

© 2017 Babajide Ishmael Ajisafe

This is an open access article distributed under the CC-BY 3.0 License.

# "All The Things We Could [Se]e by Now [Concerning Violence & Boko Haram], If Sigmund Freud's Wife was Your Mother": Psychoanalysis, Race, & International Political Theory

Babajide Ishmael Ajisafe  
University of Missouri –Kansas City

## ABSTRACT

In response to the sonic media and ludricosity of her time, Hortense J. Spillers' paradigmatic essay "'All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race," transfigures Charles Mingus' melodic, cryptic, and most puzzling record title into a workable theoretical cacophony. Closely written within the contexts and outside the confines of "some vaguely defined territory between well established republics," Spillers is able to open up the sarcophagus of meaning(s) within the Black occupation of the psychoanalytic discourse. Mingus' original assertion, "*all the things you could be by now, if Sigmund Freud's wife was your mother,*" means absolutely nothing insofar as it means everything in the face of constructed openings and invitations into "extending the realm of possibility for what might be known." As such, this article asks a similar question relating to what might be known about the sensual convergence of media, violence, and representation ('all the things we could *see* by now') of international, political, and theoretical significance. If anything, Spillers and Mingus compel us toward locating some semblance of forgotten relationality between what appears to be abstract, distant, and unfamiliar. Given our contemporary era of violent post-colonial terror and desires for alternatives to the afterlife of slavery, this article endorses the free-floating investigation into the live survey of unprotected human flesh in the specific case of Boko Haram's explosion in modern media. Is it possible that such a study is able to uncover the motive behind the assembly of spectatorship? Through a Freudian reading of human nature into international political theory, this article indicates that narrative formation and transmission is an essential component to the development of both ethno-universalisms and global constructions of race and captivity.

**Keywords:** Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalysis, Black Studies, Hortense J. Spillers, Political Theory, Boko Haram, Terrorism, Race, Media

## 1 Introduction



Fig. 1. Michelle Obama, *twitter post, associated press*, 7 May, 2014.

The post-political has everything to do with the way exposed flesh, human carrion, and cropped bodies traverse along the horror scenes that comprise the foreground of international relations, the middle ground of international law, and the background of international discourse<sup>1</sup>— an animation suspended only by the absolute "end of politics" itself.<sup>2</sup> In theory, something terrible is happening that demands an intervention into an already familiar concept of the cosmopolitan. Without question, the global city is governed by a problematically imperial axiom that seeks "to create a global legal tradition *based on a world where there are no set standards*."<sup>3</sup> However, in our contemporary moment, we have come to experience a kind of exercised geo-governmentality (*that exceeds and anticipates partitioned geographies*).<sup>4</sup> This article takes an epistemological detour from (international) political theory's normative approach by investigating the "forms of force and pressure"<sup>5</sup> that *instead*, take the shape of uncanny feelings, sentiments, and performances of human nature toward the consolidation of the cosmopolitan personality. Might such a dangerous and uncertain assertion that '*I feel, therefore the cosmopolitan feels*' take us back to Freudian fallacies of composition once previously exposed?<sup>6</sup>

Something about this photograph rings deeper than "international protest" to gender-based political violence.<sup>7</sup> Something about this photograph of Michelle Obama's objection to the kidnaping of 300 Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram makes the assault feel so personal, so natural, so painful. I spent months trying to figure out why the cosmopolitan was so invested in the unbridled transmission and circulation of terrorist narratives— documented by the extreme violence and bloody transactions of Boko Haram. What kind of explanatory testimony (if any)

could realism and international political theory provide for the world's fascination with not just the political horrors of "life exposed to death,"<sup>8</sup> but also with "scene[s] of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile."<sup>9</sup> By casting an *endarkened* Freudian "application to practical problems of political research and political practice,"<sup>10</sup> and reading into the contours of what "was *perhaps* the first [foregrounding of] the distinctive nature of the uncanny,"<sup>11</sup> we learn that these stories of terror exist because there is a need to create glimpses of western/American ethno-universalisms<sup>12</sup> of self/identity/ego that is in constant juxtaposition to a terribly troubled other.<sup>13</sup> This article seeks to decode the human nature related to the geopolitical spectatorship associated with the presentations (images, stories, videos, & new media technologies) of gruesome affairs of violence by non-state actors (Boko Haram specifically). In four parts this article faithfully relies on the critical work of philosophy, legal studies, international relations & political science, gender studies, literature & literary criticism, performance studies, post-colonial studies, and Black/African-American studies. In part two, I will address the relevance of and literature on race and the post-colonial context in order to better understand the origins of a theory of violence. In part three, we will then explore the potentials of inviting Freud (back) into international political and race theory. Part four will survey the figuration of Boko Haram's transformation into *flesh* and Part five will finally explore American press as a case study to understand the range and impact of the shocking and terrible stories of Boko Haram's expedition.

## 2 "Concerning Violence": What You See<sup>14</sup> ~~Is What You Get~~

Virtually all comprehension in science, technology, and even art calls on our ability to visualize. In fact, the ability to visualize is almost synonymous with understanding. We have all used the expression "I see" to mean, "I understand."<sup>15</sup>

What does it mean to not only *see* violence, but to understand it? Most tempting for any (political) theory concerning violence (concerning the "dark continent") is the auto-interpolative gesture that tethers Africa so intimately to "the notion of "absolute otherness,""<sup>16</sup> that it is always already implicated in the violent extractive political institutions that comprise the modern world.<sup>17</sup> More tempting however, is the misreading of the post-colonials' seemingly romantic study of violence, or the refusal to study the thing before the 13th century —an analytic misrecognition of slavery and colonialism as *post festum* iterations of an assumed original context for, "our contemporary world[s]...destruction of persons and the creation of *death-worlds*."<sup>18</sup> Recognizing the diversity of violent conflict on the continent (including "a war between European powers [that] played out on African soil" between 1914 and 1918) *before* slavery and colonialism often requires a historiography beyond the scope of political theory and even sociology.<sup>19</sup> As such, the methodological starting point for this study is predicated on the ways in which "we write and think ...under the pressure of those events"<sup>20</sup> of cataclysmic shifts in populations and epic distortions of flesh in peril.

And what we see plastered all over our timelines, news feeds, and broadcastings, typifies the alibi, scapegoat, and closure required for the sustained work of international relations and the execution of a global *Law of War*. It implies an erroneous yet general and seemingly benign theory of violence that hijacks all discourses and principles of reason that make it difficult to explain away:

### Violence is provoked between sovereigns

Yet, few (if any) provocations of race, slavery, imperialism, and colonialism have surfaced in the context of what we continue to bare whiteness to in the name of Boko Haram. It appears that the international read on the events that continue to claim the lives of individuals bound to topographies zoned out of history by his authors,<sup>21</sup> fails to resonate in the same way that the Manichean drama<sup>22</sup> of the 17th century in Africa did— a diachronic catastrophe that quite plainly "[questions] the very humanity of colonized peoples."<sup>23</sup> Simply, it appears as if the events of Boko Haram bear no synchronic/diachronic relation to the "the initiative strikes which open the Atlantic Slave Trade in the fifteenth century of our Christ."<sup>24</sup> Put another way, Black Africans killing Black Africans on live TV and on HD Internet appears to have nothing to do with questions of race and its business with international political theory. Yet on the contrary, Mbembe writes, "any historical account of the rise of modern terror needs to address slavery,"<sup>25</sup> precisely because its juridical eradication exposed the colony to the right of bodies (especially non state actors) to excise life in order to establish biopolitical sovereignty. This article departs from the post racialism that characterizes international relations in accepting, as fact, a phenomenological claim about the post-colonial:

It is the moment of the boomerang; it is the third phase of violence; it comes back on us, it strikes us, and we do not realize any more than we did the other times that *it is we who have launched it* [...] In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression... The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; ... yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.<sup>26</sup>

What remains of the colony and the flesh it left behind does not merely disappear into thin air as international relations, declarations of independence, and political theory would have it. There persists a complex historical, anthropological, and cultural milieu that is able to articulate why violence continues after the lives of salvers and settlers are spared into the New World.

Frantz Fanon's pessimistic insight on the natural order of things, suggest that the violence we see in the ~~former~~ colony like Nigeria is but an expression of this current moment that Jean-Paul Sartre termed 'the boomerang'—the return on the investment of an original assault. To be more specific, the human flesh<sup>27</sup> in Nigeria, overcome by their corporeality and physiological solidity, exemplify the permutation of technologies of race, biopower, and colonialism à la carte. Not only are they a return on investment and intermediary war machines of the positive/normative force that turned their captive bodies into flesh, "to properly assess the efficacy of the colony as a formation of terror, we need to take a detour into the European imaginary itself as it relates to the critical issue of the *domestication* of war."<sup>28</sup> The violence on the colony, imported into the colony by constructions of race, have fermented into particular "ways of killing... whose bodily integrity has been replaced by pieces, fragments, folds, even immense wounds that are difficult to close." As we will later understand, these ways of killing are kept alive only through "the morbid spectacle of severing,"<sup>29</sup> and the absolute *raw life*<sup>30</sup> that "the petrification of the bones and... their stubborn will to mean, to signify something."<sup>31</sup>

### 3 An *endarkened*<sup>32</sup> Freud & the Psychoanalytic

"[The author] deceives us into thinking that he is giving us the sober truth... by the time we have seen through his trick it is already too late and the author has achieved his object ... We retain a feeling of dissatisfaction, a kind of grudge against the attempted deceit... It is this, that he should keep us in the *dark* for a long time about the precise nature of the conditions he has selected for the world he writes about."

—Sigmund Freud, 1919<sup>33</sup>

There are two assumptions that orient my attempt at a narrow Freudian reading of international political theory and narrations of terror—one related to the personal/political dichotomy, and the other related to the racial bearings of the uncanny<sup>34</sup>/the double. To the extent that politics, governmentality, and international relations retain its primary utilitarian sensibility, one ought to expect that the scope of all theoretical inquiry remain loyal to standards of universality, collectivity, and values of majoritarianism. That, when Martin Wight in *International Theory* suggests that "all political theory presupposes some kind of theory about human nature, some basic anthropological theory," he is still referring to an anthropological condition corresponding to the grand sum of "mankind."<sup>35</sup> Robert Schuett's convincing and theoretically robust challenge to the "disavowal of the concept of human nature [that] has helped to impoverish political realism," in his important work *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations*, invites the kind of scandalous crossings of boundaries in political research and analysis like the one contained in this article.<sup>36</sup> By locating Freud and the concept of human nature as "the sole philosophical starting point for international-political theory,"<sup>37</sup> the shift in focus toward "inward-looking and self-contained politics of psychoanalytic theory and practice,"<sup>38</sup> compels a narrow and refined (*almost literary*) application to issues of international significance like terror.<sup>39</sup> This first assumption—whose intention is to usher theory away from the fallacy of composition—may be misguided. There may stand a chance that the object of international political inquiry also (much like race) "inhabit[s] intersecting axes of relations that banish once and for all the illusion of a split between "public" and "private"."<sup>40</sup> If we forgo the caveat of leaving all things personal to the work of the clinician and largely untouched by political theory (except for my cautionary narrow reading of Freud here), then Spillers' observation that "psychoanalytic insights" have been "transported into the fields of feminist and critical inquiries," also rubs my deep intuition.<sup>41</sup> I am suggesting that a psychoanalytic practice to the work of international political theory becomes transversive in its endorsement of the "cosmopolite's"<sup>42</sup> demand to aggregate the personal feelings and responses of the international political world.

Similar to W. E. B. Du Bois and E. Franklin Frazier's dilemma with the Moynihan report,<sup>43</sup> Sigmund Freud is not the first to *name* the uncanny and the auxiliary substance that gives it logical clarity (Freud's articulation of the function of 'the double'). Freud, like any other author of fiction he studied, did what he saw as necessary work in keeping "us in the *dark* for a long time about the precise nature of the conditions he has selected for the world he writes about." While "the three Lacanian dimensions"<sup>44</sup> exceeds the scope of this article, Freud's absence of Black naming (*endarkening*) his work on the uncanny, inevitably swerves away from race only to return back to it in the

Symbolic order, [where] the register of subjectivity in which naming most fundamentally takes place. Although names are signifiers that slide and slip meaning, names can also carry an

indexical force that exceeds representation. That probably sounds really fancy, but it is really just to say that names index the power of the namer to fix meanings, and it is what Slavoj Žižek calls “the radical contingency of naming” (Žižek and Laclau) 107). They leave the haunting presence of the original Namer as such, because they indicate a structural relation that tends to fix the thing named. Names are therefore forever haunted by their arbitrariness, their belonging in a network of associated signifiers or traumas, such as Sigmund Freud delineated in “The Forgetting of Proper Names.”<sup>45</sup>

As such, Freud's “distinctive nature of the uncanny and the double,” written in 1919 contains strangely familiar trances in content to the Black foundational text, *Souls of Black Folk* by Du Bois published in 1903.<sup>46</sup> Though Du Bois is speaking about the Negro within the North American context, his argument about double-consciousness is not only related to (perhaps responsible for) Freud and Spillers' argument about doubling, but has without question inspired a host of theoretical, critical, and cultural work relevant to schools of political and psychoanalytic reach internationally.

Literary, as Toni Morrison would indicate, Du Bois can be understood as a kind of “black surrogacy—an informing, stabilizing, and disturbing element” to the assumed original Freudian construct of ‘the double.’<sup>47</sup> If W. E. B. Du Bois could launch the fact of “double consciousness” with an assumed originality (borrowing his terms from the early works of “William James, who possibly introduced the term to Du Bois at Harvard, [exploring] the idea of double consciousness in *The Principles of Psychology*, and in the English translation of the 1983 German text of psychologist Oswald Külpe<sup>48</sup>), then it is appropriate that I help to shorten “the vast distance between” Black scholarship and “the science of psychoanalysis.”<sup>49</sup> Or, to evoke the work of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney on Black study, I will borrow from Freud “as he would surely borrow from us.”<sup>50</sup> In order to come to terms with problematizing psychoanalytic discourse, the essays of Hortense Spillers and Arnold Rampersad are integral to my study.<sup>51</sup> Overall however, my understanding of the problem of race and psychoanalysis hovers under the devastating work of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask*.<sup>52</sup>

I want to momentarily depart from the status quo's deployment of *Black Skin, White Mask*<sup>53</sup> and entice a different take on race and the psychoanalytic. Different from Fanon's fatalism that has impacted the prevailing work of race and psychoanalysis (especially Spillers in the very essay that would inspire my own investigation, “All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother”: Psychoanalysis and Race,” and Frank Willderson's ground breaking text in the new school of Afro-Pessimism *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*), we must also follow his deeply passionate insistence on understanding the erotic compulsion to project visions of the not yet Symbolic order. To the political theorist, Fanon has everything to do with the normative production of alternative sociality. As we have encountered Boko Haram's ability to cast an alluring narrative replete with absolute wretchedness and decay, Fanon concludes with what might be a call to action and representation located everywhere in “the place, for example, of fantasy, desire, and the “unconscious,” of conflict, envy, aggression, and ambivalence in the repertoire of elements that are perceived to fashion the lifeworld.”<sup>54</sup> This can most simply be defined as the ability or practice to create an idea of a utopian world that escapes the present; a world that does not exist. Politics then, is the praxis to actualize that vision. A radical possibility of ideations that transcend the status quo:

The idea that we could possibly go somewhere that exists only in our imaginations—that is, “nowhere”—is the classic definition of utopia.... The map to a new world is in the imagination, in what we see in our third eyes rather than in the desolation that surrounds us... Imagining a different future than being pissed off about the present... that the *dream of a new world*...for... political engagement. [...] What kind of world they wanted to build if they did win. [...] A collective imagination shaped and reshaped by the very process of turning rubble and memory into the seeds of a new society.<sup>55</sup>

While Kelly's definition is precise, intuitive and consistent with the literature, it is incomplete. Returning to Frantz Fanon and his notion of "collective catharsis,"<sup>56</sup> we are able to come up with a more theoretically robust and contextual formulation for the normative process of counterfactual construction.<sup>57</sup> By "actively" releasing "collective aggression," we turn things like "The Tarzan stories, the sagas of twelve-year-old explorers, the adventures of Mickey Mouse, and all those “comic books”,<sup>58</sup> as phantasies of our own construction. Fanon's "By Way of Conclusion" in *Black Skin, White Masks* is also constructive here in what he "calls the disalienation of all humanity" which "requires imagining a future that is not like the past."<sup>59</sup> While many scholars (*toward pessimistic and fatalistic reflections on Black social life/death*) seem to bypass this *vital* reading and Fanonian revelation on futurity, historical betrayal, and "prayer" (transcendentalism), Kelly Oliver's innovative chapter "Humanism Beyond the Economy of Property" in *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression*, is an excellent filter through which we "attempt to touch... this study"<sup>60</sup> (*to borrow the erotic language of Fanon*) on utopia. An endarkened psychoanalytic is one that recognizes the way that race and blackness always already 'troubles the text'<sup>61</sup> of classical psychoanalysis. It then becomes imperative that we read the horror stories under the assumption that:

with regard to Fanon, ... wretchedness emerges from a standpoint that is not only not ours, that is not only one we cannot have and ought not want, but that is, in general, held within the logic of im/possibility that delineates what subjects and citizens call the real world.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4 "Break[ing] Though in *Blood & Disfigurement*<sup>63</sup>: Boko Haram in the Flesh

"The hallmark of terror is not so much the depiction of pain and violence, but the transfer of violence from the land of adventure to the reader's own vulnerable and unstable state of mind."

—Ed Morgan, 2002<sup>64</sup>

Surely, as the cameras turn on and focuses in on the violence, the spectator is thinking, reminiscing, indulging, and constructing ideations of personhood. While it may be true that "you aren't able to identify or name the face of the boy looking out at you,"<sup>65</sup> you learn to fill in the gaps as you realize that the camera lens is also a mirror, a reflection, and a double of the photographer. Any picture can be you because "the self [is] the schizophrenic, hallucinatory, presence of another. But today, the voice you speak with may not be your own."<sup>66</sup> These stories of terror exist because there is a need to create a hegemonic self/identity/ego who is in constant juxtaposition to a terribly troubled other. Within a rich philosophical and academic tradition, this

process has been termed American Africanism, doubling, and double consciousness by Toni Morrison (1992), Hortense Spillers (1987), Sigmund Freud (1919), and W. E. B Du Bois (1903) respectively. Put another way, Anna Agathangelou writes that "blackness... is precisely what makes the rest of the world legible; the non-radicalness of Africans... is the foil against which 'the West' and whites measure their legitimacy and value."<sup>67</sup> Morrison as well as Mbembe suggests that this motif has pedagogical implications through "the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify."<sup>68</sup> Spillers and Freud are helpful in understanding this construction of a "foil" through caricatures of terror and 'the uncanny.' Freud indicates that we create these narratives through the figure of the "double"<sup>69</sup> (and thus, feelings of uncanniness) because of the fear of 'self destruction.'<sup>70</sup> The figure of the double becomes a fungible safeguard ("insurance") against the risk that the self or "ego" (American Identity/Imagination) might become 'extinct.'<sup>71</sup>

This process of identity construction also happens at the level of the spectacle. It is not just the *seer* whose identity is being constructed in the double process of narrative transmission but also the *seen*. In this case, the African object of our ocularcentrism occupies a liminal space in which their ontological status becomes flattened:

*As soon as I entered the United States, my otherwise complex, multidimensional, and rich human identity became completely reduced to a simple, one-dimensional, and impoverished nonhuman identity. I am saying, in other words, that to become "black" in the United States is to enter a sphere where there is no differentiation, no distinction, and no variation.*<sup>72</sup>

Written by a Nigerian man named Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, this too is the fate of the countless characters that play their role within the story of Boko Haram. The complexities of their "authentically" African or Nigerian lives are disfigured and diluted through violent acts of naming, where captive bodies are turned into flesh (Spillers). It is through this process that the rigid lines partitioning populations and geographies become less permanent, fixed, and definitive. Individuals begin to cross borders without the intention of becoming Black, with no demographic category "box" to check, no dotted line to sign, and no time or venue to deliberate over chosen and given identities. Like Táíwò, these Nigerian creatures of our imaginations "BECAME BLACK!"<sup>73</sup>

Part of this process is codified through (imagi)native<sup>74</sup> and primal venues like mainstream Black media. For example, the imaging of Black Entertainment Television (BET) in the special broadcasting, *Stolen Innocence: Your Daughters Are Our* (2014),<sup>75</sup> hints at locating and rupturing the "Us/them" dichotomy, activated by an orientalist cognition of communal separation.<sup>76</sup> By implicating America within the regime of violence against Black women and girls within the sex-work industry, the commentators (through analogy), familiarized the kidnapping of the 300 Nigerian schoolgirls. The phenomenon of #BringBackOurGirls became removed from its local/original/African context in such a way that the name Ibrahim Abdullahi becomes largely irrelevant.<sup>77</sup> Expectedly, interviews of the Nigerian girls who were able to escape the grasps of Boko Haram (MSNBC), naturally identified them as "Black women" —with a political vernacular akin to American and Black feminist sensibilities. The scene that introduced their live identities (*The Mellissa Harris-Perry Show*) is also telling to how social and political discourses would read these girls as "Black" and not necessarily as "African" or "Nigerian."<sup>78</sup> This process of exchange (the 'African' for the 'Black') not only "provides a



metaphor of displacement for other human and cultural features and relations," but Hortense Spillers also suggest that it is symptomatic of the purging of the semantic/cultural "baggage" Americanizing forces need not bear.<sup>79</sup>

Beyond the erasure of what might have disqualified the "African" from the captivity of "blackness," perhaps the evidence and testimony of injury, wound, or tort, offers the alluring possibility of justice and civil liability. Or, as Raymond Guess prefaces in *Politics and the Imagination*, "wrongdoers may seem invincible now, but eventually they will pay" *after* the jury hears my account of what happened.<sup>80</sup> —Oh, and I have all the gory details that will surely make their skin crawl. These terror(ble) stories take the shape and form of severe dismemberment. Freud provides a general basis for substantiating the position that narrations of terror (which produce feelings of uncanniness) rely on the process of severed limbs:

Dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, feet which dance by themselves—all these have something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when, as in the last instance, they prove able to move of themselves in addition. As we already know, this kind of uncanniness springs from its association with the castration-complex. To many people the idea of being buried alive while appearing to be dead is the most uncanny thing of all. And yet psychoanalysis has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another phantasy which had originally nothing terrifying about it at all, but was filled with a certain lustful pleasure—the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence.<sup>81</sup>

This passage is also reminiscent of Hortense Spillers' discussion of the "captive body," which adds another theoretical layer and substantiation to my argument about the process of 'objectification' and "doubling." Like Freud, Spillers also suggest that "social" and "cultural subject make doubles" in a way that wholly relies on the production of "scene[s] of *actual* mutilation, dismemberment, and exile."<sup>82</sup> While Spillers' "double" figuration is specific to gender,<sup>83</sup> Spillers' bifurcated "captive body"<sup>84</sup> endarkens —*which is to say racializes*—Freud's formulation in such a way that an application to Boko Haram becomes possible. This captive body is created, imaged, and circulated in a twofold process 1) by "atomizing" the flesh into compartments whereby the African body becomes non-human object in juxtaposition to the New World human-subject and 2) by irresistibly surveying these "small portions of the flesh" as a kind of spectacular "pornotroping."<sup>85</sup> To the point of the question, *what drives the creation and transmission of terrorist narratives* Spillers merely extends on the answer that Freud gives us (doubling) with an explicit and layered contextualization of African corporeality (i.e. the captive body).

Generalized by Freud and then racialized by Spillers, the narratives of terror take on the *form* of severe bodily disfiguration (the acts of Mbembe's war machines). The drama of Boko Haram displays *actual* live senses of mutilation that "take on the objective description of laboratory prose-eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bullet."<sup>86</sup> Like Freud suggests in his discussion about how "dismembered limbs... have something particularly uncanny about them," Spillers offers the connective tissue necessary to explore its application to Boko Haram, as a breeding ground for the formation of confounded identities. It is my suggestion that through the deployment of American Africanism (Morrison) and the double/uncanny (Freud), these narratives and images of Boko Haram's terror merely restage the

position (or motif) of the captive body, as we live in the historical moment that is the afterlife of slavery. This episode is merely a different manifestation of an old and peculiar institution—a *new* event for those who subscribe to the mainstream, ethno-universal, or "white" identity, and a dated one for those forced into an ascribed Black identity. Upon quickly exploring the trail left by Boko Haram (enabled by the memory of new media), the process of restaging the disfigured captive body within an African context could not be any more clear.

New media (mainly internet news stories) is scattered with gruesome depictions of the aftermath of Boko Haram's episodic voyage through northern Nigeria. It is also important to note that in some cases, we can even see Nigerian civilians' retaliating in leaked 3 second videos; hacking away with sticks at what is left of the bodies of Boko Haram members. The caption of this video (available in HD) reads "After the botched assault on Maiduguri, Borno by Boko Haram on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, residents of the city vented their frustration on the corpses of the fighters who were killed."<sup>87</sup> Other mainstream American news carriers like *The Huffington Post* also used the language of "dismemberment,"<sup>88</sup> which are too numerous to actually cite here. Most terrible however are the literal photographs of severed limbs placed beside each other in the aftermath of suicide attacks in various news stories and blogs.<sup>89</sup> Even peer-reviewed articles are enamored with the motif of 'dismemberment' as one article hyperbolically asks the question, "To what extent has Boko Haram dismembered Nigeria?"<sup>90</sup> So, if Boko Haram is not only dismembering bodies but also whole counties, then it is not a surprise that I read Spillers all over this travesty; "written in blood, [which] *represents* for its African and indigenous peoples a scene of actual mutilation, dismemberment, and exile."<sup>91</sup>

## 5 American Media & The Rest of the World

Mainstream American media is a tricky game to decipher. Why some stories get pulled and others do not is a classic question asked by the ones forced into conspiring their own answers. The ones who print off news stories and archive messy news paper clippings in the fear of their disappearance from public record. "Sometimes the story is not clear, or it starts in a whisper" because "this knowledge has been degraded, and the research rejected."<sup>92</sup> Tracing the inception of Boko Haram, a terrorist group based in northeastern Nigeria is especially tricky because, "it is also not impossible that the Boko Haram sect was just one facet of the multifaceted and well-linked fundamentalist *movement*, the true extent of which has yet to be fully determined."<sup>93</sup> What we do know however is that violent challengers of the Nigerian state began to surface with the use of force before "1999 when the country returned to multiparty democracy."<sup>94</sup> Expectedly, violence did not just erupt out of thin air when the United States finally decided to begin reporting on the crisis of the *erroneously reported* "five-year insurgency in Nigeria."<sup>95</sup> US news carriers like the *Associated Press*,<sup>96</sup> *United Press International (UPI)*,<sup>97</sup> *New York Times*,<sup>98</sup> *Washington Post*,<sup>99</sup> and the *Daily News*<sup>100</sup> began their reporting in small series throughout the years of 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2011 respectively. What makes tracking the paper trail of Boko Haram much more difficult is the fact that

From what is available, however, it would appear that the group has been around for some time, as long as ten or fifteen years, and had operated under different names in the past. Such names included Ahlusunna wal' Jamma Hijra; the Nigerian Taliban; and the Yusufiyya (Fasure 2009: 2; Omipidan 2009b: 48; Sunday Tribune 2009).<sup>101</sup>

While my research is incomplete in surveying the entire U.S. press industry's reporting of Boko Haram, we *can* conclude that the reporting did *not* begin in the summer of 2014 — with the national sensation of the 300 kidnaped schoolgirls in (characterized by the #BringBackOurGirls campaign), followed by Boko Haram's 'deadliest' massacre of 2000 civilians in Baga, Nigeria carried out early 2015.<sup>102</sup>

Despite public outcry for more media attention on the violence of Boko Haram and the criticism of international apathy,<sup>103</sup> the United States' reporting has not been completely lacking and reports have certainly been recorded.<sup>104</sup> The story carried a palpable resonance of the kind of gross terrorism that the United States waged war against in 2001. Or, to echo the words of the provocative and daring photojournalist Glenna Gordon, "some critics and media pundits have complained that the massacre hasn't been sufficiently, or even substantively, covered by the Western media. That simply isn't true: every newswire has run stories and updates, and every newspaper has written copy."<sup>105</sup> In light of this, this section looks to understand why we continue to share the story of Boko Haram's operations? Here I will argue that the process by which the story of Boko Haram is told within the North American context corroborates the theoretical arguments forwarded by Hartman, Morrison, Spillers, and Freud.

Studies in American Africanism, in my view, should be investigations of the ways in which a nonwhite, Africanist presence and personae have been *constructed— invented— in the United States, and of the literary uses this fabricated presence has served...* Ernest Hemingway, who wrote so compellingly about what it was to be a white male American, could not help folding into his enterprise of American fiction its Africanist properties." (emphasis mine)<sup>106</sup>

Nothing on the news reporting of Boko Haram captures a profound literary contrast more than the work of Adam Nossiter of *The New York Times* — who, for the next half of a decade, would "head [*The New York Times*] West Africa bureau in Dakar, Senegal"<sup>107</sup> and become the most frequent corresponding reporter on events concerning Boko Haram (nationally). The first two sentences of his first article on Boko Haram in 2009 and his most recent article in February of 2015 initially, made me believe that the story became *more* graphic as the years welcomed the profane violence of Boko Haram:

2009:

Scores have been killed in clashes between the police and members of a fundamentalist Islamic sect in towns across northern Nigeria, a predominantly Muslim region that for years has had regular and often bloody outbreaks of sectarian *unrest*. An *obscure* group opposed to Western education appears to be at the root of the current *troubles*.<sup>108</sup> (emphasis mine)

2015:

They came in the *dead* of night, their faces covered, riding on motorcycles and in pickup trucks, shouting "Allahu akbar" and firing their weapons. "They started with the shootings; then came the *beheadings*," said Hussaini M. Bukar, 25, who fled after Boko Haram fighters stormed his town in northern Nigeria.<sup>109</sup> (emphasis mine)

Surely, one could only assume that as Boko Haram evolved in its tactics (with time and experience), the nature of its narration would also grow in detail and gore. This unfounded assumption was (for me), only confirmed through the juxtaposition of 2009 stories featuring photographs of safely *secured*/*arrested*/*alive/unharmd* culpable suspects and benign language

(i.e. 'obscure', 'unrest', 'troubles'),<sup>110</sup> and a 2015 article with terror(ble) language about how "they [Boko Haram] tied their hands behind their backs, ... and cut their head[s] off."<sup>111</sup> This would suggest that as the story and its characters developed, so would the special effects and imagery used to help the reader suspend disbelief and stay tuned for the next issue. My intuitive assumption was quickly suspended after realizing that only two days later (after the 2009 article), that *The New York Times* would print an article (written by Adam Nossiter) with a graphic photograph of a nameless "body of a man killed Wednesday in fighting in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in Nigeria."<sup>112</sup>

Some stories were graphic, gory, spectacular, an exhibition of what those men who believe that 'Western education is sinful,' could actually do; characteristic of our status quo contemporary (*Hartmanian*) imagery of Boko Haram. Other stories were not. Through it all however, "the "terrible spectacle" that introduced [the story of Boko Haram continued to]... reinforce the spectacular character of black [or Nigerian] suffering."<sup>113</sup> Like any spectacle of this nature, "the casualness with which they are circulated, and the ... display of the [victims'] ravaged body," made me wonder if 'this was *always* the case.' Were we always casually circulating images and photographs of the insurgent violence in northern Nigeria (or elsewhere for that matter)? Was *The New York Times* running stories prior to 2009 or 1999 during "Boko Haram's alleged period of incubation"?<sup>114</sup> Or to be more thorough, as Abimbola Adesoji's historiography suggest,<sup>115</sup> was the Western world also producing stories ('news reporting' or otherwise) on

The Maitatsine uprisings of 1980 in Kano, 1982 in Kaduna and Bulumkutu, 1984 in Yola and 1985 in Bauchi, ... the Kano metropolitan riot of October 1982, the Ilorin riot of March 1986, the University of Ibadan crisis of May 1986, the nationwide crisis over Nigeria's membership in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in January/February 1986, the Kafanchan/Kaduna/Zaria/Funtua religious riots of March 1987, the Kaduna Polytechnic riot of March 1988, the acrimonious, nationwide debate on Sharia (Islamic law) at the Constituent Assembly in October/November 1988, the Bayero University crisis of 1989, the Bauchi/Katsina riots of March/April 1991, the Kano riot of October 1991, the Zangon-Kataf riot of May 1992, the Kano civil disturbance of December 1991 and the Jos crisis of April 1994 (Imo 1995: 21-23; Ibrahim 1997: 512-516; Enwerem 1999: 124).<sup>116</sup>

To answer the question simply, *no*. In the years of 1985-1994 (following Adesoji's timeline by date *and* region), *The New York Times* reported a total of 7 stories pertaining to the tumultuous regions as outlined by Adesoji<sup>117</sup> — with only 4 stories actually pertaining to the *sectarian/insurgent violence* (1992).<sup>118</sup> Yet, at this moment in 2009-2015, *The New York Times* published a total of 453 articles relating to "Boko Haram."<sup>119</sup> Surely there must be a reason for such a profound statistically significant rise in media coverage<sup>120</sup> on insurgent violence in Nigeria, *despite* its consistent frequency.

I want to suggest that these concerns—*autonomy*, authority, newness and difference, *absolute power*—not only become the major themes and presumptions of American literature, *but that each one is made possible by, shaped by, activated by a complex awareness and employment of a constituted Africanism*. It was this Africanism, deployed as *rawness and savagery*, that provided the staging ground and arena for the elaboration of the quintessential American identity.<sup>121</sup> (emphasis mine)

If it is true that there exists "more nuanced explorations of the *conjunction* between new media and American literature,"<sup>122</sup> then these news reports of Boko Haram (im)properly become a part of the 'American literature' Toni Morrison indicts. But not only that, I hope to displace the rigid binaries to uncover "insights regarding both new media and American literature [that] can emerge from their conjoining."<sup>123</sup> Operating under "the premise that literature, technology, and *media* have always been deeply intertwined,"<sup>124</sup> I approach the decoding of the current phase of the United States' 'war on terror' through a close reading of the *story of Boko Haram*,<sup>125</sup> as well as its employment with the American military industrial complex. It is important that we understand how these stories circulate *not* in the privacy of our Internet browsers. Instead, given our historical moment, these stories circulate in the *public* space(s) of our internet browsers *within* our seemingly private domains. *Am I really alone at home as I scour over LexisNexis News for hours? Or am I at the newsstand, gossiping and eavesdropping on someone's conversation at the train station on Chambers St., NY?* As Victoria Bernal in "Diaspora, Cyberspace and Political Imagination: The Eritrean Diaspora Online" writes, one must reconceptualize how we understand "public space." Bernal indicates, "new media, especially the Internet, are giving rise to novel communicative spaces and practices and creating new discursive communities."<sup>126</sup> In this respect, American news reporting (new media) on Boko Haram is not a neutral function of "the dissemination of information," as Walter Benjamin famously argued.<sup>127</sup> Instead, the "creativity, imagination, and realism" of any given story harnesses the potential to "make [the] news part of the literary discipline."<sup>128</sup> As Lee Siegel of *The New Yorker* suggests, "instantaneous news of what happened, or might have happened, has become our art, and, like the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy, we are all part of the swelling roar."<sup>129</sup> To return to Morrison however, Boko Haram invariably becomes a part of a literary tradition where "the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify"<sup>130</sup> becomes "a mechanism for testing the problems and blessings of freedom."<sup>131</sup>

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country ... and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack... Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime... its goal is remaking the world -- and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere... The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children... Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.<sup>132</sup>

The media trajectory that launched the story of Boko Haram was guided by an axiomatic avowal of American Africanism. Like Morrison, I want to suggest that the properly liberalist concerns of autonomy (freedom), authority, and absolute power was compromised with the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The United States of America was coerced into an indefinitely extreme and radical militarism. al-Qaeda forced the United States into doing something it "would not otherwise do,"<sup>133</sup> by its display and performance of unrepressed power on September 11, 2001. Ironically, what appears to be George W. Bush's most profound moment of chief command (as he receives applause for his five non-negotiable "demands on the Taliban"), is actually America's weakest historical vignette. In one day, the Taliban made a mockery of America and instigated reactive hegemonic claims toward authority, autonomy, and absolute power. As such, the nodal point of the American political project for the next decade would require a war on "every terrorist group of global reach." Only, after trillions of dollars in defense spending and its immeasurable human toll, the war begins to see signs of termination in the summer of 2014.

The process of pursuing al-Qaeda as a radical 'other' in the American context required what Anna Agathangelou calls a *slave-cratic-visuality of power*— a process (through motifs of blackness and orientalism) to make legible the facelessness of the enemy by gesturing toward "tensions between slavery and colonialism... [the production of] a signifying site that expresses terror and terrorism beyond the frames of dominant imperial and sovereign state powers." Similar to my investigation into Boko Haram and framing within the 'afterlife of slavery,' Agathangelou begins her "insurgent postcolonial and materialist critique" by a close reading of "the visualized terror associated with al-Qaeda and its leader bin Laden."<sup>134</sup> Through a rhetorical/discursive mechanism distinct from my analysis on tropes of 'disfigurement,' Agathangelou's engagement with theorizations on visually and media indicates that news stories (picturing bin Laden specifically) "gestures to images circulating in the US about black youth and their criminalization [and]... that black is ontologically dead [in ways that] makes terror visible."<sup>135</sup> Given Agathangelou's contention that "Africa is the originary and the final site of the undoing of the coherency of slave-cratic-visuality structures of power," the US policy and media agenda's momentary shift from al-Qaeda to Boko Haram becomes natural—especially in a world where "the black person as the 'phenomenal event and not an intelligible object of humanity' makes coherent the terrorism conflict."<sup>136</sup>

In the summer months of 2014, the same months that share the story of 300 kidnaped schoolgirls by Boko Haram, mainstream media erupted with news stories about U.S. troop withdrawal in Afghanistan.<sup>137</sup> By way of contrast, the continued play of the story of Boko Haram is a tactful literary stunt to reaffirm the American identity as 'democratic', 'civil', 'free', 'peaceful', and 'altruistic.' To argue that the American military industrial machine is unconcerned with the deployment of literary tactics of narration is to ignore the history of the Cold War, the process of containment, and the inception of United States Information Service (USIS).<sup>138</sup> Richard Jean So pointedly reminds us that there was a "major shift in communications strategy for the US state"<sup>139</sup> during the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War. So goes on to suggest that, "the government seemed newly cognizant of the "explosion" of new media technologies that had occurred in the past decade, which included radio, the telegraph, and cinema."<sup>140</sup> With this new proliferation of writing, rhetorical, and communicative technologies/methodologies, "the world now appeared promiscuously awash with *words* in an unregulated and borderless media field. In order to win the war against Communism, the US state needed to gain control of this field—to *manipulate the meaning of such words and direct their movement to the cause and consolidation of democracy*."<sup>141</sup> It is my argument that the 'manipulation' of words and meanings (discourse) justly translates into our contemporary moment as we watch the story of Boko Haram unfold. For Morrison, the story of Boko Haram is emblematic of a concurrent brand of American Africanism where "the Africanist character [acts] as a surrogate and enabler," who instigates the question, "In what ways does the imaginative encounter with Africanism enable white writers to think about themselves?"<sup>142</sup> Or, as bell hooks identifies, by "re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority."

I stand on the American continent where on any other given day, America would give not a second of news time to a story like "300" or "2,000" except for the fact that "the presence [of this story] was curial to their sense of Americanness. And it shows."<sup>143</sup> Could the West really be civilized, Christianized, law respecting peoples if they had nothing to say to about the barbaric,

fundamentally Islamic, challengers to the weak Nigerian state? And more importantly, could the United States really *still* be at war with terror if they ignored the written story of Boko Harm? America is home of the great voyeurs who save the day in the face of violence and global terror—after all, "our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there." In the face of a compromised American narrative with the withdrawal of American troops in Afghanistan, a story needed to be created in order to validate Western horror to terrorism. Despite withdrawal, the American psyche needed to know that we are still at war with terrorist. That West is still disgusted by their methods. The media campaign of #BringBackOurGirls and the political storm it created in America is validation enough. So much, that even Michelle Obama posted the iconic image of support, writing: "our *prayers* are with the missing Nigerian girls and their families. It's time to #BringBackOurGirls. -mo."<sup>144</sup>

## 6 Conclusion



Images are never unmediated, neither when they are made nor when they are read or viewed. They are constellations of worldviews abstracted from their contexts and reinserted into other spaces to participate with us in onto-political-structural contestations. They are not us but they are vital to our struggle to either reanimate or kill life.<sup>145</sup>

Right outside this fence and on the other side of the sandstone wall that blocks off the compound, are children attending a primary school on Alafia avenue in Lagos, Nigeria. In a remarkable unison, these children would sing their greetings to their teacher *every* morning with an almost hypnotic tenor of profound devotion, and unqualified sincerity. These schoolyard songs and the children that sang them had a way of commanding audibility that made it impossible to ever steal away from its sound. The songs played as an interjecting interlude that constrained the quotidian and mundane routine of urban life for anyone around to listen. For me, those sounds haunt the

pretext for this article because they typify an intersubjective trice of international human connection— even in moments where the sound only exists in my memory. I heard those songs once again when the story about the kidnaping of 300 Nigerian schoolgirls took hold on the international news cycle. Though I knew for certain that the school on Alafia avenue was safe, terror did its work of transforming benign memories like the one captured in the image above into horrible scenes of kidnaped schoolgirls whose torn "dresses [are] scattered all over" the school ground.<sup>146</sup> A sudden feeling of death and destruction was all I could intellectualize. Terror has a way of flattening experience and reason and sense such that sentimentality and feeling are able to take hold of our social and political ideations of personhood. Somehow Spillers must have known that *sound* is what would get me here. Or maybe words, or maybe sight. whatever. Perhaps the discourse remains open to revealing itself not in spontaneity but in the earnest endeavors of generative capacity "against the stubbornness of tradition."<sup>147</sup> I hope those children are still alive and that in theory, we can exhume what it means to witness their death.

## 7 Acknowledgements

To my late mentor and beloved friend Dr. Harris Mirkin, and community of scholar-mentors Jesus Raul Ayotunde Cepin, Dr. Jane Greer, Elizabeth Hayles, Nancy Levit, Dana Owens, Edward D. Scott, Jr., and Dr. Elizabeth Vonnahme who have all in some way guided this project.



## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Ed Morgan, "International Law's Literature of Terror," *Canadian Journal of Law & Jurisprudence* 11, no. 2 (2002): 317-326.

<sup>2</sup> Peyi Soyinka-Airewele, "The End of Politics?: Reclaiming Humanity in an Age of Biopower and Necropolitics," *Covenant University Public Lecture Series* 4, no.2 (2015). Relying on Achille Mbembe's most important offering of the notion of "necropolitics" and his articulation that politics (*through an understanding of biopower and sovereignty*) must:

Therefore [be understood as] death that lives a human life," Soyinka-Airewele comes to the most logical conclusion that: "we must return again to Mbembe's definition of Politics as —death living a human life. If Politics is "death living a human life," perhaps there is nothing more optimistic than to speak about the end of politics—that is, the “end of death living a human life.(33)

<sup>3</sup> Barry Grossman & Jaan Islam, "A Long and Broken History of Western “Universalism”: Cosmopolitanism," *International Journal of Political Theory* 1, no.1 (2016): 25.

<sup>4</sup> Stuart Elden & Jeremy W. Crampton, *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Ashgate, 2007): 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Grossman & Islam.*, at, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Lyndon LaRouche, *Beyond Psychoanalysis* (The Campaigner, 1973): 27.

<sup>7</sup> Helen Berents, "Hashtagging Girlhood: #IAmMalala, #BringBackOurGirls and Gendering Representations of Global Politics," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18, no. 4 (2016): 513-527

<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power & Bare Life* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998 [1995]): 88.

<sup>9</sup> Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 1 (1987): 67.

<sup>10</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986 [1930]): 17-18.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (New York: Routledge, 2003): (vii).

<sup>12</sup> *Grossman & Islam.*, at, 13-16.

<sup>13</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (New York: Grove Press, 1967 [1952]). see, Anna Agathangel, "Anxieties of Global Empire: Politics of Visibility Epistemology and 'Terror'," *Knowing Al-Qaeda: The Epistemology of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2016): 32. The primary concern of this article resides in visual culture and its parade of scenes of violence. As Fanon indicates, "The act of violence is not the killing field, the orgy of destruction. Violence is visibility, the shared evil that forces together the oppressor and the oppressed. Violence is the awareness of freedom's proximity of the fragility of survival."

<sup>15</sup> Rae Earnshaw & Norman Wiseman, *An Introductory Guide to Scientific Visualization* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Daron Acemoglu & James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012): 285-314.

<sup>18</sup> Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15 (2003): 40.

<sup>19</sup> Rebekah Lee & Megan Vaughan, "Death and Dying in the History of Africa Since 1800," *Journal of African History* 49 (2008): 349-351.

<sup>20</sup> Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe., at, 68.

<sup>21</sup> Omotade Adegbindin, "Critical Notes on Hegel's Treatment of Africa," *Ogirisi: a New Journal of African Studies* 11, (2015): 20.

Africa is not among Hegel's four cultures or civilizations. From Hegel's perspective, Africa is said to be unhistorical; undeveloped spirit – still involved in the conditions of mere nature; devoid of morality, religions and political constitution.<sup>2</sup> Hence he holds that there is a justification for Europe's enslavement and colonization of Africa. For him, slavery causes the "increase of human feeling among the Negroes.

<sup>22</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963): 41.

<sup>23</sup> Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The Logic of Violence in Africa," *Ferguson Center for African and Asian Studies Working Paper* 4, (2011).

<sup>24</sup> Spillers, *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe.*, at, 68.

<sup>25</sup> Mbembe, "Necropolitics., " at, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth.*, at, 20, 38-39.

<sup>27</sup> I use the word "flesh" here (as opposed to bodies) to invoke Spiller's specifically.

<sup>28</sup> Mbembe, *Ne.*, at, 23.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Jared Sexton & Huey Copeland, "Raw Life: An Introduction," *Qui Parle* 13, no.2 (2003): 53-62.

<sup>31</sup> Mbembe, "Necropolitics., " at, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Cynthia B. Dillard, "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 13, no. 6 (2000): 661-681. My argument for an "endarkened Freudian" mode of inquiry is heavily influenced by Dillard's "Assumption no. 5: Knowing and research extend both historically in time and outward to the world: to approach them otherwise is to diminish their cultural and empirical meaningfulness" (676-677). I want readers to understand my correction/call out to Freud's suppression of Du Bois' contribution to his theory of the double in the general "shaping of the rules which have historically guided formal educational research, the system of knowledge production within higher education, and the meanings and legitimacy surrounding research processes." I want to not only discredit Freud's pioneering brand but also provide a needed critique as well as an "endarkenment" on society as a whole.

<sup>33</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The "Uncanny"," Translated by Alix Strachey, first published in *Imago*, Bd. V., 1919; reprinted in *Sammlung*, Fünfte Folge.

<sup>34</sup> Freud argues that 'the uncanny', or more precisely, "the feeling of uncanniness," can be simply understood as a sentimental identification to the 'strangely familiar.' Put another way, Freud asserts that 'the uncanny' "is that class of terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (1-2). Freud further defines 'the uncanny' as:

In reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old—established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression. This reference to the factor of repression enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling's definition of the uncanny as something which ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light" (13).

<sup>35</sup> Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992): 25.

---

<sup>36</sup> Robert Schuett, *Political Realism, Freud, and Human Nature in International Relations: The Resurrection of the Realist Man* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): xi.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Gordon, "Psychoanalysis and Racism: the Politics of Defeat," *Race & Class* 42, no. 4 (2001): 18.

<sup>39</sup> I quickly depart from Gordon's larger argument given my assumption of an *endarkened* reading of Freud and Gordon's misplaced expectation and judgment of the work of theory.

<sup>40</sup> Hortense J. Spillers, *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*, "'All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race," (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003): 376-427

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Omar Benton Ricks, "On Jubilee: The Performance of Black Leadership in the Afterlife of Slavery," (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2014): 22.

<sup>44</sup> See Spillers, *Black, White and in Color.*, at 516-517 (notes 8-11).

<sup>45</sup> Ricks., at 28-29. see also, Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1994).

<sup>46</sup> as well as 19th century work in psychology to be discussed.

<sup>47</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992): 13. See also, Ashley Tidey, "Limping or Flying? Psychoanalysis, Afrocentrism, and *Song of Solomon*," *College English* 63 (2000): 48-70.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard W. Bell, "Genealogical Shifts in Du Bois's Discourse on Double Consciousness as the Sign of African American Difference," *W. E. B. Du Bois on Race and Culture*, ed. Bernard W. Bell, Emily R. Grosholz, James B. Stewart (New York: Routledge, 2013): 90.

<sup>49</sup> Arnold Rampersad, "Psychology and Afro-American Biography," *The Yale Review* 78 (1988): 1-18., see also, Oswald Külpe, *Outlines of Psychology*, trans. Edward Bradford Titchener (New York: MacMillan, 1895)., Arnold Rampersad, *The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976): 74., Walter Kalaidjian, "'The Pardon of Speech': The Psychoanalysis of Modern American Poetry," *The Oxford Handbook of Modern and Contemporary American Poetry*, ed. Cary Nelson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 461-486.

<sup>50</sup> Stephano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013): 26.

<sup>51</sup> Specifically, Spillers' "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987), her insightful piece "'All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race" ([1996], reprinted about three times after its original publication in 1996), and Rampersad's important "Psychology and Afro-American Biography" (1989). Oddly enough however, these works, though both embarking on the path of psychoanalytic and literary critique, speak directly past each other. Though Rampersad's article was published (Autumn, 1988), about a year and four months after Spillers' 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe,' It is increasingly strange that Rampersad fails to even mention *any* of Spiller's early work. This strangeness is further isolated by the fact that Spillers actually began the work that would become 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe' at a conference "at Barnard College in 1982" and through a series of essays from 1984-1989. See, Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah

---

Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley & Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Whatcha Gonna Do?': Revisiting 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book': A Conversation with Hortense J. Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, & Jennifer L. Morgan," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35 (2007): 299-309.

<sup>52</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (New York: Grove Press, 1967 [1952]).

<sup>53</sup> Toward a much larger project beyond the limits of this article.

<sup>54</sup> Spillers, *All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother*., at, 377.

<sup>55</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002): 2-3; 108; 197.

<sup>56</sup> Derek Hook, "Fanon and the Psychoanalysis or Racism," *LES Research* (2007), simply defines "collective catharsis" by suggesting that his reading of Fanon tells us:

In Fanon's conceptualization, then, the early traumatic event to be found at the origin of neurosis appears to be cultural in form, its source hence being a type of *cultural trauma*. As he puts it, 'there is a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly ... with the help of books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio -- work their way into one's mind' (152). Fanon demands more of an explanation than this, though, and attempts to understand something about the logic of racism in the kind of cultural victimisation he has been discussing. Each society, he claims, has a form of **collective catharsis** through which a certain amount of aggression can be 'channelled' outward and released. Cultural forms of expression are one way in which this happens. Cultural forms in colonial contexts overwhelmingly take on a racist coloration, such that whether we are talking about the characters (or plots) of television, comics, films, popular jokes, stories 'the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes' (Fanon, 1986, 146).

<sup>57</sup> See, Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*., at, 112-113, for a fuller exploration on *collective catharsis*.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Kelly Oliver, *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004): 68

<sup>60</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*., at, 231-232

<sup>61</sup> Roger W. Reeves, "Black Western Thought: Toward a Theory of the Black Citizen-Object," (Dissertation: The University of Texas at Austin, 2012: 6-11.

<sup>62</sup> Fred Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* (2013): 738.

<sup>63</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward An Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970 [1940]): 131.

<sup>64</sup> *Morgan*., at, 317.

<sup>65</sup> David Marriott, *On Black Men* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000): 124.

<sup>66</sup> Paul D. Miller, *Rhythm Science* (London: Mediawork/The MIT Press, 2004): 69.

<sup>67</sup> Anna Agathangelou, "Neoliberal Geopolitical Order and Value," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15 (December 2013): 453-476.

<sup>68</sup> *Morrison*., at, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Closely related to Morrison's argument about American Africanism. Freud also gives or hints at *another* reason for why a particular actor may be driven toward the constant creation of, the feeling of uncanniness through narrations of terror. This answer seems to be grounded in what he calls the "repetition compulsion" which would certainly answer the 'frequency' component of my

question. He indicates that:

How exactly we can trace back the uncanny effect of such recurrent similarities to infantile psychology is a question I can only lightly touch upon in these pages; and I must refer the reader instead to another pamphlet,<sup>14</sup> [footnote #14 here is a citation to his essay *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*] now ready for publication, in which this has been gone into in detail, but in a different connection. It must be explained that we are able to postulate the principle of a *repetition compulsion* in the unconscious mind, based upon instinctual activity and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts—a principle powerful enough to overrule the pleasure-principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character, and still very clearly expressed in the tendencies of small children; a principle, too, which is responsible for a part of the course taken by the analyses of neurotic patients. Taken in all, the foregoing prepares us for the discovery that whatever reminds us of this inner *repetition-compulsion* is perceived as uncanny. Now, however, it is time to turn from these aspects of the matter, which are in any case difficult to decide upon, and look for undeniable instances of the uncanny, in the hope that analysis of them will settle whether our hypothesis is a valid one. (11-12)

<sup>70</sup> Freud., at, 8-10., "For the "double" was originally an insurance against destruction to the ego."

<sup>71</sup> Perhaps some new radical vision emerges that must be disciplined out of our American imaginations (what Freud calls "dreams") and brought back to the order of the status quo.

<sup>72</sup> Olúfẹ̀mi Táíwò, "This Prison Called My Skin: On Being Black in America," *Problematizing Blackness: Self-Ethnographies by Black Immigrants to The United States*, ed Percy C. Hintzen & Jean Muteba Rahier (New York: Routledge, 2003): 42.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> I use "(imagi)native" (imaginative) to evoke an almost native aesthetic/epistemology toward the end of thinking about "land"/"space" as cognitive units, as opposed to units of matter, materials, and "property." Instead of pursuing decolonization under the rubric of 'land/property reclamation,' Martineau and Ritskes (2014) hint at transcendental modalities (much like my intention toward an enumeration of the political imagination) as "a lived critique of settler modes of knowing and sensing that are *cognitively ordered* through property and ownership." see, Jarrett Martineau & Eric Ritskes, "Fugitive Indigeneity: Reclaiming the Terrain of Decolonial Struggle Through Indigenous Art," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3 (2014): I-XII (emphasis mine)

<sup>75</sup> "Stolen Innocence: Your Daughters Are Our Daughters," *Black Entertainment Television News*, BET, Atlanta, May 25, 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1978): 327.

<sup>77</sup> Helen A. S. Popkin, "Hashtag Wars: Who's Behind the Nigeria #BringBackOurGirls Movement?," *NBC News*, May 9, 2014., Popkin writes that "Thanks to the prevalence of social media tracking tools, the provenance of #BringBackOurGirls is easily tracked to its first use on April 23, by Ibrahim Abdullahi, a corporate lawyer in Abuja, Nigeria."

<sup>78</sup> Melissa Harris-Perry, "Teen's daring escape from Boko Haram," *MSNBC*, April 18, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> *Spillers*, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe", at, 73.

<sup>80</sup> Raymond Geuss, *Politics and the Imagination* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009): viii.

<sup>81</sup> Freud, *The "Uncanny"*, at, 14-15.

<sup>82</sup> *Spillers*, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe", at, 67-69.

<sup>83</sup> And how the desire to produce the Black female (through Moynihan) as a double to the Black male is only a desire to maintain the axiological premises that is responsible for the patriarchal conditions of "the New World."

<sup>84</sup> Though Spillers enumerates this on four different levels, I will synthesize them to *two* for the sake of clarity and relevance.

<sup>85</sup> Alexander Weheliye, "Pornotropes," *Journal of Visual Culture* 7 (2008): 65-81., La Marr Jurelle Bruce, "'The People Inside My Head, Too': Madness, Black Womanhood, and the Radical Performance of Lauryn Hill," *African American Review* 43, no. 3 (2012): 371-389., Most simply stated, "pornotroping" can be understood as the:

mass-circulation of the figure of [the Black]-in-pain [which] perpetuates what cultural theorist Saidiya Hartman calls "the spectacular character of black suffering" (3).<sup>10</sup> This process coarsens audiences to the lived reality of such pain, romanticizes and aestheticizes that pain, invites audiences' narcissistic projections onto it, and fetishizes it for voyeuristic consumption.<sup>11</sup> (Bruce)

Weheliye's definition of "pornotroping" gives me a language to describe the process of creating and transmitting terrorist narratives. Weheliye also gives us contextual examples like "slavery, the Holocaust, colonialism, and the recent images from the Abu Ghraib prison, as well as from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina" (72). These examples are very similar to my focus on images tied to the events of Boko Haram.

<sup>86</sup> Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe", at, 67.

<sup>87</sup> "Corpses of Boko Haram Fighters Assaulted In Maiduguri," *Live Leak*, February 2, 2015, [http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=e84\\_1422872701](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=e84_1422872701)

<sup>88</sup> Haruna Umar and Adamu Adamu, "Boko Haram Suspected As Twin Blasts Hit Nigerian Market," *Huffington Post and The World Post*, December 1, 2014., Alexandra Hartmann, "Everything You Need to Know About Boko Haram, the Group Kidnapping Nigerian Girls," *World Mic*, May 8, 2014., Sunny Nwankwo, "Horror in Borno as Boko Haram dismembered 10," *The Daily Independent*, May 3, 2014.

<sup>89</sup> "Northeast Nigeria ; A Battered Region Dotted With Human-Land-Mines," 247ureports, <http://247ureports.com/northeast-nigeria-a-battered-region-dotted-with-human-land-mines/>., Abdulkareem Haruna, "Northeast Nigeria ; a battered region dotted with human-land-mines," *Echoes News Nigeria (Kareem Haruna's Blog)*, December 6, 2014,

<http://echoesinn.blogspot.com/2014/12/northeast-nigeria-battered-region.html?m=1>., "Dismembered Body Of Female Suicide Bomber Who Blew Up Herself In Damaturu (Graphic)," *BIGLAWNewsLine*, February 16, 2015, <http://biglawnewsline.com/2015/02/dismembered-body-of-female-suicide-bomber-who-blew-up-herself-in-damaturu-graphic.html>., Aminu Abubakar, "Explosives strapped to girl kill 20 people at Nigerian market," *CNN*, January 11, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Adetoro Rasheed Adenrele, "Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as a symptom of poverty and political alienation," *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 3, no. 5 (2012): 21-26.

<sup>91</sup> Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe", at, 67.

<sup>92</sup> Stephano Harney & Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013): 68.

<sup>93</sup> Abimbola Adesoji, "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria," *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 2 (2010): 99.

<sup>94</sup> Atta Barkindo, Benjamin Tyavkase Gudaku, & Caroline Katgurum Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground: Boko Haram and Gender-Based Violence against Christian Women and Children in North-Eastern Nigeria since 1999," *Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network*, no. 1 (2013): 11.

<sup>95</sup> The New York Times, "Explaining Boko Haram, Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency," *The New York Times*, November 10, 2014 (reposted on May 8, 2015, per Lexis)., one of *The New York Times'* most recent articles on Boko Haram incorrectly (perhaps, ethnocentrically) suggests that, "Boko Haram is an Islamist extremist group responsible for dozens of massacres of civilians and the abduction of more than 500 women and girls *in its five-year insurgency in Nigeria.*" I assume that this inaccurate five-year timeline is *solely* based on when *The New York Times* began covering Boko Haram with a 2009 article written by Adam Nossiter. Meanwhile, the actual peer reviewed research suggests "that the group has been around for some time, as long as ten or fifteen years" (see *Adesoji.*, at, 98.). For The New York Time's first article on Boko Haram (presumably), see, Adam Nossiter, "Scores Die as Islamic Fighters Battle Nigerian Police," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2009.

<sup>96</sup> Bashir Adigun, "Nigeria Says Terror Suspects With Al-Qaida Links Arrested in Country's Muslim North," *The Associated Press*, November 12, 2007.

<sup>97</sup> "Nigerian Security Arrests Terror Suspects," *UPI*, November 12, 2007., "Analysis: Nigeria Sees Al-Qaida Oil Threat," *UPI Energy*, November 12, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Adam Nossiter, "Scores Die as Islamic Fighters Battle Nigerian Police," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2009., Adam Nossiter, "Nigerian Troops Surround Militant's House," *The New York Times*, July 29, 2009., Adam Nossiter, "Nigerian Forces Attack Compound of Islamic Militants," July 30, 2009., Adam Nossiter, "Nigeria Confirms Death Of Islamic Sect's Leader," *The New York Times*, July 31, 2009., The Associated Press, "Nigeria: Accounts Conflict On Sect Leader's Death," *The New York Times*, August 1, 2009., Senan Murray & Adam Nossiter, "After Suppression of a Sect, a Nigerian Town's Fear Is Mingled With Relief," *The New York Times*, August 4, 2009., Adam Nossiter, "Nigerians Recount Night of Their Bloody Revenge," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2010., Adam Nossiter & Sani Adamu, "Prison Raid In Nigeria Releases Hundreds," *The New York Times*, September 9, 2010., Adam Nossiter & Isa Gusau, "Killings Signal Violent Revival Of Nigeria Sect," *The New York Times*, October 19, 2010., The Associated Press, "Nigeria: Mosque Attack Signals A New Round of Violence," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2010., The Associated Press, "Nigeria: Islamist Sect Members Are Arrested in Killings," *The New York Times*, November 23, 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Katharine Houreld, "Warnings Ignored In Nigeria, Clerics Say," *The Washington Post*, August 3, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> Tina Moore, "Christmas Day bombings in Nigeria kill at least 39, radical Muslim sect claims responsibility," "Holiday horror in Nigeria (lexis)," *Daily News*, December 26, 2011., Oren Yaniv, "U.S. to hunt thugs in Nigeria church attack," *Daily News*, December 27, 2011.

<sup>101</sup> *Adesoji.*, at, 98-99.

<sup>102</sup> Matt Rozsa, "Why is mainstream media ignoring the Boko Haram attacks?," *The Daily Dot*, January 19, 2015., Faith Karimi & Aminu Abubakar, "Nine days later, bodies still litter bushes from Boko Haram's 'deadliest' massacre," *CNN*, January 12, 2015., Terrance McCoy, "Boko Haram may have just killed 2,000 people: 'Killing went on and on and on'," *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2015.

<sup>103</sup> See *Rozsa.*, above., Christopher Harress, "More Boko Haram Deaths, Less Media Coverage And No U.S. Troops On the Ground In Nigeria," *International Business Times*, June 6, 2014., Maeve Shearlaw, "Why did the world ignore Boko Haram's Baga attacks?," *The Guardian*, January 12, 2015., China Okasi, "Why no one is talking about Boko Haram," *MSNBC*, January 15, 2015., N'jaila Rhee, "Why Boko Haram Is Killing Thousands with Little Media Coverage,"

---

*This Week In Blackness*, January 19, 2015., Jared Malsin, "Why western media overlooked a massacre in Nigeria," *Columbia Journalism Review*, February 2, 2015.

<sup>104</sup> Glenna Gordon, "Nigerians Don't Need More Boko Haram Coverage, They Need Action," *Vanity Fair News*, January 20, 2015.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Morrison.*, at, 90.

<sup>107</sup> Priya Kumar, "Farewell to New Orleans," *American Journalism Review (AJR)*, June/July 2009.

<sup>108</sup> Adam Nossiter, "Scores Die as Islamic Fighters Battle Nigerian Police," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2009.

<sup>109</sup> Adam Nossiter, "Boko Haram, and Massacres Ruled by Whim," *The New York Times*, February 5, 2015.

<sup>110</sup> *Nossiter, "Scores Die as Islamic Fighters Battle Nigerian Police,"*., this article features a photograph of about 51 males captioned as "Suspected religious fundamentalists [who] were arrested during a crossfire with the police in Bauchi, northern Nigeria, on Sunday" (source: Agence France-Presse — Getty Images).

<sup>111</sup> *Nossiter, "Boko Haram, and Massacres Ruled by Whim,"*.

<sup>112</sup> Adam Nossiter, "Nigerian Forces Attack Compound of Militants," *The New York Times*, July 29, 2009., image sourced by: Pius Utomi Ekpei/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images.

<sup>113</sup> *Hartman.*, at, 3.

<sup>114</sup> *Atta Barkindo, Benjamin Tyavkase Gudaku, & Caroline Katgurum Wesley.*, at, 4.

<sup>115</sup> *Adesoji.*, at, 96., explains that this historiography is concerned with exploring "the [insurgents'] first attempts at imposing a religious ideology on a secular, independent Nigeria, [that] marked the beginning of ferocious conflict and crises in Nigeria (Isichei 1987: 194-208; Ibrahim 1997: 511-512)."

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 96-97.

<sup>117</sup> 3 of the reports were unrelated to insurgent violence. See, The Associated Press, "Chronicling the Worst Aviation Disasters," *The New York Times*, August 17, 1987., Keith Bradsher, "Boeing 707: the First U.S. Commercial Jetliner," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1990.

<sup>118</sup> Associated Press, "Toll in Religious Riots In Nigeria Is Put at 24," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1992., Associated Press, "Nigeria Quells Religious Riots; 200 Dead," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1992., Associated Press, "Some Groups Banned by Nigeria After Riots," *The New York Times*, May 21 1992., Kenneth B. Noble, "Nigerians Brace for Fallout of Civil Strife," *The New York Times*, May 23, 1992.

<sup>119</sup> My sample relies on date/region modification searches through LexisNexis. In 2009-2015, 408 newspaper articles and 46 blog posts were made about "Boko Haram."

<sup>120</sup> While the reporting of *The New York Times* is not representative of the entire U.S. news industry, it is my impression that these number are substantially insightful for highlighting the mass circulation of public discourse on Boko Haram (2009-2015).

<sup>121</sup> *Morrison.*, at, 44.

<sup>122</sup> Tara McPherson, Patrick Jagoda, & Wendy H. K. Chun, "Preface: New Media and American Literature," *American Literature* 85, no. 4 (2013): 615-628., the authors define new media as:

Stemming from "mass media," carries with it connotations of entertainment, quick communication, and ephemeral information—that is, something other than literature, which implies ineffable and lasting artistic merit, density rather than clarity, and most traditionally, familiarity with letters and books. (615)



<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 616.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> I am *italicizing* the "story of Boko Haram," to signify my investigation's interest in looking at Boko Haram not necessarily as a political/organizational unit. Instead, it is more important for my reader to understand Boko Haram as a short novel-- a literary device even. I am interested in Boko Haram as a rhetorical/epistemological question (how we read, write, know and understand the thing).

<sup>126</sup> Victoria Bernal, "Diaspora, Cyberspace and Political Imagination: The Eritrean Diaspora Online," *Global Networks* 6, no. 2 (2006): 161-179.

<sup>127</sup> *McPherson, Jagoda, & Chun.*, at, 616, citing: Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968): 89.

<sup>128</sup> Ana Margarita Aguila Reyes, "Dominatrix News: News as Literature" (master's thesis, San Diego State University, 2011), 50.

<sup>129</sup> Lee Siegel, "Is the News Replacing Literature?," *The New Yorker*, February 12, 2014.

<sup>130</sup> *Morrison.*, at, 6.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 7.

<sup>132</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation," transcript provided by *Presidential Rhetoric*, September 20, 2001.

<sup>133</sup> William L. Ury, Jeanne M. Brett, & Stephen B. Goldberg, *Getting Disputes Resolved Designing Systems to Cut the Costs of Conflict* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1988): 7.

<sup>134</sup> Anna Agathangel, "Anxieties of Global Empire: Politics of Visibility Epistemology and 'Terror'," *Knowing Al-Qaeda: The Epistemology of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2016): 29.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 33.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, at 42.

<sup>137</sup> For example, these are just a few of the stories printed by The New York Times: Mark Landler, "U.S. Troops to Leave Afghanistan by End of '16," *The New York Times*, May 28, 2014., "Obama's New Troop Withdrawal Plan for Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2014., Michael R. Gordon, "Criticism Over Troop Withdrawal Emerges From Beyond G.O.P.," *The New York Times*, June 5, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> Richard Jean So, "Literary Information Warfare: Eileen Chang, the US State Department, and Cold War Media Aesthetics," *American Literature* 85, no. 4 (2013): 723.

Dwight Eisenhower, newly elected to the president's office in 1952, who elevated the agency to a central role in US Cold War political strategy, endowed it with increased funds, and expanded its staff worldwide. Most important, he also assumed a more intellectual posture in thinking through the agency's function. In 1953, he wrote: "The purpose of [the USIA] is to depict imaginatively the correlation between U.S. policies and the legitimate aspirations of other peoples in the world" (Cull 2008, 101).

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, at, 723-724. (emphasis mine)

<sup>142</sup> *Morrison.*, at, 51-51.

Africanist idiom[s] [are] used to establish difference ... to signal modernity ... to reinforce class distinctions and otherness as well as to assert privilege and power... a black idiom and the sensibilities it has come to imply are appropriative for the associative value they lend to modernism—to being hip, sophisticated, ultra-urbane.

<sup>143</sup> *Morrison.*, at, 6.

---

<sup>144</sup> Michelle Obama, "Our prayers are with the missing Nigerian girls and their families. It's time to #BringBackOurGirls. -mo," *twitter/@flotus/associated press*, May 7, 2014 .

<sup>145</sup> *Agathangelou, "Anxieties of Global Empire"*, at, 32.

<sup>146</sup> Vlad Duthiers, "Victim's family: 'We have nobody to help us, Exclusive to CNN: Father of two missing Nigerian schoolgirls, 'Life in Chibok, it looks like we have no hope,'" *CNN Press Room*, May, 7th, 2014., As described by the family of one of the abducted Nigerian girls in an interview with CNN's Vlad Duthiers.

<sup>147</sup> Hortense J. Spillers, *Black White & In Color.*, at, x.