A Recipe for *Lemonade:*

An Exploration of Gender, Race and Space in Beyoncé's Visual Album

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the visual concept album, *Lemonade,* released by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's to answer the question, "*How do representations of race, geography and gender portray social inequality as grounds for development in the United States?"* A multimodal, social semiotic approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) is adopted to investigate four samples from the hour-long film, and theories of "imaginative geographies" and "respatialization" are used to frame the discussion. Katherine McKittrick argues that "respatialization" in Black feminist theory allows for the reclaiming of a location or symbol which once otherwise did not belong to those asserting new power over it.

The study identifies four mechanisms of representation used in *Lemonade* to put forth the view of the Southern African American woman as underrepresented: *The New Orleans setting*, *the spoken word*, *the underserved Black woman* and *exotic Black tradition*. The research proposes that, despite their intersectionality, each of these samples have varying degrees of representations of underdevelopment and social inequality about them, depending on the context in which they're shown. Whether or not a viewer interprets the said or unsaid meanings of these representations is often contingent upon his or her membership within a discursive community. The geopolitical implications of this conclusion are discussed, and means of further research for clarification and expansion are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

“As an actual and imagined site of Black southern ecstasy, tragedy, remembrance, and revolutionary possibility, NOLA is the pendulum on which Beyoncé rides a southern genealogy that traverses the Deep South from Alabama to Louisiana to Texas, back and through, with stops in between.”[1] — Dr. Zandria Robinson

“If celebrating my roots and culture during Black History Month made anyone uncomfortable, those feelings were there long before a video and long before me.”
— Beyoncé Knowles-Carter[2]

On 17 April, 2016, renowned American popstar Beyoncé Knowles-Carter shared a 1-minute trailer across social media for a mysterious premiere event. Exactly one week later, the world would come to know this project as her second visual concept album, titled *Lemonade*. In the trailer, Beyoncé is seen sporting rows of braids and a fur coat with images of a red room, an empty car park and pastoral settings of the American South flash by as, via voiceover, she whispers, “The past and the present emerge to meet us here.” Released on 23 April, 2016, *Lemonade* is the singer’s sixth studio album and second visual concept album that premiered first on HBO and Tidal (owned by her husband Shawn Carter, better known as Jay Z), and, just a few days later, was made available on iTunes and Apple Music. The 14-track album was accompanied with an hour-long visual film, set predominantly in New Orleans, and included spoken word poetry written by British-Somali poet Warsan Shire.

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[1] Robinson (2016)
[2] Gottesman (2016)

No stranger to controversy and within hours of its release, *Lemonade* was all at once both hailed and criticized by fans and mainstream media alike, with rumours swirling around her marriage to Jay Z, his fidelity and who was "Becky with the good hair" she sang about in the fourth track (Knowles-Carter, 2016, track 4). More importantly, however, it continued to ignite conversation around feminism and the lived Black[3] experience for men and women in the United States as racial tensions and police brutality, particularly against young Black men, continued to rise (Norman, 2016).

The album included the single "Formation," which contains explicit references to the activist Black Lives Matter movement —an international activist organization that campaigns against violence and systematic racism against Black people — in its accompanying video. Beyoncé performed "Formation" for the first time at Super Bowl 50, dressed in a military-inspired jacket reminiscent of Michael Jackson's 1993 Super Bowl performance, and with an all-Black female dance troupe dressed in uniforms similar to those worn during the height of the 1960s-'70s Black Panther movement. For those who supported Beyoncé's political activism through her visual album and live performances, *Lemonade* represents strength and the empowerment of Black females and the continuation of necessary conversations about race relations in the United

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[3] In this paper, when referring to race, 'Black' will be capitalized, per the Oxford English Dictionary. However, other style guides including the AP Stylebook and continue to insist on a lowercase 'b.'

States (McFadden, 2016). On the contrast, she has been deeply criticized for using imagery related to police brutality and reverential nods to the late Black activist Malcom X, and for using her own celebrity to put forth those same statements and conversations that are celebrated by her supporters, even being branded by as a “militant activist” by CNN host and *Daily Mail* contributor Piers Morgan (Morgan, 2016).

While the media discourse and conversations surrounding *Lemonade’s* themes are important in their own right, this study will focus on a lesser explored angle in the discourse surrounding *Lemonade*. Throughout the visual album, the deep American South — particularly New Orleans — and its population are seen in various stages in African American history. This study will employ Edward Said’s theories of Orientalism and imagined geographies (1978) as a postcolonial reading of *Lemonade*. Throughout the paper, the use of specific visuals will be considered in the context of existing systems of representation and within America’s history of Othering. Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* will serve as the empirical focus of this study, and four samples of the visual album will be analysed using Hodge and Kress’ (1988) social semiotic approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA). This study will postulate that through the use of visual and spoken word, Beyoncé argues that the American South — beginning with the Black female and ending with a post-Katrina New Orleans still ravished by poverty and discrimination — is underrepresented and an exoticized “Other” in the United States, making social inequality a key necessity for development in America. The mechanisms of Stuart Hall’s concept of representation (1997) will be identified — the use of *power and knowledge*, *binary oppositions, essentialism* and *fetishization* — each of which are used to affirm Beyoncé’s use of Black moments in history and particularly through its use of New

Orleans — a major former slave port and the site of Hurricane Katrina, best known for its devastating effects on the Black population in the Lower Ninth Ward. Beyoncé's postcolonial world in *Lemonade* is still one of resistance and oppression; it is not about the end of colonization or imperialism. It is an exercise in political power and the challenge of commonly accepted knowledge (Shome and Hedge, 2002) and discourses on race and geographical Otherness in the United States. More specifically, *Lemonade* challenges the commonly accepted knowledge that the end of colonialization and imperialism resulted in equality. Rather, *Lemonade* seeks to prove that racial and economic disparity are still very much a reality in the American South.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Race, Gender and Postcolonial Representations

Before moving into the study, we must first acknowledge that no paper of this length or calibre can possibly cover the sheer amount of research available to understand postcolonial theory, racism, geography and representation. Thus, this chapter will serve as a basic introduction to the key themes and concepts under which the study of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* will be framed. Postcolonial theory is broadly defined as the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies that were once colonized by Western nations (Grossberg, 2012). Interdisciplinary by nature, it is concerned with gender, race and resistance facilitating the diffusion of knowledge about oppressed peoples and those most vulnerable to the effects of a colonized history, creating an undeniable tension (Shome and Hedge, 2002). Colonialism was not just about the physical conquest, but is also often detailed as a cultural one involving "the production, circulation, and legitimation of meanings through representations, practices and performances that enter full into the constitution of the world (Gregory, 2004, 8). Throughout the research process, this study found that theorists rely on Edward Said's influential work, *Orientalism* (1978), and it has proven to be a key text on understanding representations of the "Other." Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident' (2-3). His work serves as the foundation to much of postcolonial theory and representation studies.

Moreover, it is analysed as a "corporate institution" used as a Western style for dominating and restructuring — exerting power — over the Orient. Postcolonialism, outside of the geopolitical is an "analysis and critique of the ways in which Western knowledge systems have come to dominate" (Sharp, 2008, p5). Said emphasises that Orientalism is a hegemonic cultural production, constructed through language and discourse to create binary oppositions. And while much of postcolonial theory addresses Orientalism as traits of difference between the Eastern Orient and Western Occident or the Global North and South, it became the basis for work that more explicitly explored racism, gender and representation, notably by Stuart Hall, who investigated the construction of accounts of difference through knowledge production and subsequent discourses not just about colonialism and slavery (1997), but also the gendered "Other." Inequality in the United States is also rooted in systems of representation, and "the 'Other', in short, is essential to meaning" (Hall, 1997, 236). Hall continues, "[Difference] is both necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self as a sexed subject — and at the same time, it is threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility and aggression towards the 'Other' " (238). Racialized discourse, Hall argues, is structured by a set of binary oppositions — that between "civilization" and "savagery," or more plainly put, Black versus white. In the United States, this discourse was signified through dominating stereotypes of Black culture in media. Accounts of difference in stereotypical representations *reduce* groups to a small number of oversimplified traits; *essentialize* a culture or group so that they are defined by these traits; and *naturalize* differences, rendering them self-explanatory. These accounts of difference are further rendered *fixed*, so as to be perceived as biological by Nature. Orientalism, thus, is furthered through racist discourses constructing racialized identities that consistently depend on an essentialist understanding of accounts of difference. While race and sex are defined biologically, their traits are most often misrepresented in popular culture. Richard Dyer asserts the various ways race has been represented within Western popular culture, arguing that "as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm" (1997, 1).

The same can be applied even further to the Black female, feminist theorists like bell hooks and Angela Davis argue. Continuing to follow this line of work, a new line of Black feminist scholarship emerged as a theoretical and practical effort demonstrating that race, gender and class are inseparable in the social worlds we inhabit (Davis, 1989). In a reading of the American government's response to 2005's Hurricane Katrina, the devastating natural disaster that left much of New Orleans under water and devastated, which we will focus on below, Giroux elaborates on Davis' reading of postcolonial theory and the representation of minorities, arguing that it leads to the "new biopolitics of disposability," where poor people, people of color, women and other minorities are left to fight for themselves in the face of tragedy or disaster. They are not seen by the dominant society and have been "rendered invisible, utterly disposable" (Giroux, 2006, 175). This line of scholarship sought to understand the interconnections between both Black and feminist movements, alongside class interaction. On why they all must be seen as interconnected, Davis posits,

> "Working-class and racially oppressed women confront sexist oppression in a way that reflects the real and complex objective interconnections between class exploitation, racist oppression, and male supremacy. Whereas a white middle-class woman's experience of sexism incorporates a relatively isolated form of this oppression, working class women's experiences necessarily place sexism in its context of class exploitation, and Black women's experiences further incorporate the social factor of racism" (164-165).

In *Feminism is for Everybody*, bell hooks argued that this line of critique did not come into play, however, until challenged during the 1970s and '80s, and that white females had to learn to "divest" of their white supremacy in order to recognize that race played a role in the feminist liberation movement (2000, 58). She continues that despite work to combat this, racist interactions between groups of females will continue to exist so long as society remains segregated. The examination of the Black female as a multifaceted matter and not two separate entities, as it was viewed previously, has contributed an exciting analytical depth to the study of representation, which will help inform this paper's analysis of *Lemonade*.

Geography and the Imagined Community of the American South

Much literature surrounding representation focuses on the human being or the culture, and less so on the geographical location. Geography's focus maintains that of the "real world" — of landscapes and topography, where clearer lines can be drawn. However, it is important to understand how those representations construct one's understanding of a geographical location. In *Culture & Imperialism,* Said wrote how no one is totally free from the struggle over geography, territory, space and place (1993).

Felix Driver argues that imaginative geographies help question a sense of identity and place in the world (1999) — from gender and class to nationality or geographical location or place in the world. Borrowing from Said's *Orientalism*, as referenced above, the "imaginative geographies" are based on binary oppositions that keep a certain culture or power dominant over another, and reinforces a particular identity. This line of thought, Driver explains, challenges us to rethink history as complex interconnected imaginative geographies of the literal physical space. The idea of connecting one's sense of self to a place was coined by sociologist C. Wright Mills in 1961, called the sociological imagination, which connect "personal biographies to public issues." Building upon this is the geographical imagination (Harvey, 2005), which adds the physical space, or geography to history. The concept of the geographical imagination articulates the literal and figurative ways in which people conceptualize and render space and their relation to it (Gregory 1994).

Southern representation in the imaginative geography is called into question in McPherson's *Reconstructing Dixie* (2003), arguing that there is still much to be learned from studying the American South as an entity through cultural, feminist and postcolonial lenses. The Southern imaginary, or ideal is underwritten by feminist and racial narratives. Taking a specific focus on race, gender and place when represented as a cohesive unit, McPherson argues:

> "Studying the role of the South in the national imaginary and in the works of individual Southerners illuminates the role of the imagination in social life, mining the links between imagination and representation. Culture and representation become nodes in 'which active links are made between signifying practices and social structure.' Such social structures might be structures of dominance, but modes of cultural expression can also open the space for imagining other ways of being Southern" (11).

To paraphrase, the understanding of the Southern identity and geography can be understood in terms of "race" and cultural politics surrounding it. This can also be applied to the idea of communities, particularly Anderson's "imagined community." Communities are built through shared characteristics and a sense of place (Anderson, 1991). They foster nationalistic tendencies and bonds of similarity. Anderson reasons that media and communication help produce geographic significance. Places and their relationship to each other are defined by the use of language and visual. For this paper, New Orleans — where much of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* was shot and the "Formation" music video was set and directly references in its lyrics — will be the focus. Through the media’s representations and the reality of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, those most affected became a media construct that lead to the formation of a population’s understanding or imagining of a geographic location. “Like a blockbuster film, which uses the misery of the developing world as an exotic background for a story about the travails or white people, the rolling, roiling, repetitive pictures of Black suffering are used as mise-en-scéne for the ‘real’ human interest stories…the reign of the bad niggas becomes the constructed tale of New Orleans” (Dickerson, 2005, 615). This media representation of New Orleans took hold at both a global and local scale after Hurricane Katrina, with the city constantly represented and described as one of destruction and looting, rather than its prior celebratory roots in Creole culture, music and food, fulfilling Nord’s insight that “communities are built, maintained, and wrecked in communication” (Nord, 2001; 2). It paints New Orleans as Said’s “barbarian land” (54). “Dead people, mostly poor African-Americans, left uncollected in the streets, on porches, hospitals, nursing homes, in electric wheelchairs, and in collapsed houses prompted some people to claim that America has become like a ‘Third World country’ while others argued that New Orleans resembled a Third World Refugee Camp (Brooks, 2005, 1-2)” (Giroux, 2006, 173).

A similar comparison was made during the airing of HBO’s critically acclaimed drama from the early 2000s, *The Wire,* often praised for its portrayal of social realism and the dichotomous Baltimore communities. In *Film Quarterly,* Walters writes, “…Whether this fact means that white, middle-class viewers of the show better understand the lives of black drug dealers and those living in the neighborhoods where they work is, however, arguable — and that argument can be found online. Ideas of race and class tourism are threaded through much of the web commentary on the series and its reception" (Walters, 2008, 64). This was likewise seen in reviews and reception to *Lemonade*.

Music as a Form of Public Activism

Musicians have long used their music as forms of public action or activism, and there is a great deal of literature to support this. "Music brings people together and evokes for them collective emotional experience to which common meanings are assigned" (Ramet, 1994, 1). Music has spawned activism across multiple platforms — from democracy, to race, resistance, development and more specific niche causes. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus more specifically on music of and relating to the Black female. As public figures, Marlo David Azikewe wrote that in the public sphere, "Female hip-hop artists have addressed major feminist issues: sexual agency, domestic violence and sexual assault, female economic survival, empowerment and the strength and beauty of black women" (Azikewe, 2007). In hip-hop culture particularly, artists like Missy Elliott, Lauryn Hill and Lil' Kim have been praised for using their Otherness (their Black female bodies) to various degrees of feminism and feminist statement-making, ignoring the roles the predominant white music industry ties to force them into. We can also look to today's surge in "conscious rap," which is defined as political rap offering an empowering, Afrocentric alternative to the usual kinds of messages in popular radio rap music (Cummings and Roy, 2002).

Laying the groundwork for this kind of statement-making by female artists like Beyoncé, were those coming from as early as the 1920s and '30s. In *Blues Legacies and Black*

Feminism, Angela Davis explored the musical styling and artistry of women like Bessie Smith, Nina Simone and Billie Holiday, popular blues singers, suggesting there was great correlation between their work and the social, political and cultural events occurring during their times, serving as a precursor to the feminist activism that spawned in the 1970s (1998). In *Just My Soul Responding*, Brian Ward argues that during the Civil Rights Movement, music served as a glimpse into the Black consciousness and its struggle for equality (1998). Music was also used to express Black pride, which helped create the collective identity of Blackness during the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. A recurring example of this in studies of music during the Civil Rights Era is James Brown's 1968 song, "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud," which he wrote addressing the prejudice toward Black populations in the United States and the need for Black empowerment (Angelos, 2005). Even more relevant to the case of Beyoncé's Lemonade is Nina Simone, whose song "Mississippi Goddam" was in written in direct response to the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama — which resulted in the death of four young girls and injured 22 other in 1963. Of this song, Feldstein writes, "Immediately after hearing the events in Birmingham, however, Simone wrote the song, 'Mississippi Goddam'. It came to her in a rush of fury, hatred and determination' as she suddenly realized what it was to be black in America in 1963" (Feldstein, 2005, 1350). It is here worth mentioning in passing — though this research will not explore it in detail — that Beyoncé does make obvious visual nods to Nina Simone in her film through the use of her album covers.

A Brief Look at Reviews of Lemonade

And finally, though not based in theory, it is vital that, for this research, a brief examination of the reception of Beyoncé's album is considered. As mentioned in the introduction, much of the reception surrounding *Lemonade* rightly highlighted Beyoncé's growth as an artist and musicality, with subtle nods to the changing nature of her attitude as a musician, and one to take a more active stand in the political arena. However, the predominant discourse around the visual album focused on her relationship with Jay Z and accusations of infidelity harkening back to their infamous elevator moment in 2014 with Beyoncé's sister Solange. "If these lyrics aren't fiction, the man she's castigating for adultery in the most public forum possible is her multimillionaire husband, Jay Z," writes Larry Bartleet in a review for *NME (2016).* Critics who took this one step further pondered who "Becky with the good hair" was, a nod to lyrics in the album's fourth track. Arguing though, that perhaps many music critics missed the point — that "good hair" could have been a euphemism for white women's hair as a beauty standard — which will lead us into the more relevant critiques of *Lemonade*, one blogger wrote:

> "The film itself contains a vast collection of natural black hairstyles. Taking a closer listen to — and look at — *Lemonade* from this perspective, it becomes clear that one of the most important themes running throughout the album is hair: the huge emotional power and personal significance that hair holds for all women, and specifically for Black women" (Pigeons, 2016).

The pieces that are most relevant to this paper, however, are those that do pertain to the biopolitics of geography race, and female empowerment, and help to form the basis for the necessity of a critical discourse analysis on the visuals in *Lemonade*. Regarding the single “Formation,” Dr. Zandria Robinson writes, “As an actual and imagined site of Black southern ecstasy, tragedy, remembrance, and revolutionary possibility, NOLA is the pendulum on which Beyoncé rides a southern genealogy that traverses the Deep South from Alabama to Louisiana to Texas, back and through, with stops in between” (2016), highlighting the importance of space and cultural legacy to the latest musical output. In the sampling and critical analysis, this paper will explore the narrative woven throughout *Lemonade*, however, music critics and theorists all agreed that it centered the movement of Beyoncé — representing the journey of many Black women — from anger and hurt, to renewal and empowerment, with the American South as the backdrop. “Even though the South holds a fraught history between Black and white Americans, ‘*Lemonade’* affirms that the call of home is undeniable” (McFadden, 2016).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This study on representation as a form of underdevelopment in Beyoncé’s latest artistic output, *Lemonade*, will be centred heavily around postcolonial theories in race, gender and imagined geographies, as explored above. Representations of race and gender — as it pertains to both to geography in the physical and imagined — are understood in the context of this study to be institutionalized and in need of challenging. Discrimination, particularly that of the impoverished Black female is a legacy left through the postcolonial struggles of the Civil Rights movements and female liberation, having reared its head again through various social movements spawning from natural disaster (Hurricane Katrina in 2005) and more recent instances of police brutality. These discriminatory ideologies are still premised on the notion of Edward Said’s “Other,” cast in an essentialized or reductionist light. This research will argue, however, that Beyoncé simultaneously uses these representations to her advantage to argue that because of Othering, it has resulted in an underdeveloped American South, predominantly impacting the Black female community.

In addition, this research will look at music as a means of mobilization via the social movement theory, which argues that collective action is the creation of belief systems and the establishment of a collective goal or issue (Tarrow, 1992; Oliver and Marwell, 1992). This was seen in the Civil Rights movement of the ’60s and, today, is notably organized through the Black Lives Matter movement. The ways in which these beliefs or movements are legitimized include formal and informal organization, leadership and communication networks (Morris, 1999). As modern-day artists like Beyoncé or influential Black Power activists like Malcolm X acknowledged these movements, Black cultural and music theorists have needed to look music as an important additional lens that furthers social movement theory and as a space of collective identity and action (Calhoun-Brown, 2000; Tarrow, 1992). While Beyoncé cannot technically be classified as a rapper, much of her music and videos in *Lemonade* fall into many of the same trappings of “conscious rap” as explored and defined above. The inspiration from the movements of the ’60s have been rearticulated in Beyoncé’s music and of conscious rap artists who use “black nationalist sound, image, and message” (Decker, 1993, p. 54) as a means to empower and create a collective action in support of a larger movement.

These theoretical concepts will allow us to explore the following research question:

Research Question: *How do representations of race, geography and gender in Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's recent visual album release, Lemonade, portray social inequality as grounds for development in the United States?*

The central research question will be examined with the support of the following sub-questions:

a) *How can a postcolonial theory in American pop culture contribute to the discourse around development in the United States?*
b) *How does representation impact social movements?*

As it currently stands, since *Lemonade's* release, think pieces have focused predominantly on Beyoncé's agency as a superstar and her ability to engage and command audiences through her celebrity power. Coverage has been littered with gossip, though there have been a few pieces that tackle race and feminist theory, particular as it pertains to the idea of "#blackgirlmagic" (McFadden, 2016). However, examinations of *Lemonade* still lack a postcolonial and a post-Civil Rights lens. And as tensions hit an all-time high in the United States — with a light being shone on economic and educational disparities between race and gender; racist police tactics and an increase in incidents of racially charged police brutality leading to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement — the social legacy of segregation and discrimination is at the height of U.S. consciousness.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A Social Semiotic Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

When looking at the research question and the topic with which it is concerned, this study is best conducted with a multimodal critical discourse analysis (henceforth known as CDA). As a research method, CDA is most justified for this study because it aims to understand ideology within cultural texts. A previous pilot study conducted by the researcher focused solely on visual representation in "Formation," just one of the 14 tracks on *Lemonade*, used a semiotic visual analysis based on the works of Barthes. According Barthes, semiotics is the style and content of the piece itself (1977). For Barthes, it is a tool of political analysis. The pilot found that a semiotic approach is more successful when incorporating ideology, the abstracted meanings applied to public opinions, groups and individuals (Eagleton, 1991). "Ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes" (Eagleton, 1991, 9). Thus, this study has taken note of the pilot study's flaws and will instead employ a social semiotic approach to critical discourse analysis, rather than just a basic semiotic understanding of *Lemonade*. Perhaps the best indication of the preference for social semiotics over basic semiotics comes from Hodge and Kress' *Social Semiotics* (1988):

> "Traditional semiotics likes to assume that the relevant meanings are frozen and fixed in the test itself, to be extracted and decoded by the analyst by reference to a coding system that is impersonal and neutral…Social semiotics cannot assume that texts produce exactly the meanings and effects that their authors hope for: it is precisely the struggles and their uncertain outcomes that must be studied at the level of social action, and their effects in the production of meaning" (12).

This social semiotic approach is appropriate because of its attention to critical discourse, or the "production of meaning" as referred to above. In Hodge and Kress' approach to CDA, discourse is defined as "the site where social forms of organization engage with systems of signs in the production of texts" (Hodge and Kress, 1988, 6). In other words, the purpose of a social semiotic CDA is to reveal the conceptual nuances and differences embedded within the discourse that has "been imposed by one social group on another on behalf of its own interests" (Hodge and Kress, 1988: 3). This is where Hodge and Kress introduced their concept of "logonomics," or secondary messages that regulate the meaning of any statement or visual. While they are generally not obvious or seen outwardly, they help shape discourse and the way meanings are made. These logonomic systems determine the power structure of the sender and receiver or messages, the circumstance under which they are sent and how they are interpreted (1988, 4-5). For example, Hodge and Kress write, "when a logonomic system allows a statement offensive to women to be read as 'a joke,' this signifies a particular structure of gender relations" (Hodge and Kress, 1988: 5). This notion of discursive structures and logonomic systems will be especially relevant in this paper as it studies representations of race, gender and place via CDA.

The Case for Multimodality

This brings us to the next element of this paper's methodology. While semiotics focus on the solo image or text as the primary source of meaning, "its concern for the social effects of an image's meaning mean that some attention is also paid to the social modality of the site" (Rose, 2007, pp. 77-78). Initially, the intention was to examine just the visual of *Lemonade*, however, as a visual musical album/short film — where lyrics and spoken word poetry go hand-in-hand with the visual — they must be analyzed together through a multimodal analysis. This means that in addition to evaluating the imagery sampled for visual cues of representation, I will also contextualize the social of the image by analyzing portions of the accompanying spoken-word poetry and speech as part of a "multimodal narrative" (Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 98). The term multimodality was introduced to highlight the importance of taking into account semiotics other than language. With the increase in sound and film through various modes — from the Internet to the cinema — visual communications academics turned to multimodality to understand the representations that are produced as content creators and consumers. These new representations are created by semiotics that are different from, but may also include language. Other elements considered are ones such as image, music and gesture, among others (Iedema, 2003). The term multimodality offers a new way of exploring how language and image work together (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996) and how image language and sound coordinate (Iedema, 2003) to make meaning across multiple aspects of social life.

Thus, a multimodal, social semiotic CDA was chosen over a more quantitative method like content analysis because identifying sample images or spoken word/lyrics as representative of specific ideology is subjective. Content analysis is almost always empirical or observational and an objective way to quantify recorded representations in a particular work (Van Leeuwen, 2001, 13). For example, it would be nearly impossible to decipher the *true* meaning of an Antebellum image in *Lemonade*. Hodge and Kress (1998: 12) stress that works do not always produce the meanings envisioned by their creators, arguing that “it is precisely the struggles and their uncertain outcomes that must be studied” (1998, 12). Thus, a CDA approach allows the researcher to explore multiple meanings, while also investigating the cultural or ideological significance of particular images or texts.

This research will follow the outline offered by Hodge and Kress for a social semiotic approach to CDA, and will be adapted to also include the case for multimodality as outlined above. At the basic level of semiotics, the analysis will begin with an understanding of the socio-political contexts in which Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* was released and how it pertains to representations of space, race and place in the United States. These contexts will help us understand the logonomic systems under which *Lemonade* is being interpreted. Following a contextual setting, there will be in-depth description of the texts chosen for sampling. At this level, the analysis and interpretation will be minimal. Finally, the research will move into the multimodal, social semiotic CDA, drawing conclusions in discourse and ideology.

SAMPLING AND IDENTIFICATION OF MODALITIES

Beyoncé’s latest album release, *Lemonade* was selected as the work for analysis because of its confrontational use of racial, gendered and geographic representations; the controversies surrounding the release of the album as statement-making; and as Beyoncé’s turn toward music as a point of activism and expression. Her provocative performance at the Super Bowl in light of racial tensions across the United States — but particularly in the South — provide an interesting framework for which to analyze selections of the visual album. After multiple, consistent viewings of the visual album in its entirety and readings of the accompanying speeches and spoken-word poetry interlaced throughout, four texts were selected for social semiotic CDA. In addition, the research will focus on the modalities of visuals, with the accompanying spoken-word poetry or interlaced speeches, rather than lyrics. These clips from *Lemonade* were specifically chosen for their intentional usage of gendered, geographic or racialized statements, whether audio or visual. The researcher has chosen to remove Beyoncé's lyrics from the modalities of analysis for the sole reason that the lyrics lend themselves more to gossip on marital strife, rather than a postcolonial reading. If the researcher was instead conducting a content analysis of media reaction and reception via the publication of reviews and think pieces related to *Lemonade*, this would have been a valuable lens and mode for analysis to include, as other critiques and interpretations have made direct reference to lyrics as a mode of understanding the meanings made behind the visual album.

To be clear, the selected samples stem from the research question and themes represented in the literature presented above, and is not rationalized in the timing of the clips or their position in the album. Each sample, this research will argue has both a spoken and unspoken (logonomic) meaning. At this juncture, it is important to note that the goal of this research is not to produce results that serve as the definitive reading of *Lemonade* or the definitive understanding of Beyoncé's intentions of doing so. Rather, this is intended to be one of many critiques and interpretations of the visual album. There have been many interpretations of *Lemonade* (though, based on the researcher's examination, none academically rooted), and this study will inevitably be influenced by the researcher's own position as a white, upper-middle class woman and a fan of Beyoncé as a musician. However, the representations and images analyzed were consistently done so within the context of existing ideologies and discourses about race, gender and space, thus anchoring the analysis in a social context rather than a personal one, in due part to the researcher's own reflexivity.

And while this research would have also supported a critical discourse or content analysis of media reaction to *Lemonade* as a way of exploring audience reception and understanding of the visual album, the scope of this paper does not allow for this inclusion of additional methodologies, particularly one that would require a more quantitative analysis.

ANALYSIS

Context

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter released her first visual album, titled simply *BEYONCÉ* with no promotion or advance notice in December of 2013 (Parkwood Entertainment/Columbia). Developed as a simultaneous audio-visual album, the songs were seamlessly tied together through short films filled with clips from her childhood, samples of influential speeches and her signature dance moves. In deciding to move from the release of singles to an immersive concept album meant to be consumed from start to finish, Beyoncé said in a press release:

> "I see music…It's more than just what I hear. When I'm connected to something, I immediately see a visual or a series of images that are tied to a feeling or an emotion, a memory from my childhood, thoughts about life, my dreams or my fantasies. And they're all connected to the music." (Parkwood Entertainment/Columbia Records, 2013)

This album was the first of her kind — a departure from pop earworms about love and girl power (see: "Single Ladies" of 2008 fame), and instead tackling more meaningful subjects like sexuality, Black womanhood and, most notably — with the incorporation of a TED talk on the socialization of girls by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Adichie, 2013) — feminism. Hailed as "an exploration of gender and power and an unwavering look at black female sexual agency" (McDonald, 2013), the self-titled album of 2013 helped set the stage for what became her second visual album release, and the one being explored in this research, *Lemonade*. And while *Lemonade* was released in a similar manner — not too long after a Super Bowl performance, with the announcement of a subsequent world tour, and with little fanfare or promotion leading up to its release — what separates *Lemonade* from *BEYONCÉ* are the socio-political contexts under which it was released and her even deeper delve into not just feminism, but more specifically Black feminism, the Black Lives Matter movement and the historical legacies of colonialism and slavery in the deep American South. Thus, putting aside Beyoncé's celebrity power, it is more relevant to look at how the discourse in race relations, gender and development in the United States shifted from 2013 to present.

According to Mapping Police Violence (2016), between December 2013 and April 2016, 784 unarmed Black people have been killed by police (See Fig. 1). Moreover, a Gallup poll on race relations polling satisfaction on the state of race relations showed that 35 percent of respondents worry about race relations in the United States "a great deal" in 2016 compared to just 18 percent in 2013 (Gallup, 2016). And though the Black Lives Matter movement, which Beyoncé highlights in *Lemonade* was founded in 2012 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting of Trayvon Martin, it did not gain steam as a nationally recognized movement until 2014 after the shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri by a white police officer and subsequent protests and unrest that followed in not just Missouri, but all over the country as a result. Over the course of the two years that followed, the Black Lives Matter co-founders expanded the organization to a network of over 30 local chapters (Cullors-Brignac, 2016). The formation of the Black Lives Matter movement and its Internet following via the #blacklivesmatter hashtag has been noted to heighten the discourse on race relations in the United States, and particularly that related to law enforcement treatment of Black people throughout the country. As Beyoncé added her name to the list of supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement through her social media accounts, money and art, she has the opportunity to highlight an issue that affects the Black community — her community — disproportionately, making it a powerful contribution.

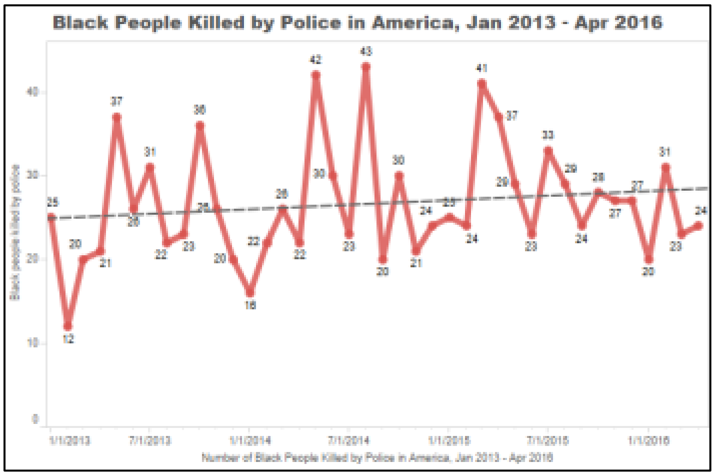

Fig. 1: Police violence against African Americans (Mappingpoliceviolence.org, 2016)

However, the discourse around race relations is nothing new in the United States, and often appears as though a heightened flare-up occurs every few years, as a result of a disaster, whether natural or manmade (Hochschild, 2000). In 2005, following the landfall of Hurricane Katrina (a Category 3 hurricane), there were widespread claims that the impact of the storm disproportionately affected Black people and those living in poverty in Louisiana. According to a fivethirtyeight article, while African-Americans long accounted for most of New Orleans' poor, they also made up a much of its middle class. After Katrina, however, the dynamics changed. The poor are still overwhelmingly Black (serving as the media's representation of crime, poverty and underdevelopment), but the affluent and middle classes are increasingly white (Casselman, 2015). Media described those affected as "refugees" and their actions as "looting" rather than "evacuees" and "finding food" and, according to one study, the word "Black" appeared within 10 words of "refugee" or "looting" (Sommers, 2006). And beyond that, New Orleans was consistently referred to as resembling a Third World country. And Beyoncé's *Lemonade* is not the first instance of celebrity calling attention to race relations, or New Orleans for that matter. On 2 September 2005, NBC Universal aired "A Concert for Hurricane Relief," where, on live television, rapper Kanye West infamously said, "George Bush doesn't care about Black people" (Stratchen, 2015). Now viewed by many as an accurate representation of New Orleans and the U.S. government's response in New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina, this then extremely controversial statement on live television helped paved the way for more Black artists like Beyoncé to use their power as celebrity to take a stance — whether through speech, social media or their art — against racial tensions in the United States.

Description of Samples

The Louisiana Setting

After the release of the music video "Formation" — the single put forth prior to *Lemonade's* full visual album release — it came as no surprise to music critics and Beyoncé fans that New Orleans was the location for much of the visual album's storyline. And though filming was kept tightly under wraps, viewers now know that the visual album shows the American South in various representations of time and places of history, with a distinct emphasis on New Orleans and the legacies the traumas of slavery and Hurricane Katrina have left behind. Caught in the visual album is a multitude of scenes from Louisiana — couples kissing on Bourbon Street, the Louisiana State University Marching Band, jazz players, the Mercedez-Benz Superdome and the bayou.

However, the most striking visuals of the deep South are those bookending the first and last third of the album: various scenes taking place in and around plantation homes preserved from the 1700 and 1800s. Track 4, "Sorry," from minutes 17:30 through 19:30

shows scenes of Beyoncé and tennis star Serena Williams dancing at the Madewood Plantation of 1846 (Marshall 2016) in Napoleonville, Louisiana, in crisp black and white film. The plantation landscape also features prominently in the latter half of the film, this time at the Destrehan Plantation in the Mississippi Valley, founded in the late 1780s, and its slave quarters. Before launching into "Freedom," the visual album's tenth track, the Destrehan plantation is filled with Black women of all ages, dressed in clothing reminiscent of both present-day urban style and Antebellum styles likely worn by enslaved female workers. One of the final scenes, occurring at minute 52:28, shows Beyoncé surrounded by six other Black women: singer-songwriters Lisa-Kaindé and Naomi of Ibeyi, musician Chloe Bailey, actress and activist Amanda Stenberg, musician Halley Bailey, and singer/model Zendaya (Thomas, 2016).

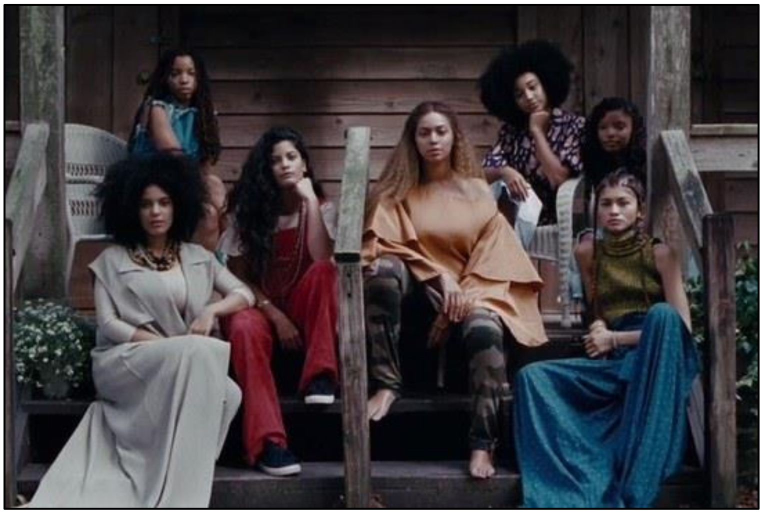

Fig. 2: The plantation porch (Knowles-Carter, 2016)

The Underserved Black Woman

Throughout *Lemonade*, there are various close-up, portrait-style shots of Black women in various settings or locations taken throughout New Orleans. The women are shown in various states of dress, skin tones and natural hair styles — shown one after one. The women are of a mixed combination of emotions; some are shown angry, others sad or forlorn while some are happy and smiling. Shot in a yellowish tone, the footage looks grainy, reminiscent of home videos that could have been taken from a family's camcorder. This is first seen in the interlude of the Malcolm X speech during the third track "Don't Hurt Yourself," and again, during the chapter called "Forgiveness" that leads into the ninth track, "Forward." In "Forward," Beyoncé includes the faces of those directly affected by police brutality and the resulting Black Lives Matter movement, perhaps the epitome of the voice for the underserved or neglected — the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner appear.

Interesting to note throughout the use of the portraits of Black women, is that men are rarely shown in the entirety of *Lemonade*. The exception comes in the form of Jay Z during the ballad "Sandcastles" and again in the second-to-last track, "All Night" where home footage of Beyoncé, Jay Z and their daughter Blue Ivy is spliced together with footage of other Southern Black and mixed race couples on the streets of New Orleans. In addition to the lack of men, it will be important to note that throughout the film only African-Americans are shown, and again, they are all women.

The Spoken Word and Speech

Lemonade is broken up into 11 parts, closely resembling Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief as seen in her pioneering book "On Death and Dying" (1969). The start of a new chapter is marked by a white, italic font alerting the viewer what stage of the journey was being entered into: intuition, denial, anger, apathy, emptiness, accountability, reformation, forgiveness, resurrection, hope and redemption. These new chapters throughout the hour-long visual album are also interlaced and woven together through the spoken word poetry of Somali-British poet, Warsan Shire. Throughout the film, Beyoncé quotes from "warsan versus melancholy (the 7 stages of being lonely," "For Women Who Are Difficult to Love," "The Unbearable Weight of Staying (The End of the Relationship)," "How to Wear Your Mother's Lipstick," "Dear Moon" and "Nail Technician as Palm Reader" (Garcia, 2016).

In addition to the poetry, a few songs have speeches in between them – from the influential Malcom X, to New Orleans residents (both male and female) to Jay Z's grandmother, Hattie White, sharing how she made lemonade out of lemons at a ninetieth birthday celebration. The most striking of which, and what this research will focus on, is of course, Malcom X's speech sampled during "Don't Hurt Yourself" from 13:35 to 13:53. In the portion of the speech sampled, which was given in May 1962 to a crowd of African Americans in Los Angeles, Malcom X says:

> "The most disrespected person in America is the black woman.
> The most unprotected person in America is the black woman.
> The most neglected person in America is the black woman." (1962)

In this sample, we don't see the archival footage of Malcom X delivering the speech, titled, "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself," but rather footage of the Southern Black women as described above.

Exotic Black tradition

Track 4, "Sorry" (as highlighted above for its use of the Madewood Plantation) is interesting visually for a second reason to be explored deeper in the analysis. The lead-in and the track, clocking in at minute 16:40 through 20:35, shows Beyoncé's and her back-up dance troupe on a bus and then in an empty field with their faces painted a stark white with intricate designs, also donning West African patterned clothing. The intricate face paint is that of the Yoruba culture, a West African tribe hailing predominantly from Nigeria. The face paint was done by Nigerian artist Laolu Senbanjo, who is famous for using the female body as his canvas for traditional West African body art through "The Sacred Art of the Ori" – a spiritual Yoruba ritual (Klein, 2016).

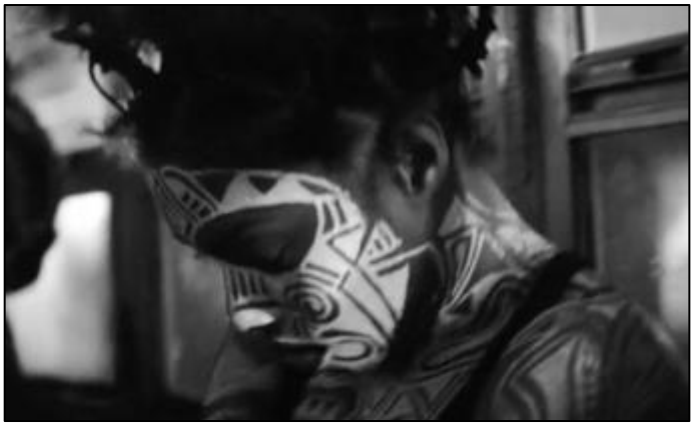

Fig. 3: Yoruba body art in "Sorry" (Knowles-Carter, 2016)

In addition to the Yoruba body art and African elements in style, another striking scene of cultural exoticism in Lemonade is the Mardi Gras Indian, seen around 45 minutes into the film, solemnly shaking a tambourine and circling around an empty dining room table. She is dressed in a white, feathered costume with intricate beading and headdress. She first appears in black and white, holding a photograph of a young Black man at marker 44:39, bookended by scenes of the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner and

Michael Brown, Black men who were killed in instances of the alleged police brutality that brought about the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement.

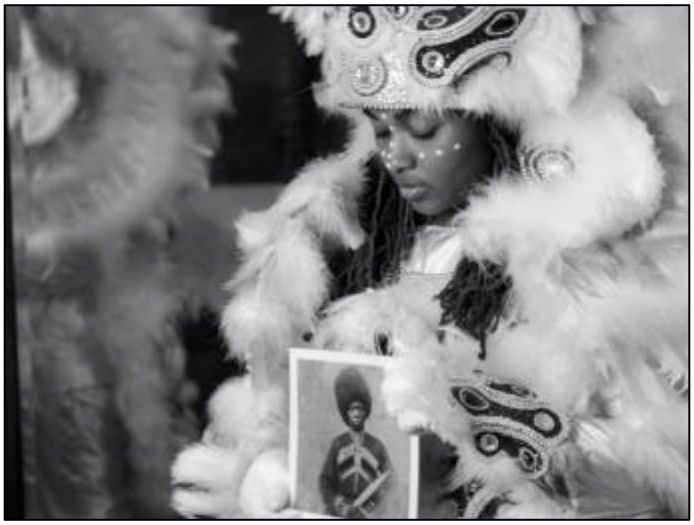

Fig. 4: Mardi Gras Indian (Knowles-Carter, 2016)

Postcolonial Discourse in Geography

When examining the samples selected in *Lemonade* in relation to the postcolonial discourse that surrounds race, gender and geography, a continuity in the audio visuals becomes clear throughout the hour-long run time of the film. Lemonade launches at the origins of the ancestral history of Black women in America – at the plantation. And while Beyoncé may use Southern Antebellum visuals and locations as a nod to her cultural and familial roots, a social semiotic approach cannot limit itself to the meaning or intentions of the author. Rather, according to a social semiotic CDA, meanings exist in dialogue and how texts are received not just by the author, but by their viewers, as well. Despite romanticized cuts to images of mossy trees and tall grass, no visual is quite as striking as that of Beyoncé, whether with Serena Williams twerking inside the Madewood Plantation during “Sorry” or of the celebrity Black women — dressed in a mixture of Antebellum and Jim Crow-era clothing — gathered on the front porch of a slave quarter outside of Destrehan Plantation at the start of the album's final chapter. The plantation landscape seen throughout *Lemonade* represents the traumas of segregation and gendered mistreatment seen over decades of feminist Black history.

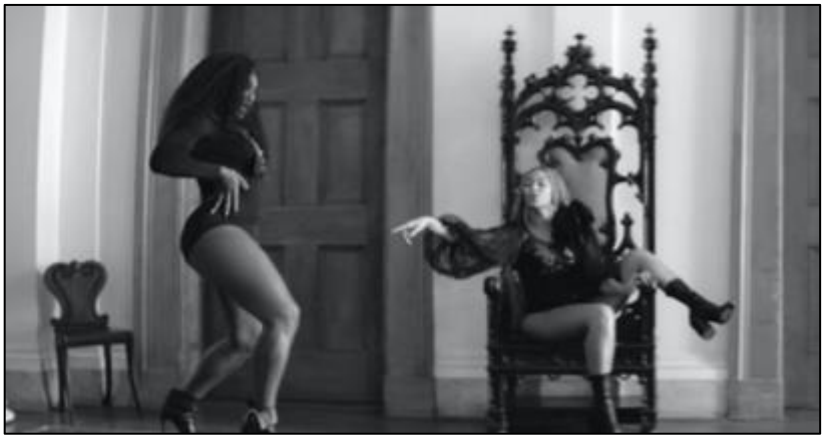

Fig. 5: Madewood Plantation in "Sorry" (Knowles-Carter, 2016)

A superficial reading of Beyoncé and Serena Williams in the Madewood Plantation raising their middle fingers in the air — an obscene gesture that, when paired with the lyrics to accompanying song "Sorry" — is just an enraged goodbye from a scorned lover. However, diving deeper into its context through space, the location is actually much more significant than a casual fan may come to realize. Historically, the interiors of majestic plantation mansions were reserved for white masters' living quarters, where female slaves served or else were punished, often with whips or chains (Warner, 1993). Women were a commodification or an object, not a body or a soul. By placing Beyoncé and Williams at the foot of a grand staircase, dancing and seated in what closely resembles a throne, there is a sense of rebellion, of declaring a geography or location that has never belonged to a Black woman before their own. In her throne, in a plantation, Beyoncé demonstrates white, hegemonic power. These logonomic systems flip the power structure generally accepted in a colonial discourse. This inversion, or semiotic play, has decoupled a racial signifier from their signified by placing Beyoncé and Williams in a location in which they would not have otherwise been seen.

Likewise, a surface reading of the females gathered on porch is easily one of powerful women uniting — the said meaning of *girl power* — but the researcher argues here that their location is what is most important. Positioning them on the porch of a slave home on plantation grounds — a place that once systematically devalued the lives of Black men and women — the women represent a colonial, racialized past, and a struggle that continues into the modern day. Seeing famous Black women sitting on the porch creates the unsaid meaning of *the fight for equality continues. We are still undervalued.* That, while there have been strides in racial equality, it comes with a troubled past and a future still full of question marks, particularly given the timing of the album's release when racial tensions are at an all-time high. The pairing of Black women inhabiting a white residence is what Black feminist Katherine McKittrick calls "respatialization," — or the reconsidering the meaning of geography and space from a Black perspective, suggesting that slavery, incarceration, racism and sexism have all played a part in determining how we "only seem to see black geographies" (McKittrick, 2006, 5), thus invoking Said's concept of imaginative geographies as expressed in the theoretical foundations above.

Representing Blackness

In *Lemonade*, the complexity of the Black geography is painted through the use of colonialism, slavery and contemporary practices of racism, as seen through additional imagery beyond the plantation, including that of a devastated New Orleans and the heartbroken faces of Black mothers holding photos of their sons slain in acts of police brutality. The juxtaposition of imagery recognizant of the past with current female Black suffering is a Beyoncé proclaiming that while history moves forward, for the Southern Black female, it often remains motionless and stuck in a colonial America, still paralyzed by racial inequality. By admitting they exist, the superficial meaning of empowerment instead reveals a deeper site of pain. This lack of motion is contextualized through the imagery of the Southern Black female seen throughout the entirety of *Lemonade*. As described above, the portraiture of the modern Black woman is shot through a grainy, oversaturated, yellowish tone. The women are plainly dressed and in various states of emotion, but more often than not somber as Malcolm X's speech plays over the quick cuts. The quote is more than 50 years old, and, according to Beyoncé's world of Blackness, still rings true today, serving as the basis for her representation of race and gender as a means for understanding how they have kept the American South in a state of "Third World" dating back to not just the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, but rather all the way back to the Black woman's beginnings as a slave in the deep American South. By sampling "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself" — stressing on the words "disrespected," "unprotected" and "neglected" — and playing it against the imagery of underserved Black women in New Orleans, Beyoncé takes a positive post-feminist approach that affirms the positive effects of feminism from the 1970s (McRobbie, 2004), and suggests that while some equalities have been achieved, the Black female is still left lagging behind in many aspects. It serves as a call to arms to continue the fight for a gender equality that is not determined by the color of one’s skin. The words — Malcolm X’s speech, Hattie White’s speech and Warsan Shire’s poetry — created a new lens over the entirety of *Lemonade* reframing the album so that it is not a tale of Beyoncé’s martial struggles, but rather a struggle of a generation of underserved and underdeveloped Southern Black women from the beginning of their time in the United States.

This representation can be taken one step further with the exploration of the exoticism shown in samples throughout Beyoncé’s *Lemonade*. The concept of representation and Otherness and race has largely been attributed to Hall and “The Spectacle of the Other” (1997), with the Other being represented as a primitive, exotic being. In the case of *Lemonade*, Beyoncé takes Hall’s exoticism and applies it through Black culture or tradition, going as far east as the traditional Yoruba body art as seen on the women riding a school bus in “Sorry.” The women are donned in white body paint, which is significant in that it is worn in Yoruba culture during worship of the gods, known as orishas in Yoruba culture. In this example of exoticism, Beyoncé is nodding artfully to African roots, which have traversed all over the world after the slave trade and through the African diaspora. By having all of the women present painted in the tradition of an exotic culture, Beyoncé removes the categories “Man” and “Other” that both McKittrick and Hall claim were invented by the West, and instead proffers ways to get beyond what she calls the superficial stories of the Other that have “organized our populations and the planet” (McKittrick, 2006, 135). While the said meaning operates at the level of audio —Beyoncé on a bus celebrating with girlfriends as a form of empowerment and freedom from men — the unsaid meaning operates at the level of the physical manifestation, or the tradition of Black bodies riding toward salvation. These meanings are not exclusive, in due part to multimodality – where a viewer can accept both meanings based on either a lyrical or visual understanding of the text.

An additional marking of difference is seen toward the close of Lemonade in the Mardi Gras Indian, as described above. The Mardi Gras Indian is traditionally a Black male, or groups of Black males called tribes organized by neighborhood for parades during the Mardi Gras celebration. Their costumes are ornate, and generally only worn one year before a new one is made. The exoticism on display at the representational level is clear — it's a tradition uniquely Black and Southern, celebratory. However, at a logonomic reading of the Mardi Gras Indian, there are a multitude of readings to explore, beginning with a similar history of marginality between Native Americans and Black populations in Louisiana, as seen in the War of 1812 and the Civil War respectively. Adding another dimension to this is Beyoncé's decision to use a female Mardi Gras Indian, in a role that is traditionally male. Having this young woman in a traditionally male role dance around an empty table, presumably summoning the spirits of the slain Black men shown in photographs just moments prior is a nod to political and personal legacies of struggle throughout history in gender and race relations — tying back to Hall's concept of binary oppositions in representation. In these two representations of Black women, Beyoncé has done so through a lens of historical exoticism, essentializing Black culture (both African and American Black cultures) in ways that present them as the "Other" or "Oriental." They are not dressed like a viewer, and instead, conjure images of Africa.

Intersectionality in *Lemonade*

When examining the samples selected for analysis in *Lemonade*, the identification of race, class, gender and sexuality have demanded to be treated as intersecting (Collins, 2004), rather than competing frameworks for developing a proper analysis of how that shaped a geographical and postcolonial reading of prolific piece of pop culture. Intersectionality developed in the late 1980s to study the interaction between multiple systems of oppression contribute to systematic inequality (McCall, 2005). Because Beyoncé is a public figure, a female and Black, these systems all impart on a social semiotic CDA of *Lemonade* and the logonomic method. Through any given text, uncoupling any of these representations would have been difficult. The critical discourse examined above led to a set of ideas, that when taken together, organize both the way the sender (Beyoncé) defines certain truths about her identity, and the way it has been received by audiences to result in a postcolonial reading gender, race and place in New Orleans. When pairing these representations with the poetic interludes and striking visuals, *Lemonade* provokes complex ideas of race, power and gender in America.

In the context of this research paper, Beyoncé comes across not only as a Black feminist, but also an activist, which is coming through in her other means of support for the Black Lives Matter movement (appearing alongside her husband at protests in New York City), donating to post-Katrina relief and serving as a spokeswoman for empowerment organizations like Chime for Change, with a specific focus on empowering girls in developing Africa. From a researcher's standpoint, then, it is a safe assumption to argue that Beyoncé's use of exoticism and Black pride and intertextuality injected in *Lemonade* comes with a keen understanding of her agency to claim that the American

South is underdeveloped by way of human rights, civil liberties and social equality, all of which predominantly affect the Black female community. However, as this research has repeatedly stressed, the analysis can only exist in dialogue, and the interpretation has important implications in the discourse surrounding race, gender and spatialization. Fans whose discursive communities overlap with Beyoncé's will take a greater appreciation or understanding of the unsaid meaning of the exotic Black culture and speech on display, whereas others may read *Lemonade* strictly in a sense of #blackgirlmagic, meant for some and not for all.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of postcolonial representation, respatialization and intertextuality presented above does not constitute a comprehensive list of the ways in which Beyoncé's *Lemonade* can be read by any critic, academic or casual fan. This research argues that through the above mechanisms, Lemonade does not just seek to tell a superficial story of a woman scorned and learning to forgive, nor is it just an ode to Black womanhood. Rather, it is a piece of artistic activism in support of a region that remains one of the United States' most troubled and underdeveloped today. It is Beyoncé's call to arms that the Southern Black population represent underdeveloped America that continues to suffer, due in large part to the history and continued mistreatment of a geographic location. This conclusion was reached through the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of four aspects of Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, using the approach outlined in Hodge and Kress's (1988) work on social semiotics and multimodality.

The argument proposed in this research, however, remains a theory in its present form that requires additional exploration. Interviews with residents of New Orleans on how they believe Beyoncé represented their plight would serve as an interesting follow-up, allowing researchers to identify how viewers from the space portrayed, and thus different discursive communities, produce varying interpretations of racial respatialization. Additionally, a content analysis of critical reception to Lemonade could provide valuable information on how music critics, feminists and Black scholars navigate between the logonomics in *Lemonade*, and under what circumstances they do or do view this representation as one that sheds light on how slave and post-slave struggles form a unique sense of place.

What can be stated more aptly is that this research has proven that race, gender and sexuality have ideological dimensions that work to organize social institutions. *Lemonade* is not an accumulation of symbols that encourage or condemn women, Black culture or geography —it is a performance of a place-based critique of the American South. And as long as racial tensions, discrimination and gender inequality exist within dominant hegemonic structures in U.S. geopolitics, space will play a pivotal role as it does in *Lemonade*, signifying a paradoxical status of a postcolonial, yet still underdeveloped Southern America. If we are to assume that one of Beyoncé's intended purpose of setting *Lemonade* in the colonial south, a place where the majority of viewers recognize as a "backward system" — we see her use space to provoke a reaction to the strong women who are still suffering from a lack of equality in today's modern context, specifically those affected by police brutality and those represented by the Black Lives Matter movement.

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