMAAC not only provide the cultural aspect but these museums are putting pieces of material culture in context with the political and economic circumstances to enable the facilitation of instilling racial pride and identity. Thus, what the exhibits are evoking for patrons are a means to challenge their racial dehumanization. The following comments from HMAAC demonstrate such evocation:

"It was very impactful, just a reminder of a lot of things we've done."

"Umm, that it's real! That all that we suffer and go through as a people. It's real!"

By acknowledging their racial identity in relation to the historical figures and events featured in the content of the exhibits at Tubman and HMAAC, visitors are able to understand not only the culture and society or the political and economic context, but they are able to wrestle with their dehumanization that are these racial meanings reflected in



the exhibit. One visitor from Tubman expressed affirmation in African descended contributions to American inventions:

“Pretty much everything that we use or associated with what we use is invented by a Black person...definitely intrigued, wanting to learn more.”

This visitor is impacted by the historical facts presented to her throughout the “From the Minds of African Americans” exhibit at Tubman. In *Africology, the Culture and Society* tradition is useful to explain how exposure to African-American history can impact the person. To be clear, the sample from Tubman consisted of ninety-eight percent African-American visitors. As such, scholars in this school of thought focused on the restoration of identity and self-esteem. In this fashion, scholars have made a concerted effort to purpose Black scholarship to advance the cultural survival of people of primarily African origin and their descendants. Michael Thelwell (1969) offers the perspective that “The black experience is not merely one of political and cultural oppression . . . it also includes psychological and intellectual manipulation and control of African Americans by the dominant majority” (709). Scholars have studied issues like education to understand one of the sources of oppression and to restore the identity of peoples of primarily African origin and their descendants.

Thelwell continues, “When Black students enter predominantly white institutions they are indoctrinated in a process of psychological and cultural suicide fostered by the covert racism and cultural chauvinism, which informs the intellectual and scholarly establishment” (1969, 706). The author attributes a large portion of the psychological and intellectual oppression to the system of indoctrination that is also known as the American educational system. In this regard, *Culture and Society* is useful here to explain the impact

of knowing one's history. Further, Carter G. Woodson speaks to this very process of indoctrination in his work *Mis-Education of the Negro*. Woodson uses a reading of the history of Negro education from the Reconstruction period forward to support the argument that others have improperly administered education to the detriment of black people.

No systematic effort toward change has been possible, for, taught the same economics, history, philosophy, literature and religion which have established the present code of morals, the Negro's mind has been brought under the control of the oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. (1972, xiii)

Echoing the views of Thelwell, Woodson attributes one of the major sources of oppression within the scope of the educational system. As a remedy for Black mental and psychological enslavement, Woodson collaborated with W.E.B. Dubois in the early 1900s to "promote the rich history of black folk culture" to counter the "'white-washing' of collective memory regarding slavery and its legacy while celebrating African-American accomplishments, history, and culture" (Burns 2013, 8). The desired restoration of racial pride and identity is demonstrated here with the visitor's "intrigue" and "wanting to know more" about the culture she identifies with. Her response to the exhibit confirms Woodson's assertion that, "The education of any people should begin with themselves (Woodson 1972, 32) . . . no one can be thoroughly educated until he learns as much about the Negro as he knows about other people" (Woodson 1972, 136). Not only is the visitor's racial pride and identity instilled, but also, by recognizing themselves in the exhibits, the visitor is empowered.

Luke (2002) and Bennett (1995) corroborate this notion as the unseen knower—artistic displays can affect political identity by using museum performances to guide

individuals and groups through political discourses of self-recognition and self-activity (Luke 2002, 2). From this standpoint, self-recognition is empowerment. As previously mentioned, museum leaders of the Emancipation exhibitions and the Black Museum Movement felt that museums could be instruments of empowerment for the Black community (Ruffins 1997; Wilson 2012). Thus, the museum's impact of instilling racial pride and identity is situated in a longer trajectory of the Black Intellectual tradition to "vindicate the race". Tubman Museum's founder, Richard Keil, shared that reasons why he founded the museum:

I didn't start this because of a dream. You know some people say, 'Well, Keil dreamed of this.' I never had a dream. I worked; I studied; and I worked some more. And I lived in the African-American community since 1956. I lived there. It wasn't that I lived in a very nice house in the suburbs. I lived in either the ghetto or rural Mississippi or rural Alabama. . . . My first job was working in the fields of rural Alabama and trust me the only people who would be doing that is African-American men. I grew up and it was part of the culture. . . . It's like the air I breathe is purer than the air you breathe or somebody else breathes. And it's the same thing with racism. Our country just inhales it. From the smallest, you know, from the very start. And you know, African-Americans were . . . ignorant, they're dirty, immoral, you know, lazy, and here I was working, doing very hard work with all fine, young African-American men. Except for a couple who were old but they were working and working hard. Wonderful people and they'd invite me to their home and I met their wives and met their girlfriends and their daughters and their sons and then I had went to a little Black church and I meet these people who are so nice to me. They really were and all of a sudden I just said, 'You know all the stuff that I learned in my life was a lie. It really was!' And so I just said, and it was during, as I said '56 so, I had started a study for the priesthood, So I had made up my mind, that's what I wanted to dedicate myself to the liberation of this kind of trash. (Keil 2015)

Much of Keil's reasoning behind founding the Tubman African-American Museum is rooted in the African-American thrust to "vindicate the race." Race vindication was a major activity for Black intellectuals from the early nineteenth century onward. African-American literary artists, political leaders, preachers, professors, publishers, and other highly educated

professionals put their intellect and training in service to “the race” to “deconstruct the discursive structures erected in science, medicine, the law, and historical discourse to uphold the mental and cultural inferiority of African peoples” (V.P. Franklin and Bettye Collier-Thomas 2002, 160). Important spokespersons included: Alexander Crummell, Ida Wells-Barnett, James Weldon Johnson, Harry Haywood, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and W.E.B. DuBois. Such spokespersons “used their life writings to tell the truth about themselves and their people, and expose the lies about the nature of European and American cultures and societies being spread internationally by white supremacists” (160).

Keil’s “race vindication” approach definitely had its roots in instilling racial pride in its Black audiences. The early fair builders “collected stories of struggle and perseverance from former slaves as a means of gathering evidence of black America’s laudable accomplishments” (Wilson 2012, 13). From this collective memory, the Black organizers carefully crafted exhibits and performances around historical narratives of enslavement and Emancipation that educated and fostered race pride in Black audiences.

Scholars St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton in their work *The Black Metropolis* also recognized the race pride approach, stating, “In the period between the First and Second World Wars the emphasis Negro leaders placed on cultivating ‘race pride’ became a mass phenomenon among Negroes in larger urban communities” (1945, 391). This phenomenon still impacts Black audiences, including the sample of the ninety-eight percent African-American visitors I observed at the Tubman museum. Moreover, commentary about racial pride observed at HMAAC was centered on how far they have come social justice wise and how far they have to go. Ultimately these museums provided a space for an assessment of the race for those who identify as African American. In the way early fair builders provided

a progress report in the form of an exhibition, the Tubman and HMAAC provide a space for visitors to identify their group progress or lack thereof.

For Keil, dedicating himself to the “liberation of this kind of trash” was to dispel negative cultural myths about the African descended population in America. From his perspective, creating a space for the preservation of African-American history and culture was the answer:

And when I travelled, I'd go to gas stations in the rural South. There would be a picture . . . of a African-American woman, huge lips and you know, just exaggerating the white person's concept of the Black person. And yet, in northern Wisconsin, I would see, even though there's been even probably more terrible tragedies with the Native American people out there, but at least you can go to the stores and you'll see a beautiful statue of a Native American woman or man or something like that. But in the South...as far as going into a department store and seeing a picture of a beautiful man, African-American man and a beautiful African-American woman or even the way people would talk, just like in front of you they would say the N-word and they'd call me a N-lover to my face. . . . But you know, I'm very quiet. . . . I just said, we have to change this. . . . So basically it was, I thought and with my readings by Black scholars and activists, we have to preserve African-American history. (Keil 2015)

In creating this space, Keil drew from what historian Thomas J. Davis calls “we, too, were here” syndrome—which “reveals itself in static, undifferentiated, impersonal exhibitions that sweep across time with the aim of showing that black people, like whites, were also here” (1989, 329; Burns 2013, 9). Black museum leaders who employed this “we, too, were here” tactic in their exhibits demonstrated to audiences, both Black and white, that African and African-American history were worthy of respectful public representation and dialogue, and that historical discourse about Black inferiority was dangerously incorrect (Burns 2013, 9). In the midst of an overtly racist South in the 1950s and 60s he had a vision

to counter negative stereotypes about the country's African-American population through the preservation of African-American history and culture.

Moreover, according to Mabel Wilson in *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (2012), the “we, too, were here” approach aligns with the Black Intellectual tradition to be corrective. In correcting and producing knowledge pertaining to people of primarily African origins there was also the motivation to instill a sense of racial pride. Faced with the ideological tone that put the world on display from primitive to civilized at America's turn-of-the century fairs, there was born a legacy of Black Americans who had utilized the fairs in Atlanta, Paris, Charleston, Jamestown, New York, and Chicago as accessible venues for the display of racial progress (Wilson 2012, 7). Wilson (2012) writes, “When confronted with these powerful and persuasive narratives of civilization, black Americans used the fairs to vigorously respond to how they were being portrayed and positioned” (7). Members of the Black elite and intelligentsia such as Alain Locke, Mary Church Terrell, Ida Wells, W.E.B. DuBois, Kelly Miller, Meta Fuller, Carter G. Woodson, Claude Barnett, Horace Cayton, and Margaret Burroughs, “sought to disprove the bleak forecasts augured by their fellow white citizens by taking measure of their own advancement” (7). In well-fought battles with white fair organizers and politicians to represent themselves at the world's fairs, these early black fair builders earned their very own “Negro Building” firstly at the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition, with others soon to follow (Wilson 2012; Robert W. Rydell 1993). The “Negro commissioners” were charged to organize a landmark exhibit highlighting the progress of the Negro race in the thirty years since their emancipation from enslavement (Wilson 2012, 31). As such, “To counter the perception of the Negro as lazy and uncivilized, Penn

[Head of Atlanta's Negro Building] meticulously outlined the various achievements of the Negro race in the categories of education, professional achievement, patents, journalism, religious institutions, art, literature, and music" (51).

Rydell (1993) describes the Negro Building Exposition in detail:

Fairgoers who actually entered the main lobby of the building received a pamphlet authored by W.E.B. DuBois on the contributions by African Americans to Texas and to the United States and brochure describing the art on display in the building, including four murals on lobby walls by renowned artist Aaron Douglas. The murals depicted the history of the African American from 'the time of his transportation from Africa to his present period of progress.' Right below the murals were the names of noted African Americans: Charles Young, Richard Allen, Benjamin Banneker, Wright Cuney, Daniel Williams, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Booker T. Washington, Crispus Attucks, and Frederick Douglass. Beyond the foyer, thousands of exhibits from thirty-two states were organized into six categories: 'education, fine arts, health, agriculture, mechanic arts and business' with portions of each exhibit area devoted to several federal agencies and their work on behalf of African Americans. Federal exhibitors included the Department of Education, the Resettlement Administration, the Public Health Service, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Youth Administration, with the latter two agencies supplying sixty persons to serve as guides to the exhibits. On their tours of the building, visitors learned about the development of African-American universities, witnessed an exhibit devoted to African-American musical and artistic accomplishments, received a copy of an African-American newspaper from the African-American newspaper exhibit organized by Chicago *Defender* editor Claude Barnett, learned about the variety of African-American churches, discovered the existence of federal loans for African-American farmers, learned about Civilian Conservation Corps camps for African Americans, found out about African-American inventors, and received information about African-Americans attorneys who had argued before the Supreme Court. (178)

The exhibit's content at the Tubman museum contains most of the elements from the early Negro Building expositions such as the "From Africa to America" mural, African-American inventions, profiling historical figures, and the presentation of African-American accomplishments. As such, Tubman's "From Africa to America" mural (see Figure 4) held the highest holding power with visitors spending an average of seventy-nine seconds

viewing and discussing the mural that highlights African-American firsts. Further, forty-eight percent of all visitors stopped at objects pertaining to Harriet Tubman and spent an average of forty seconds viewing it. As one visitor noted, the objects about her life made her, as a historical figure, “come alive.” Additionally, the “Letter to Harriet Tubman from Frederick Douglass” had the greatest holding power within the Harriet Tubman exhibit with visitors spending an average of sixty seconds viewing the document. Overall, visitors were intrigued with the personal papers and photos of such an iconic historical figure that they can claim a racial identity with.

The fact that “vindicating the race” and “corrective” politics are still employed in an era in which the United States claims to be “post-racial” is very telling. The centrality of race in the African-American experience is still relevant. Here too, the concept of coloniality is useful. From this data, we see that race is continuing to shape the lives of these patrons despite the political and economic strides that many African Americans have made since the Civil Rights era.

Political Economy is useful here to contextualize the post-Civil Rights era. Between 1890 and 1910, Jim Crow laws created an elaborately divided world, such that the whites inhabited the domain of resources and power and African Americans inhabited the domain of deprivation and powerlessness. The weight of this system fell with greatest force on those in rural areas where people were tied to the land by debt slavery and peonage (sharecropping) (Fullilove 2004, 22-23). In 1916, the black mass movement to the city began. By 1930, 1.5 million black people had left the privation and oppression of the rural areas to make a new life there (23). Others moved from rural areas in the South to



Southern cities. Though African Americans were ninety percent rural at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were ninety percent urban 100 years later (27).

When they arrived to the cities, Fullilove (2004) documents that, “People arrayed themselves on an urban grid in a particular pattern. Poorer, industrial neighborhoods occupied the center, while wealthier, more residential neighborhoods were located at the edges” (24). Further, Fullilove adds,

White people, when they first arrived, would live in the poor neighborhoods in the center of the city, which we may call ‘newcomer neighborhoods.’ . . . When they got a little money, they moved on to more peripheral neighborhoods. The newcomer neighborhoods were centrally located, close to mills and factories. . . . Although they were areas of filth, crime, and poverty, those funky neighborhoods provided the doorway into the American dream...For blacks, the newcomer neighborhoods were the beginning and the end of their options for housing. . . . The newcomer neighborhoods were transformed into Negro ghettos. (24)

Geography is important to implement the idea of race to organize the world’s population into a hierarchical order of superior and inferior people. The racial/ethnic hierarchy is at the center of the international division of labor where the core—wealthy, developed countries—utilizes skilled labor and the periphery—poor, underdeveloped countries—operate with coerced and authoritarian forms of labor (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2005; Grosfoguel 2007, 2009; Torres 2007). What is peculiar about the African-American population located in the core nation of the United States is that they are occupying a periphery position within a core nation. They have been underdeveloped as a people (Marable 1983). This situation has been recognized as an internal refugee population (Fullilove and Wallace 2011) and internal colonialism (Omi and Winant 1994; Allen 2005). As I mentioned above, the European melting pot was a way for European immigrants to enter the newcomer neighborhoods and leave; however, the African-Americans’ internal

colonial status rendered them to the newcomer neighborhoods as their permanent location.

After 1945, a changing global economy, in conjunction with the emergence of a new postcolonial, transnational context, fostered significant shifts in Black civil society. Globally numerous groups waged successful anticolonial struggles that resulted in new nation-states in African and Asia. Within the United States, the Black activism of the 1950s-1970s stimulated the dismantling of de jure and de facto racial segregation (Collins 2009, 65). From the end of World War II to the mid 1970s, US African-Americans acquired unprecedented access to education, housing, and jobs long denied under legal segregation (65).

From the Founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910 to the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, US African-Americans pursued a policy of gaining civil rights and equal treatment in housing, schools, jobs, and public accommodation (66). This changed political climate led to African-American civil society becoming more stratified by social class. The sizable working class that had long formed the core of African-American civil society expanded upward. From this working-class “center,” many African-Americans experienced social mobility into the fledgling Black middle class (66).

On the other hand, while many African-Americans benefited from the changed legislative climate, many others did not. Many African-Americans endured downward social mobility from the working-class center. The downwardly mobile—those who lost their job and failed to find new ones—joined a growing population of poor African Americans that had been on the bottom all along. This growing group on the bottom, often

referred to as the “Black underclass,” was not the cause of Black economic disadvantage but instead constituted one outcome (66). In the post-World War II period, Black civil society underwent considerable changes. At the center of these changes is a restructured global political economy. Job export to nonunionized American and foreign markets, job deskilling, the shift from manufacturing to service occupations, and job creation in suburban communities all allow firms to find cheaper substitutes for African-American labor (66-67).

In the wake of the 1960s’ legal victories not all segments of US society were willing to enforce antidiscrimination legislation. In addition, conservative politicians advanced a series of racial projects designed to limit if not eliminate the social gains of the 1960s in the 1980s and throughout the 1990s (67). These advances were coupled with white backlash in the form of growth in new white supremacist organizations and worsening chronic unemployment in many African-American urban neighborhoods on top of deeply entrenched patterns of racial segregation in housing (67).

In general, work for African-American men in manufacturing disappeared. African-American women could find work, but it was often part time, low paid, and lacking in security and benefits. Further, the introduction of crack cocaine in urban African-American neighborhoods in the early 1980s incorporated men and women into the informal economy. Drugs became a major employer of young African-American men and young African-American women looked to these men for financial assistance (66). While US African Americans became more class stratified, the racial segregation in housing that fosters inequalities of education and employment persisted (66).

Here we see that not only have colonial racial meanings survived the post- Civil Rights era, but the patrons also recognize the role that race is playing in contemporary society. Put very simply, if race was reducible to class, then race should have disappeared for those African Americans that have achieved a measure of economic success—or at least, declined in significance.



**Figure 4: From Africa to America. Tubman African- American Museum**



**Figure 5: Harriet Tubman, 1911. In *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People*, Tubman African American Museum**

### **3. Moved to Action**

These moments were interactions with the exhibits that galvanized them to engage in political activity beyond their visit to the museum. One patron at HMAAC stated the following:

“I think it will make people reassess: ‘What am I doing?’ like, ‘What am I contributing?’”

In this moment, the visitor expressed the need for self-reflection and ethical development in the struggle for social justice. Culture and Society would say that their need to galvanize is attributed to social and cultural influences on their psyche.

As the Political Economy trend understands race as an ideological byproduct of capitalism, conversely, coloniality understands race as a structure of domination that is entangled with the other forms of domination such as sex, labor, and authority. It is not about class-consciousness and a class struggle; it is about racial consciousness and a racialized struggle. Coloniality understands this moment as a reflection of how the exhibit caused the patron to grapple with their dehumanization to the point where they wanted to engage in political activity such as doing further research. The visitors from Tubman demonstrate this desire for engagement below:

“When we get back to the house we gon look this up and see...”

“ I mean I took some pictures so I can go back and read it.”

In the above comments, visitors are grappling with the historical figures and/or current events that are presented in the museum and their response was that of further research.

For these patrons, the discussions of race in Tubman and HMAAC are not just about culture; it is about the nature of their lives. They have been so profoundly influenced by the

content presented that they are equipped to confront their dehumanization by exploring the subject further. Another patron from HMAAC expressed such an instance:

“There are things you can go back and research on your own. So if you see something, for instance, the video with Elizabeth Warren, that’s something I didn’t know about so I think it gives you an opportunity to kind of delve a little deeper into some issues you may not know about.”

For this patron, he wanted to research further the historical injustices inflicted upon African Americans as discussed by Senator Elizabeth Warren in her speech, “Getting to the Point.” This was a political decision on his behalf that would not have otherwise been made if there were objects and content on display that focused on material culture separate from the political and economic context. He is researching further the nature of racial meaning in America that dehumanizes him.

Hence, these racial meanings that early Black leaders of the Emancipation expositions and Black Museum Movement grappled with are similar to the racial meanings the staff at HMAAC and Tubman are contending with. Part of HMAAC CEO’s mission is to promote, “Exhibitions that make people talk. . . . And somehow out of that talk we hope that people begin to talk about making things better and solving the problems that exist for us today” (Guess, Jr. 2015). Thus, by addressing the contemporary issues facing Black America, he hopes to steer the visitors’ inspiration for action towards “solving the problems that exist for us today.” In this regard, Guess’ mission is to not only to get people talking but also to urge them to reassess pertinent information about these issues. HMAAC’s ABOLITIONISTS exhibit not only impacted its patrons’ sense of social and racial consciousness but it also evoked responses that inspired visitors to action as well.

This theme is aligned with the Black Intellectual tradition's function to be prescriptive. The purpose of black scholarship is more than the restoration of identity and self-esteem—it is to use history and culture as tools through which people interpret their collective experience, but for the purpose of transforming their actual conditions and the totality of the society all around them (Marable 2000, 18). For the patrons, doing further research gives them an opportunity to interpret their “collective experience” further. Wilson (2012) notes that Black museum leaders of the International Afro American Museum in the 1960s declared, “The museum should not only collect artifacts but, more importantly, should inspire black citizens to action” (2012, 253). Race is still a central question for African Americans; therefore all the political interventions from the post-Reconstruction period, Civil Rights period, and the post-Civil Rights period is still relevant and required in this so-called post-racial era.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Coloniality as a concept reinforces the importance of the long-standing trends within the discipline of Africology. Both traditions within Africology—Culture and Society and Political Economy—illuminate crucial aspects of contemporary African-American life. Culture and Society argues that explanations of and solutions for the Black condition revolve around culture and psychology, whereas Political Economy argues explanations of and solutions to the Black condition revolve around economic relations or structure. The inclusion of coloniality, however, serves to mediate the tension of the culture versus economy debate and is rooted in the Black Radical Tradition. As such, I am situating my work in what scholar Maldonado-Torres calls the “decolonial turn,” that is in a long

hallmark of some of the most innovative, critical Black thinkers. The “decolonial turn” is simply the “critical responses to racism and colonialism articulated by colonial and racial subjects” (Torres 2008, 7).



## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

#### **Summary of Findings**

In the previous chapter, I generated three themes that captured the impact the Houston Museum of African American Culture and the Tubman African American Museum had on its patrons: 1) Social and Racial Consciousness; 2) Instilled Racial Pride and Identity; and 3) Moved to Action. In the first theme, I conceptualized “social and racial consciousness” as the moment when the exhibits caused patrons to think critically about the current state of race relations in the United States. In the second theme, I utilized the concept of “instilling racial pride and identity” to capture the moments when visitors’ comments reflected a sense of pride in the accomplishments of people with whom they shared a racial identity. Finally, my third concept, “moved to action,” captured moments when visitors commented that their interactions with the exhibits galvanized them to engage in political activity beyond their visit to the museum. The significance of race is central to the visitors’ commentary evoked by the exhibits. Hence, this data reinforced the idea that race is a central question in the United States.

In my data interpretation, I employed the theoretical concept of “coloniality” to analyze these themes and situate them in relation to a longer trajectory of the Black Intellectual tradition and longstanding African-American political interventions. For the first theme, “social and racial consciousness,” relevant scholarly discussions on the subject of racial and social consciousness were the Black Intellectual tradition’s descriptive function to present the reality of Black life from the perspective of Black people themselves.

Culture and Society explains the visitors' comments pertaining to social and racial consciousness as a reflection of being indoctrinated in a racialized society, whereas Political Economy explains such comments as dealing with racism that developed as a consequence of slavery. I asserted that coloniality sees the visitors' comments as the recognition of their dehumanization in the form of contemporary racial meanings that survived the slave labor system. Furthermore, coloniality sees race as a constitutive element of the economic system and not a consequence of an economic shift.

In the second theme, "instilled racial pride and identity," I noted that it was situated in a longer trajectory of the Black Intellectual tradition to "vindicate the race." Accordingly, Culture and Society was useful to explain how exposure to African-American history can impact the person. Moreover, Political Economy was useful for contextualizing the post-Civil Rights era for Black America. Still, coloniality was necessary to reconcile the two in understanding that patrons were steered to recognize the role race plays in contemporary society. Coloniality illuminates that: 1) Racial meaning is one of dehumanization; 2) Coloniality locates race in the historical project of colonialism; and 3) These racial meanings survive colonial administrations. If the need to "vindicate the race" is still necessary in contemporary society, then the racial meanings that organize our economy and social classification are continuing to dehumanize people of color and African Americans in particular.

Finally, the third theme, "moved to action," revealed that visitors were galvanized toward political action beyond the museum visit. Culture and Society would say that their need to galvanize is attributed to social and cultural influences on their psyche. As the Political Economy trend understands race as an ideological byproduct of capitalism, it is a

structure of domination that is entangled with the other forms of domination such as sex, labor, and authority. Coloniality interprets visitors' comments as an avenue to grapple with their dehumanization by exploring the subject further or reassessing their ethics. Through this political intervention, this thrust is rooted in the Black Intellectual Tradition's function to be prescriptive. Historically African-American scholars, museum leaders and activists alike have summoned the political intervention to bestow their work towards the empowerment of the African-American community as a whole.

In my concluding perspectives discussion, I include: 1) the public representation of African-American enslavement, 2) African Americans and historical trauma, and 3) museums as alternative spaces for minorities.

## **Concluding Perspectives**

### **Representations of African-American Enslavement**

Before 1980, there was a virtual silence about slavery in American museums (Ruffins 2006, 394). Ruffins argues that there were "restrictions to the discussion of the trans Atlantic slave trade that emerged after Christopher Columbus's arrival" (394). Further, the author chronicles this silence that persisted in museums well into the late twentieth century (Ruffins 2006, 401). Silence on the subject of slavery reflected the larger fact that, "before about 1970 African Americans were simply missing from most official formulations of American history" (Ruffins 1998, 78). The larger mythos of Black history was that it had been "lost, stolen or strayed" (78).

Considering that there is a history of cultural memory that was segregated along with the history of the United States' formally de facto and de jure segregated society, "the all-white professional staffs of mainstream museums followed the available scholarship...which relegated slavery to the margins of American history" (2006, 396). It was not until the "social history" revolution scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s that efforts to recover the voices of the "voiceless" slaves were inserted back into American history. Works by scholars such as Kenneth Stampp, Herbert Gutman, Eugene Genovese, John Blassingame, Lawrence Levine, and Ira Berlin changed the landscape of American history and paved the way for more than two generations of inquiry into the lives of ordinary African Americans (Ruffins 1998).

Another cause for the silence on slavery was the general consensus that slavery was considered an exclusively southern story and therefore "regional." According to Ruffins, "There was no clear reason why U.S. museums in the East and Midwest. . . . should devote floor space or collections attention to the [regional] subject of slavery" (Ruffins 2006, 396). Within the South itself, powerful traditions of memory had unlinked the history of slavery from the history of the Confederacy. As far as Southern mythos goes, the heroic Confederates had fought to preserve this grand and decorous world of their forefathers (396).

Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small (2002), in their work *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*, witnessed the southern mythos employed in the 122 Southern plantation museums sites they visited. Eichstedt and Small observed what they called the process of "social forgetting," which they attributed to the absence of discussions of the system of slavery and those who had been enslaved while

touring the sites. The authors postulate that Southern plantation museums employed selective history-making that ultimately presents the “South as genteel, beautiful, romantic, marked by honor and nobility, and filled with chaste white women and generally, upstanding, brave white men” (Eichstedt and Small 2002, 9).

The silence was interrupted in the 1980s with the release of various advances made in other media such as television and film (Ruffins 2006, 401). In the 1970s, Alex Haley’s best-seller *Roots* was published in 1976 followed by the NBC television network release of the miniseries *Roots* (1977). This miniseries, based on the text, had a profound impact on American public culture (398). Record numbers of Americans watched. Media interviews suggested that most people had never known about the violence and personal humiliations of slavery (398). Additional films such as *Glory* (1989), *Amistad* (1997), and *Beloved* (1998) resulted in greater public knowledge of slavery and its consequences. Added books such as Dorothy Spruill’s *Somerset Homecoming: Recovering a Lost Heritage* (1989), Peter Kolchin’s *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (1993), and more recently, James Oliver Horton and Lois Horton’s *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (2008) also contributed to the trend in the growing public and scholarly interest in slavery (Burns 2013, 9).

Following the 1977 release of the television miniseries, *Roots*, ABC television network released the equally successful *Holocaust* (1978), which also broke viewing records. This film on the European Holocaust stunned many Americans including members of Congress, so much so that a rare unanimous vote in both the House and the Senate authorized the Holocaust Memorial Commission. Thirteen years and \$200 million dollars later the American public witnessed a “move from a set of ideas to an imposing building

near the Mall, not far from the Washington Memorial” (Ruffins 2006, 399). The erection of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum presented a model framework by which African Americans can talk about slavery since representations of it previously seemed to have insurmountable problems associated with presentation.

This new framework prototype from the Holocaust Museum offered African Americans a way to present a horrific story with dignity that provides irrefutable evidence of historical evil and respectfully acknowledge millions of lives lost. The Holocaust Museum resonated with so many Americans because it preserves the memory of a holocaust that took place outside the United States. The problem with discussions of slavery derives from the circumstance that African Americans’ presence in the population is not from voluntary migration. Further, if the Middle Passage or slavery can be described as a Holocaust, then the villains were not so distant, in England or Turkey or Eastern Europe. Rather, some villains of the Black Holocaust (or their descendants) are American too (401). Some of the problems associated with framing discussions of slavery lie in how it connects to the development of the nation. Since the national history represented in museums is based off the heroic Anglo citizen and industrial capitalism, having discussions of slavery and its contribution to the nation’s success interposes the national historical narrative.

By the 1990s, the public interest aroused through other media, novels as well as films, began to affect museums, especially in terms of audience interest and demands for exhibitions on slavery (404). Colonial Williamsburg facilitated several representations of slavery starting in the early 1980s with African American actor and historian Rex Ellis’s “first-person interpretations” that highlighted the overlooked lives of Williamsburg’s

African Americans, both enslaved and free. At one time, Colonial Williamsburg's presentations of slavery lagged behind the ever-growing scholarship on slavery. However, by the mid-1980s, Williamsburg had become a leader in the burgeoning efforts to discuss slavery in a public context and an important source of archaeological and documentary research (402).

In 1994, Colonial Williamsburg opened for visitation Carter's Grove, a large plantation site six miles from the center of town. After conducting extensive archaeological surveys, slave quarters that had once stood on the property were rebuilt on the original sites and interpreted as dwellings for field slaves (407). In 1999, the African American interpreters thought that they and their audiences had matured to the point that Williamsburg could attempt some special programming: a slave auction. Ruffins asserts the following: "Of course, slave sales were a fundamental part of the slave system, and one of the biggest slave markets was in nearby Richmond, Virginia. However, no one had yet tried to present an auction as part of living history interpretations" (407).

Although controversial, Colonial Williamsburg did go through with the auction despite threats from the NAACP to sue and others to boycott. The auction has never been repeated but Colonial Williamsburg has continued to produce programming that dramatically presents the dilemmas of enslaved people. Their 2000 "escaped slave" program is one to mention in which guests are approached by a runaway slave and they are to act instinctively to the situation. As it turns out, it is one of its most popular programs (407).

The movement to "museumize" the subject of slavery has seen a very tumultuous road. However, by 2005 a number of important, though controversial, exhibitions about

slavery have appeared in large museums in England, France, and the United States. Various aspects of the slave trade such as the Middle Passage have become the specific focus of plays, dances, public conferences, and memorial. In several states—Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia—well-connected politicians have proposed building entire museums devoted to the presentation of slavery’s history in the United States (Ruffins 2006, 395).

In view of it all, two interpretive frameworks emerged as a result of discussions regarding representations of slavery in the context of museums: 1) promotion of racial reconciliation or 2) argument for reparations (416-417). There have been heated public arguments about whether African Americans should be compensated for enslavement in the form of reparations (409) or whether they should focus on reconciliation pedagogy that call for public apologies (417). In any case, these are the concerns that have surfaced with such a global subject as slavery. Museums who are looking to museumize slavery from this point on will have to make those critical curatorial decisions in light of the social, political, and economic climates of their establishment. This subject speaks specifically to the prospect of where the staff at the recently opened National Museum of African American History and Culture may have gone interpretively.

The subject of slavery has changed from not being discussed at all to proliferating discussions among scholars and the public to entire museums dedicated to the subject. The discussions or lack thereof concerning slavery were intimately tied to the nation’s separate versions of history. On the one hand, the national history tells the tale of the heroic Anglo-Saxon defeating the backwards non-white folks to forge the world’s greatest empire; on the other hand, you have African Americans’ notion of the same history that inserts their



contributions and illuminates the dark side of the American story. These opposing histories form the basis of the changing representations of slavery in museum exhibitions.

### **African Americans and Historical Trauma**

The subject of slavery and the African Holocaust as a whole is a source of much contention in United States history to say the least. In the context of museums, “evidence of historical evil” to “acknowledge millions of lives lost” has been presented as either the promotion for reconciliation or the argument for reparations (Ruffins 2006). Such historical occurrences are also the root of *historical trauma* for African Americans. *Historical trauma theory* in its various interpretations amounts to the premise that “populations historically subjected to long-term, mass trauma—colonialism, slavery, war, genocide—exhibit a higher prevalence of disease even several generations after the original trauma occurred” (Michelle M. Sotero 2006, 93). Additionally Sotero notes,

A key feature of historical trauma theory is that the psychological and emotional consequences of the trauma experience are transmitted to subsequent generations through physiological, environmental and social pathways resulting in an intergenerational cycle of trauma response.(93)

As such, the original trauma not only causes populations to exhibit a higher prevalence of diseases, but also causes mental and behavioral patterns in subsequent generations that contribute to and perpetuate the diseases. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation describes historical trauma as “a cluster of traumatic events and as a disease itself” (Sotero 2006, 96). Moreover, “the symptoms for historical trauma as a disease are the maladaptive social and behavior patterns that were created in response to the traumatic experience, absorbed into the culture and transmitted as learned behaviors” (96).

Leary, Reid, Mims, and Higginbottom assert that African Americans have sustained traumatic psychological and emotional injury as a direct result of slavery, perpetuated by social/institutional inequity, racism and oppression (97). Leary defines the aforementioned injury, Post—Traumatic Slave Syndrome, as “a condition that exists when a population has experienced multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery and continues to experience oppression and institutionalized racism today” (Joy Leary 2005, 121; Serie McDougal III 2014, 71-72). Furthermore, Omar Reid, Sekou Mims, and Larry Higginbottom contend that “the psychic trauma that weaved through the intergenerational memories of the descendants of the African slaves has resulted in the present day phenomenon of PTSlavery D” (2005, 36). The authors describe what they call Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder as, “dysfunctional behaviors and disorders that exist [that are intergenerationally transmitted] among Black people have origins linked to the African slave period” (10).

In addition, Sotero notes at least four distinct assumptions the underpin historical trauma theory: 1) mass trauma is deliberately and systematically inflicted upon a target population by a subjugating, dominant population; 2) trauma is not limited to a single catastrophic event, but continues over an extended period of time; 3) traumatic events reverberate throughout the population, creating a universal experience of trauma; and 4) the magnitude of the trauma experiences derails the population from its natural; projected historical course resulting in a legacy of physical, physiological, social, and economic disparities that persists across generations (2006, 94-95). As such, Sotero developed a *conceptual model of historical trauma* that posits that historical trauma originates with the subjugation of a population by a dominant group (2006, 99). The model illustrates that the primary generations are the direct victims of subjugation and loss, which cause them to be

plagued with physical injuries, malnutrition, and high rates of infectious and chronic diseases (99).

Trauma responses in primary generations may include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, self-destructive behaviors, severe anxiety, guilt, hostility, and chronic bereavement. Secondary and subsequent generations are affected by the original trauma through various means including the genetic transmission of mental illness, depression, and PTSD; physiological fetal adaptations in the form of Type 2 diabetes caused by maternal malnutrition; and maladaptive behaviors and related social problems such as substance abuse, physical/sexual abuse, and suicide (99-100). Secondary and subsequent generations also experience “vicarious traumatization” through collective memory, storytelling and oral traditions of the population where traumatic events become embedded in the collective, social memories of the population which produces original trauma through loss of culture and language. Additionally, original trauma is also reproduced through first-hand experiences of discrimination, injustice, poverty, and social inequality (100).

Mindy Fullilove (2004) describes historical trauma as “root shock” in response to serial forced displacement. “1,600 black neighborhoods were demolished by urban renewal” (20). It is Fullilove’s contention that as a result of urban renewal Black America experienced *root shock*—the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one’s emotional ecosystem (11). The trauma of being Black in America in the post-World War II era is said to be another major cause for the issues faced today. According to Fullilove,

This massive destruction caused root shock on two levels. First, residents of each neighborhood experienced the traumatic stress of loss of their life world. Second, because of the interconnections among all black people in the United States...Root shock, post urban renewal, disabled powerful mechanisms of community functioning, leaving the black world at an enormous disadvantage for meeting the challenges of globalization. (20)

That said, it is important to clarify that urban renewal in the United States is “a program of the federal government...designed to provide money for retooling the city, preparing for postwar era, and switching...to new means of productivity” (57). More importantly, Fullilove notes, “In 1950s America, urban renewal was a synonym for ‘progress’” (57). Progress meant new technologies, new jobs, and new uses for the land (57). In explaining the history of the pattern, Fullilove states,

Reclaiming land for new uses has an important precedent in American history in the abrogation of treaties with Native Americans. In the beginning of the westward push, Native Americans were asked to move west of the Appalachians. Then they were asked to move west of the Mississippi. Then they were settled on reservations, which were relocated repeatedly. . . . The land-claiming strategy embodied in the Housing Act of 1949 [urban renewal] was straightforward. (57-58)

Urban renewal, Fullilove asserts, was a response to this question: “The poor are always with us, but do we have to see them everyday?” As such, Fullilove argues that urban renewal was designed to hide the poor not to undo poverty (197). Consequently, Mindy Fullilove and Rodrick Wallace (2011) contend that the African-American population experienced *serial forced displacement* since settling into American cities, which characterizes as the repetitive, coercive upheaval of groups (381).

The conditions under serial forced displacement have led to consequences such as the persistent, de facto internal refugee population and behavioral and health patterns, including raised levels of violence, family disintegration, and substance abuse among

others. In sum, Fullilove and Wallace identify as serial forced displacement the following: segregation and redlining; urban renewal; highway development; planned shrinkage/catastrophic disinvestment; deindustrialization; mass incarceration/criminalization; gentrification; disaster; HOPE VI; and the foreclosure crisis as serial forced displacement (381). In this manner, the scholars note that serial forced displacement's effects will persist across generations due to epigenetic effects (384).

Additionally, Fullilove extensively examined the effects of serial forced displacement as *root shock*. Root shock is to be thought of as a metaphor reflecting that of a tree or a plant whose roots are uprooted; throughout the process of transplantation, it can result in the plant lacking in major nutrients due to the root hair getting damaged or drying out and ultimately go into shock. In the same way that plants get too disturbed when they are transplanted from their natural habitat to a different landscape, people experience root shock when their emotional ecosystem gets partially or entirely destroyed (Fullilove 2004, 11).

When considering the various perspectives as discussed by the aforementioned scholars pertaining to addressing historical trauma, museums chronicling the Black experience have the power to trigger "vicarious traumatization" in many respects. However, scholars and museum practitioners have offered practical ways for museums to buffer the potential injury in order to promote healing without flights of fantasy, either by overlooking what has to be done or by reaching too far in the future for utopia.

## Museums as Alternative Spaces for Minorities

Within the spectrum of American ethnicity, African-Americans have always had an ambiguous and uncomfortable status, one that has not been well represented in the public sphere. Their presence in the population does not derive primarily from voluntary migration (Ruffins 2006, 400-401).

It is within this vein that the representation of minorities and African Americans in particular have battled with skewed representations of themselves both in museums and in the media as a whole. In *Exhibiting Blackness: African-Americans and the American Art Museum*, Bridget R. Cooks conducts a critical exploration of discourse on African-American art and culture in American art museums. Cooks understands “exhibition strategies for representation” to explore the assertions made in the unequal and often contested relationship between African-American artists, curators, visitors and critics in the mainstream art world (2011, 1). The author examines case studies that demonstrate her two guiding methodologies: (1) the anthropological approach where she acknowledges, “[that the exhibit] displays the difference of racial Blackness from the elevated white ‘norm’” and (2) the corrective narrative where exhibits “[aim] to present the work of significant and overlooked African-American artists to a mainstream audience” (1).

Cooks’ analysis of curatorial strategies leads to her conclusion that “Exhibitions have a more pivotal role than just fulfilling the function of displaying objects of ‘creative expression’, they have pedagogical roles, teaching values of art, cultures, social movements, and national histories” (3). Cooks’ work adds to the discussion of how representational practices of race and racialized subjects are treated within the context of American art museums. Her conclusion that exhibits have pedagogical roles in addition to the function of

displaying objects is critical in understanding how museums can impact identity development.

Similarly, Vicki Crowley and Julie Matthews (2006) in their article, “Museum, Memorial and Mall: Postcolonialism, Pedagogies, Racism and Reconciliation,” argue the museum’s role in reconciliation pedagogy. The authors define reconciliation as “An embodied dialogical and dialectical encounter situated in the between space of modernity’s congealed historical past and its sense of the dynamic past” (Crowley and Matthews 2006, 267). The between space provides the possibility to inquire into the conditions of, rather than search for, a definite truth or complete solution of conflict, injustice, and injury (267).

In sum, the aforementioned articles refer to opportunities for healing. Crowley and Matthews further this notion by elucidating the purposes, aims and position of reconciliation as distinctive and distinctively marked by local histories signaling. They describe reconciliation as, “An act of religious atonement, as state-initiated policy, as political imprimatur and as moral suasion and rallying point” (269). Ultimately, the museum’s role as a *pedagogical intervention* with a focus on reconciliation will offer up a space in which discourse—such as witnessing and archival construction, memorializing, and the material and visceral immediacy of horror, violence, and trauma—can be interrogated and revealed in an effort to heal and acknowledge in a post-colonial, post-Civil Rights era. Crowley and Matthews offer a potential pedagogical role that museums can play in discussing issues of race that would prove useful when developing exhibits on racialized subjects. Their work provides a descriptive call for innovation in museums; however, it does not include any data from actual visitor observation to evaluate how museums that employ *pedagogical intervention* impact their racial identity development.

Deborah F. Atwater and Sandra L. Herndon (2003), in their text “Cultural Space and Race: The National Civil Rights Museum and MuseumAfrica,” contend that museums play a significant role in influencing the meanings generated on the subject of race (16).

Additionally, the authors explain the role of museums in creating spaces for multiple, often competing, interpretations of collective memory, history, and meaning (16). As such, this study presents a descriptive essay on how museums as public spaces can display and reveal the intersection of race and culture in the recovery of a society’s historical and cultural memory.

The authors also present the museum as a public space that is significant in fostering the development of public memory (15). The authors understand public memory as having the “the potential to create a shared sense of the past, fashioned from symbolic resources of community, and subject to its particular history, hierarchies and aspirations” (17). Moreover, the scholars assert that along with public memory museums are positioned as “Key cultural loci of our times. . . . They inevitably raise questions about knowledge and power, about identity and difference, and about permanence and transience” (19). As far as public memory is concerned, museums ultimately develop this through what they decide to display and reveal.

Museums as public spaces represent a communal space where the “space defines the individual, so too does the individual define the space” (21). These spaces represent who is valued, represented, and reflected in the common past and thus shape cultural and social environments. Atwater and Herndon’s (2003) idea of communal space aligns with Regina Faden’s notion of the “New Town Square,” where museums should serve as places for communities to discuss shared burdens and challenges (2007, 77). In like manner,



Ruffins' notion of "racial memory" notes a set of collective emotional desires through which conversations concerning the African-American holocaust experience can be held. In Ruffins' view, museums can facilitate racial memory through "museumizing" discussions of slavery.

The concept of collective memory is a central component to scholarship on African-American museums. Scholars have approached this concept within the context of their respective studies that reveal an emphasis on how important it is for group self-efficacy to possess and interrogate collective memory. Within the context of Ruffins' (2006) study on how slavery as a global subject is treated in African-American museums and exhibitions on African-American subject matter at historically white museums, she uses the term cultural memory or *racial memory*. Ruffins asserts that there is a history of cultural memory that was segregated along with the history of the United States' formally de facto and de jure segregated society (2006, 396).

As such, the discovery of the enslaved dead inadvertently by the federal government's General Services Administration in the course of excavating for the foundation of an office building in 1990 and the extraordinary amount of public attention it received resulted in what became the New York African Burial Ground project. This project spurred dozens of efforts in cities across the country, especially in the South, to save graveyards under similar conditions of rescue archeology. Ruffins notes that these efforts—with the New York Burial Ground project serving as the model for slavery memorials and museums—have provided historical support for a set of emotional desires that have collective force within African-Americans communities (2006, 414).

In sum, this set of emotional desires are what she calls “racial memory” that ultimately provide an opportunity to evoke new conversations that “ focus on the Middle Passage itself as the most important prism through which to view the African-American holocaust experience” (414). Ruffins points out that the cultural memory that was once segregated has been interrogated by the “racial memory” which presents an opportunity for the African-American communities to possess collective memory through the model offered by the New York African Burial Ground project.

Viv Golding (2009), in her work *Learning at the Museum: Identity, Place and Power*, uses a framework of race and its effects on racialized populations to understand the role of the contemporary museums, how museum professionals can act to combat racism and its pernicious effects today, and who will take responsibility to speak ‘truth to power’ when it diminishes fellow citizens living in the post-modern world (2). Her study argues that museums can hold up a hope for challenging racist mindsets essentially through respectful dialogical exchange that she terms, *feminist- hermeneutics* (2).

Regina Faden (2007) concurs in her article, “Museums and Race: Living up to the Public Trust,” that museums have a fiduciary responsibility to the public to lead the discussion of race to meet the demands of a more inclusive version of history in a post-Civil Rights era (77). Tracy L. Teslow (2007) in her study, “A Troubled Legacy: Making and Unmaking Race in the Museum,” asserts that race is an ideological system that has been constructed by the museum. Teslow focuses on an analysis of museums that she selected to examine how racial ideology has been employed.

Bernadette T. Lynch and Samuel Alberti (2010) discuss in their text “Legacies of Prejudice: Racism, Co-production and Radical Trust in the Museum,” how “museums have

been complicit in the construction of physical and cultural hierarchies that underpinned racist thought from Enlightenment until well into the twentieth century” (13). The authors assert the aforementioned as the legacies of prejudice that still confront museums today. Lynch and Alberti also urge that museum spaces should be a place for democratic exchange and to acknowledge their legacies of prejudice (2010, 13).

In “Race for Sale,” author Patricia Hilden promotes museums and curators in particular to break away with the “Euro-centered. . . universalist void” that permeated public memory in the colonial period to embrace and demand “the existence of the other, equally legitimate centers” in the post colonial era (2000, 14).

Last but not least, James Clifford, in his work “Museums as Contact Zones,” argues that the notion of museums as contact zones is both descriptive and prescriptive—prescriptive in that culture-collecting strategies should be inclusive of historical specificity and diversity rather than “Collections of universal culture, repositories of uncontested value, sites of progress, discovery and the accumulation of human, scientific or national patrimonies” (Clifford 1999, 451). Further, Clifford promotes a decentralization and circulation of museum collections that ultimately create a democratic politic that would challenge the hierarchal valuing of difference (452).

Essentially these authors are saying that the museums as a conveyor of power and identity affirmer should recognize the diversity of the public in a manner that will empower those diverse peoples that are represented in the public memory. These authors critique and offer alternatives to the oppressive legacies that often rendered marginalized voices invisible in museums. These authors’ works are important in understanding how museum practitioners and scholars have begun to address the issue of historical trauma

when developing exhibits. This is a significant discussion to have when trying to remedy the negative impact of a racialized society at large, and specifically a history of museums that were created as apart of the colonial and imperial expansion.

## **Conclusion**

In my dissertation I have demonstrated the ways in which coloniality as a theoretical framework can build upon the Africological tradition. Van Horne (2007) acknowledges in his explanation of the six basic purposes concerning the subject matter of the discipline of Africology that Africologists should “open new paths in advancement of society and civilization” (105). Accordingly, understanding the ways that Africa-American museums impact its patrons exposes larger themes around contemporary race relations. More importantly, it identified the historical African-American political interventions that are still necessary for countering racial meanings that continue to dehumanize racialized populations. This information is useful for not only the advancement of African-American society but also the advancement of American society at large. Pinpointing racial meanings that have persisted in the post-Emancipation, post-Reconstruction, post-Civil Rights, and now, the so-called post-racial era have grave implications for how to regenerate resistance.

## References

- Allen, Robert. "Reassessing the Internal (Neo) Colonialism Theory." *The Black Scholar* 35, no. 1 (February 2005): 2-11.
- Ambrose, Andy. Personal Interview. Macon, GA December 4, 2015.
- American Institutes for Research, Harris H. Shettel. *Strategies for Determining Exhibit Effectiveness*. Pittsburgh: American Institutes for Research, 1968.
- Asante, Molefi Kete. *Afrocentricity, the Theory of Social Change*. Chicago, Ill: African American Images, 2003.
- Atwater, Deborah F., and Sandra L. Herndon. "Cultural Space and Race: The National Civil Rights Museum and MuseumAfrica." *Howard Journal of Communications* 14, no. 1 (2003): 15-28.
- Barganier, George. "Coloniality and Modernity in Latin America." *Race Matters: Politics and Government in Latin America*. Department of Africology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Wisconsin, Milwaukee. 01 Apr 2013.
- . "Fanon's Children: The Black Panther Party and the Rise of the Crips and Bloods in Los Angeles." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley , 2011. OskiCat (ucb.b18534923).
- Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism & Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*, 3rd ed. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.
- Bruce, Jeff. Personal Interview. Macon, GA December 2, 2015.
- . Personal Interview. Macon, GA January 2, 2016.
- Burns, Andrea A. *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013.
- Carroll, Karanja K. "Africana Studies and Research Methodology: Revisiting the Centrality of the Afrikan Worldview." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 4-17.
- Cesaire, Aime. *Discourse on Colonialism*, 2000 ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1955.
- Clay, Dominic. Personal Interview. Houston, TX November 20, 2015.
- Clifford, James. "Museums as Contact Zones." In *Representing the Nation: A Reader: Histories, Heritage and Museums*, edited by Jessica Evans and David Boswell, 435-457. London: Routledge, 1999.

- Cole, Johnetta. "Black Studies in Liberal Arts Education." In *The Black Studies Reader*, edited by Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Hudley, and Claudine Michel, 21-33. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Cooks, Bridget R. *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011.
- Cox, Oliver C. *Capitalism As a System*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.
- Crowley, Vicki, and Julie Matthews. "Museum, Memorial and Mall: Postcolonialism, Pedagogies, Racism and Reconciliation." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 14, no. 3 (2006): 263-277.
- Davalos, Karen Mary. *Exhibiting Mestizaje: Mexican (American) Museums in the Diaspora*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001.
- Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- Davis, Thomas J. "'They, Too, Were Here': The Afro-American Experience and History Museums." *American Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June 1989): 328-340.
- Dean, David. *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice*, 2002 ed. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Drake, St. Clair, and Horace R. Cayton. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, 1993 ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945.
- DuBois, W.E.B. *The Negro*, 2012 ed. New York: Grindl Press, 1915.
- Dunbar, Christopher, Dalia Rodriguez, and Laurence Parker. "Race, Subjectivity, and the Interview Process." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 279-298. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002.
- Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Eichstedt, Jennifer L., and Stephen Small. *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002.
- Faden, Regina. "Museums and Race: Living Up to the Public Trust." *Museums and Social Issues* 2, no. 1 (April 2007): 77-88.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Grove Press, (1952) 2008. Citations refer to the Grove Press edition.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Franklin, V.P., and Bettye Collier-Thomas. "Biography, Race Vindication, and African American Intellectuals." *Journal of African American History* 87 (Winter 2002): 160-174.

- Fullilove, Mindy T., and Rodrick Wallace. "Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916–2010." *Journal of Urban Health* 88, no. 3 (2011): 381-389.
- Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It*. New York: One World/Ballantine Books, 2004.
- Gates, Jr., Henry L., and Manning Marable. "A Debate on Activism in Black Studies." In *A Companion to African-American Studies*, edited by Lewis R. Gordon and Jane A. Gordon, 96-101. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006.
- Golding, Vivien. *Learning at the Museum Frontiers Identity, Race, and Power*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009.
- Gomez, Michael Angelo. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Grosfoguel, Ramon. "A Decolonial Approach to Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Border Thinking and Global Coloniality." *Kult*. 6.Special Issue (2009): 10-38.
- . *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- . "THE EPISTEMIC DECOLONIAL TURN." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 211-223.
- . "The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and the Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 73-90.
- Guess Jr., John. Personal Interview. Houston, TX December 9, 2015.
- Haraway, Donna J. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 575-599.
- Haraway, Donna. "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936." *Social Text* 11 (1984): 211-223.
- Hilden, Patricia P. "Race for Sale: Narratives of Possession in Two "Ethnic" Museums." *The Drama Review-a Journal of Performance Studies* 44, no. 3 (2000): 11-36.
- Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2009 ed. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Houston Museum District Association. "Houston Museum District." Houmuse.org. Last modified 2015. <http://houmuse.com>.

- Houston Museum of African-American Culture, *Abolitionists: Different Eyes Seeing the Same Reality*, Houston, Texas, November 13, 2015-January 30, 2016.
- Hull, Gloria T., and Barbara Smith. "The Politics of Black Women's Studies." In *The African American Studies Reader*, edited by Nathaniel Norment, 144-156. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2001.
- James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1963.
- Johnson, Charles. *Middle Passage*. New York: Atheneum, 1990.
- Keil, Richard C. *Lessons Along the Way: Before, During and After Priesthood*. North Charleston: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.
- . Personal Interview. Macon, GA December 2015.
- Kelley, Robin D. "A Poetics of Anticolonialism." *Monthly Review* 51, no. 6 (1999): 1.
- Leary, Joy DeGruy. *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*. Milwaukie, Oregon: Uptone Press, 2005.
- Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Lynch, Bernadette T., and Samuel J. Alberti. "Legacies of Prejudice: Racism, Co-production and Radical Trust in the Museum." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 35, no. 1 (2010): 13-35.
- Macon-Bibb County Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Macon: where soul lives." simpleview. Last modified 2015. <http://maconga.org>.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- . "ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 240-270.
- Marable, Manning. "Black Studies and the Racial Mountain." *Souls*, Summer 2000, 17-36.
- . *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983.
- McDougal III, S. *Research Methods in Africana Studies*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2014.



- Mignolo, Walter. *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2005.
- Moynihan, Daniel P. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, D.C.: United States. Department of Labor. Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965.
- Nimako, Kwame, and Glenn Frank Walter Willemsen. *The Dutch Atlantic: Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*. London: Pluto Press, 2011.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994.
- Pekarik, Andrew. "Studying Visitors and Making Museums Better." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 50, no. 1 (January 2007): 131-134.
- Professional Networks Council of the American Alliance of Museums. *Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence*. Washington, D.C.: American Alliance of Museums, 2012.
- Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1.3 (2000): 533-580.
- Rassool, Ciraj. "Ethnographic Elaborations, Indigenous Contestations, and the Cultural Politics of Imagining Community: A View From the District Six Museum in South Africa." In *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, 106-128. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- Reid, Omar G., Sekou Mims, and Larry Higginbottom. *Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder: Definition, Diagnosis and Treatment*. Charlotte, NC: Conquering Books, 2005.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2000 ed. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.
- Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1972.
- Ruffins, F. D. "Culture Wars Won and Lost, Part II: The National African-American Museum Project." *Radical History Review* 70 (1998): 78-101.
- . "Recovering Yesterday: Overview of the Collection and Preservation of Black History." *Black Issues in Higher Education* 13 (February 1997): 16-22.
- . "Revisiting the Old Plantation: Reparations, Reconciliation, and Museumizing American Slavery." In *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by Ivan Karp, 395-434. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

- Rydel, Robert W. *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1996.
- Small, Stephen, and Kwame Nimako. "Public History, Collective Memory and Competing Representation of Slavery and its Legacies in England and the Netherlands." Paper presented at International Political Science Association, Madrid, Spain, July 8, 2012.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- Sotero, Michelle M. "A Conceptual Model of Historical Trauma: Implications for Public Health Practice and Research." *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 93-108.
- Tesch, Renata. *Qualitative Research Analysis Types and Software Tools*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Teslow, Tracy. "A Troubled Legacy: Making and Unmaking Race in the Museum." *Museums & Social Issues* 2, no. 1 (2007): 11-44.
- Thelwell, Michael. "Black Studies: A Political Perspective." *Massachusetts Review*, Fall 1969, 701-712.
- Tubman African-American Museum, *The History of the Dream Project*, Macon, Georgia.
- US Census Bureau. *Race/Ethnicity: 1980-2010 City of Houston*. Houston: Planning & Development Department, 2012.
- US Census Bureau. *State and County QuickFacts: Population Estimates Macon (city), Georgia*. Macon: US Census Bureau, 2015.
- Van Horne, Winston. "Africology: Considerations Concerning a Discipline." In *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought, and Action: A Guide to Africana Studies*, edited by Clenora Hudson-Weems, 105-127. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007.
- Washington, Mary Helen. *Black-Eyed Susans: Classic Stories by and About Black Women*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1975.
- Williams, Eric Eustace. *Capitalism & Slavery*, 1994 ed. New York: Russell & Russell, 1944.
- Wilson, Mabel. *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Woodson, Carter Godwin. *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, 2nd ed. New York, NY: AMS Press Inc.,

(1933) 1972. Citations refer to the AMS Press edition.

Yoshioka, Joseph G. "A Direction-Orientation Study With Visitors at the New York World's Fair." *The Journal of General Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1942): 3-33.

Young, Alford. "Experiences in ethnographic interviewing about race: The inside and outside of it." In *Researching Race and Racism*, edited by Martin Bulmer and John Solomos, 187-202. London: Routledge, 2004.

Younge, Gary. "The Man Who Raised a Black Power Salute at the 1968 Olympic Games | World News | The Guardian." The Guardian. Last modified March 2015.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics>.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A:**  
**Structured Interview Questions (A)**

**Introduction of the interviewer**

Hello, my name is Anastacia Scott. I am interviewing visitors on their experience with the exhibits at the [Tubman African- American Museum] or [Houston Museum of African-American Culture]. The purpose of this interview is to understand how African-American museums impact their visitors. The responses will be used in the analysis portion to help explain how African-American museums impact the visitor and in what ways. After having seen the exhibit...

1. What did you learn from the exhibit?
2. What portions of the exhibit stood out for you?
3. Who would you recommend to visit this museum to see the exhibit?
4. How did the exhibit make you feel?
5. What are your reasons for visiting the museum today?

## Introduction of the interviewer

## Content

## Presentation

162

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What portions of the exhibit stood out for you?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you mean by that?</li> </ul>
---	--	---

### Accessibility

Main Questions	Additional Questions	Clarifying Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the labels clear enough to read when you wanted more information about something on display?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which labels did you have issues reading?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there something in particular you did not understand because of how the label was written?</li> <li>• How so?</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Behavioral Recording Sheet**

**Date:**

**Time of Entry:**

**Time of Exit:**

Group Composition
-------------------

Group Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Visitors 12 years or older: \_\_\_\_\_

Visitor Age: \_\_\_\_ teens   \_\_\_\_ 20s   \_\_\_\_ 30s   \_\_\_\_ 40s   \_\_\_\_ 50s   \_\_\_\_ 60s   \_\_\_\_ 70s

Number of Children in Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Composition: \_\_\_\_\_ Male(s)   \_\_\_\_ Female(s)

Behavior Observed or Comments Observed
--



## **APPENDIX D: Visitor Behavior Patterns**

- **Looking at graphics only**
- **Looking at objects in cases**
- **Part of a group with sheets, writing**
- **Talking to other members in group**
- **Manipulating a video or flip or other interactive element**
- **Taking a photograph/video**
- **Browsing (looking while walking, not stopping)**
- **Fatigue (leaning, sitting on available seating area or floor, etc.)**
- **Pointing**
- **Other behaviors:** walking on exhibit elements, disciplining, throwing garbage, walking into diorama, taking notes, using a cell phone or electronic device, kissing, eating, etc.
- **Reading labels:**
  - Bending to read
  - On tiptoes to read
  - Being read to
  - Adjusting glasses
  - Sitting on haunches to read

**APPENDIX E:**  
**Structured Interview Questions (B)**

**Introduction of the interviewer**

Hello, my name is Anastacia Scott. I am interviewing curators, staff and administration on the development of the exhibits at the [Tubman African American Museum] or [Houston Museum of African American Culture]. The purpose of this interview is to provide the background and context for the museum and its respective exhibits. The responses will be used in the analysis portion of my dissertation to enrich and diversify the findings.

1. How long has the museum been existing?
2. When did the museum acquire the building?
3. What is the organizational chart for how the museum is governed and managed?
4. If the museum has a collection, what is the scope of the museum's collections?
5. What is the process for evaluating your programs?
6. Do funding sources influence the types of exhibits you all develop?
7. What are the future plans or your vision for the museum?
8. Who is the museum's target audience?
9. Who curated [exhibit observed]?
10. Was there a target audience for [exhibit observed]?
11. What is the supporting programming for [exhibit observed]?

# ANASTACIA SCOTT

Department of Africology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

## EDUCATION

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**, Milwaukee, WI

*Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.), Africology*, anticipated December 2016

Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies

Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management

**Dillard University**, New Orleans, LA

*Bachelor of Arts, Sociology*, May 2010

Cum Laude

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTEREST

- Post-Racial Ideology
- Colorblind Ideology
- Decolonial Theory
- Museum Studies
- African American History and Culture
- Critical Museology
- Transdisciplinary Methodologies and Theoretical Frameworks
- Comparative Socio-Cultural Theories
- African American Critical Literary Thought

## SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

- Community and University Partnership (CUP) Grant, 2014-2015
- Chancellor Graduate Student Award, 2011-2014
- Graduate Student Travel Award, 2013-2014
- Student Association Grant, 2013-2014

**Dillard University**

- Dillard University Presidential Scholarship

Fall 2007-May 2010

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** Milwaukee, WI

*Graduate Instructor*

- Africology 100: Black Reality: Survey of African American Society- Fall 2014, Spring 2015

*Teaching Assistant*

- Africology 100: A Survey of African American Society- Fall 2011, Fall 2012
- Africology 112: African American History 1865 to Present- Spring 2012, Spring 2013
- Africology 111: African American History to 1865- Fall 2013, Spring 2014

*Guest Lecturer*

- English 217: Race, Class, Gender, and Hurricane Katrina- Spring 2012

## **PUBLICATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS**

---

Edwards, Crystal, and Anastacia Scott. "Why Decoloniality?" *Advanced Methods and Theory in Africana Studies*. Ed. J.L. Conyers and M.D. Crawford. TX. Print. (forthcoming)

Edwards, Crystal, and Anastacia Scott. "Decolonizing Knowledge and Power Summer School-Barcelona, Spain." *The Africologist Fall* (2014). Online.

Scott, Anastacia. "Youth and Students." Ed. Zachery Williams and Mtangulizi Sanyika. *March on Washington at 50: "A Deposit Was Made but the Check Still Bounced"* (2013): 12-13. Institute of the Black World. Institute of the Black World. Web.

"That Takes the Cake": Milwaukee's Contribution to Jazz Through Cakewalks  
America's Black Holocaust Museum, Milwaukee WI. (forthcoming)

## **SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS**

---

*Panelist, Annual National Council for Black Studies Conference* (March 2014) Miami, FL.  
"Post-Racialism and African American Museums"

Poster Presentation: Interning at the Smithsonian, UWM-MSP 50th Anniversary Poster Session (October 2013) Milwaukee, WI

*Panelist, American Multicultural Student Leadership Conference* (April 2012) Menomonie, WI.  
"The Obama Effect"

Panelist, R3: Race, Religion and Representations Symposium (March 2012) Madison, WI.  
"The Evolution of Race"

*Panelist, Annual NCBS National Conference* (March 2009) New Orleans, LA.  
"The Psychological Impact of the Mandela and Obama Presidencies on College Students Self Efficacy and Self-Esteem"

## **UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE**

---

Africology Seminar Series Committee, Member, Department of Africology 2014  
Africology NOW, Student Organization, Officer 2011-2015

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & INTERNSHIPS**

---

### **The Historic New Orleans Collection**

November 2015-January 2016

**Intern** New Orleans, Louisiana

- Examined THNOC's currency holdings for the exhibition *Money, Money, Money!*
- Selected and evaluated the appropriate content for exhibition *Money, Money, Money!*
- Inventoried, described, and housed a collection of approximately 500 drawings and sketchbooks by Angela Gregory and Selina Bres Gregory

### **Southern Food and Beverage Museum**

Summer 2015

**Intern** New Orleans, Louisiana

- Conducted curatorial research for the creation of new exhibit and the enhancement of current

exhibits

- Produced a historical resource on the African and African American influences on Southern cuisine

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

Fall 2011-2014

- Finding Funding Opportunities in the Arts and the Humanities
- Grant Writing in the Arts, Humanities and the Humanistic Social Sciences

**Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage**

Summer 2013

**Intern** Washington, D.C.

- Assisted in the daily operations of the Will To Adorn: African American Diversity, Style, and Identity site at the 2013 Folklife Festival
- Presented at the Smithsonian 2013 Folklife Festival
- Compiled data using Microsoft Word, Excel and e-mail
- Accountable for troubleshoot thinking and strong communication skills to complete tasks under deadlines

**Robben Island Museum**

Summer 2009

**Intern** Cape Town, South Africa

- Conducted curatorial research at the Robben Island Mayibuye Archives on 1989 ANC/NP Negotiations
- Learned archival research
- Prioritized multiple tasks for daily operations
- Accountable for troubleshoot thinking and strong communication skills to complete tasks under strict deadlines
- Assisted in production design for museum exhibition

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

---

**Founder and Co-Director, Africology Now Youth Institute**

2014-2015

- Educational enrichment and mentor program for high school girls that encompasses College/Career Prep, Academic Support and a Sankofa Book Club.

**Co-Coordinator, My Sista's KeepHer Girls Empowerment Summit**

Fall 2014

- Hosted a conference for 90+ middle and high school girls focusing on sisterhood, self-esteem, and cultivating relationships.

**Agape Community Center**

2012

**Facilitator**

- Designed a Black History themed curriculum for students aged 8-11 years.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

---

**Facilitator, Anti-Defamation League**

August 2015-

Current

Metairie, Louisiana

- Facilitate anti-bias education, training, and workshops for teachers, students, and educational administrative staff

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDY AND RESEARCH**

---

Decolonizing Knowledge and Power: Decolonial Summer School Barcelona, Spain  
University of the Western Cape Cape Town, South Africa