

“You know you that bitch when you cause all this conversation” –
Beyoncé’s audio-visual album *Lemonade*, bell hooks,
the roundtable group post and research positionality

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction: “Bitch, I’m back by popular demand”	2
1.1	About terminology	5
2	Theoretical approach: Feminism, Black feminism and intersectionality	7
2.1	Feminism.....	7
2.2	Black feminism	11
2.3	Intersectional theory	14
3	Research material.....	19
3.1	Beyoncé: <i>Lemonade</i>	19
3.2	bell hooks: <i>Moving Beyond Pain</i>	20
3.3	<i>The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks and “Moving Beyond Pain”</i>	21
4	Analysis: “I’m a riot through your borders”	23
4.1	Patriarchy: “I am the dragon breathing fire, beautiful man I’m the lion”	24
4.2	Commodity: “Always stay gracious, best revenge is your paper”	33
4.3	Violence: “I got Hot Sauce in my bag, swag”	43
5	Discussion: Research positionality and intersectionality.....	50
6	Conclusion: “How I have missed you, my love”	59
7	References.....	62

1 Introduction: “Bitch, I’m back by popular demand”

After ten years of studies, I have learned that cultural studies is the most fascinating field of study for a popular culture enthusiast like myself. Having written my bachelor’s thesis on house music lyrics and house culture in the United States, plunging into the world of pop music and popular culture one last time felt natural to me. As a student, I have often times felt that studying popular culture is a complex myriad of approaches and theories, combining elements from sociology, cultural studies, art history, history, linguistics and gender studies. Popular culture, among other things, is a reflection of the way artists experience and express reality, as well as the capitalist market’s demands. This thought has gotten me to this point and serves as the stepping stone for this master’s thesis.

What has always drawn me towards studying topics related to popular culture is the way phenomena in popular culture reflects this particular time in history. This is especially crucial when studying Beyoncé’s visual album *Lemonade*, bell hooks’s critique *Moving Beyond Pain* and counter critiques of *the Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain.”* Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* is a particularly fascinating topic for cultural studies, as it comments on issues that have recently risen on the surface in wider discussion: Black women’s rights, police violence, the treatment of racial minorities in the United States, and the emancipation of female sexuality. Furthermore, in the time of the global #metoo campaign against sexual harassment, *Lemonade* is a powerful statement on the sovereignty of the female space and body.

In 2018, the civil rights of African-Americans are once again in spotlight. Although segregation is history, the United States still struggles with racial tensions. Examples of this is the publicized police violence targeted towards African-Americans that led to the deaths of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner, which broke out the violent riots in Ferguson, Missouri. In addition, several Black artists such as Common and John Legend have campaigned to raise awareness on the mass

incarceration of African-American males in the United States. After the election of Donald Trump as President and the initial shift in United States domestic politics towards a more conservative direction, alt-right and racist movements in the United States have started shifting towards the mainstream.

Black musicians have commented on the 21st century African-American experience in their music and art, but that is not a new phenomenon: Black music – blues, jazz, soul, RnB, funk and hip-hop – have always carried a political message that has vocalized the Black experience to the masses. “Say it loud – I’m Black and I’m proud” screamed James Brown at the top of his lungs in 1968, commenting on the African-American struggle. The commentary has not ended and new generations Black artists are using their art and visibility to bring attention to these issues.

Beyoncé’s visual album *Lemonade*, which is both an hour-long film and music album, takes on themes of female empowerment, police violence, the position of African-American women in society, the relationship between African-American men and women, and being cheated on in a relationship. When *Lemonade* was published in April 2016, I had already become familiarized with theories about intersectional feminism, white gaze and privileges through talks with friends and colleagues. Due to reading about intersectional feminism and its relation to Black feminism, I wanted to understand more on how whiteness perceives blackness and how these two artificially constructed definitions of race impact the way one looks at the world, and in this case, popular culture.

Soon after the publication of *Lemonade*, bell hooks, a front-row African-American scholar and feminist, published her critique on Beyoncé’s album named *Moving Beyond Pain*. Shortly after this, a group of African-American feminists publishes a blog post, *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain”*, that contained eleven short comments on hooks’s critique, most of them very critical and opposing to what hooks had written. I found both hooks’s critique and the eleven rebuttals a great possibility for analysis on the themes of Beyoncé’s visual

album. After I started planning on how to analyze these texts and what methodological tools to use, I encountered a problem with my research positionality.

I was examining this debate with great interest, but at the same time struggled with my own position. Was my role in this discussion to just listen? As a White, Finnish woman, I could not really relate nor share my experiences on the African-American experience, the struggles of Black women in American society or whether hooks's critique on Beyoncé's agenda and feminism and Black feminism was justified or not. I kept asking myself the same question again and again: Can I study this topic, and if yes, then how? No matter how hard I attempted to understand, would I still end up explaining the experience and culture of people I can never relate to on a real level? Whiteness has a tradition of explaining and interpreting the cultures and experiences of minorities, and it has not been commonly questioned or put under the spotlight. Who has the right to dissect into these types of racial and cultural issues without whitesplaining? No matter how skilled and articulated my analysis would be, would it still be observed through my white, privileged gaze?

This master's thesis has two research aims and sections. The first is to analyze the discussion between bell hooks's essay *Moving Beyond Pain* and the counter commentaries of *the Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain."* The analysis focuses on comparing the arguments of hooks's essay with the Black feminists' group post, as well as positioning these arguments with the themes and images of *Lemonade* itself. The analysis will be looking at differences of perception, but also possible similarities. Furthermore, the analysis attempts to generalize what Black feminist writers included in the discussion perceive of *Lemonade* and its stance on the issues of feminism and Black feminism. The analysis aims at remaining more as an observer instead of providing too much researcher-based speculation and personal analysis. This is done purposefully and it is conducted in such a manner to pay close attention to research positionality and the researcher's gaze.

Secondly, the thesis conducts a discussion on my research positionality, concentrating whether my background as a White, European woman has an influence on objective research. The discussion aims at analyzing what happens when the researcher becomes aware of their own privileges and consciously attempts to write them out in a separate discussion section. In other words, the second aim of the thesis is to reflect on myself as the researcher of this study. The main focus is on how my position impacts the way I look at a study topic that is so deeply rooted in race and the struggle of African-American women to gain equality and freedom in the American society.

1.1 About terminology

Terminology in this thesis is used to discuss race and ethnicity in the United States. Selecting the appropriate terminology for the topic that is both accurate and descriptive, as well as respectful and thoughtful, is a challenge.

In this thesis, both “African-American” and “Black” are used. Black feminist theory and writers most generally refer to “Black women” or “Black people”, with the Black always capitalized. In a similar manner, when referring to “White people” or “White women”, I have chosen also to capitalize the word as well.

The term “African-American” is also used in the thesis. This term is commonly viewed as a neutral manner of referring to Americans with African origins. In the United States, “African-American” is more generally used by non-Blacks to address the ethnic group in a neutral, non-colorist manner. However, there are voices that have expressed that they would rather be referred to as “Black” instead of “African-American.”

In some occasions in the thesis, the term “women of color” is used as a synonym for Black women.

It is important to remember that using a specific term to refer to an ethnic or cultural group of people may, and probably will, change over time. Using selected terminology is always a reflection of a

certain time period in history. Terminology concerning ethnicity requires constant re-evaluation and reflection. The terminology used in this thesis might not be valid in the future.

2 Theoretical approach: Feminism, Black feminism and intersectionality

The background material of this research consists of three different theoretical frameworks: feminism, Black feminism and intersectionality. The first two theoretical introductions aim at providing an overall understanding of how the feminist movement has developed, and how Black feminism was born out of the need to vocalize particular challenges that women of color encounter in comparison to Western, White women. In addition, the background material discusses intersectionality as a theoretical framework. Intersectionality is used particularly in third-wave feminism as an analytical tool to vocalize challenges that women face due to disadvantages such as race, sexual orientation or disability.

2.1 Feminism

The first section of the theoretical approach briefly defines feminism as a theory and movement. Feminism is a social movement and a field of study whose purpose is to promote the equality of women in the world. Feminism is usually divided into waves, that refer to a particular time period in the feminist movement. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* describes feminism in the following manner:

And when, all those years ago, I looked the word up in the dictionary, it said: *Feminist: a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.* My great-grandmother, from stories I've heard, was a feminist. She ran away from the house of the man she did not want to marry and married the man of her choice. She refused, protested, spoke up whenever she felt she was being deprived of land and access because she was female. She did not know that word *feminist*. But it doesn't mean she wasn't one. (47–48)

A key concept in feminist theory and movement is patriarchy. In feminist theory, patriarchy refers to the idea that women are inferior to men in society. According to bell hooks, "patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone

deemed weak, especially females” (hooks, *Understanding Patriarchy*). Furthermore, in *Understanding Patriarchy*, hooks views patriarchy as harmful to men by suggesting that patriarchy denies males access to emotional well-being and causes them damage. Even though patriarchy is still a valid and central concept in third-wave feminist theory, it has also been criticized for being too unidimensional. As Vrushali Patil argues, “the definition of patriarchy has received critique on its unidimensional conceptualization of gender, its dichotomization of gendered individuals into women and men, and its neglect of differences and power relations within each category” (850). Patil also suggests that categories such as gender, race, and sexuality, while operating according to distinct logics, are interdependent and interrelated (850).

This theoretical introduction to feminism focuses in particular on how feminism has developed from first-wave feminism to the third wave, and how it has come to its current state as an interdisciplinary field of study. As Maggie Humm generalizes, in addition to the three waves of feminism, the movement has given birth to several other feminisms that position themselves under the greater feminist theory umbrella – Black feminism, intersectional feminism, post-feminism, postmodern feminism and Marxist feminism (1). Black feminism and intersectional feminism are discussed separately in the background material of this thesis due to their relevance to the research topic.

Catherine E. Harnois writes that early approaches to feminist research in the social sciences aimed to transform traditional academic disciplines. In Harnois’ words,

Feminist scholars sought to centralize women’s issues within the humanities, social sciences, and biological sciences. They introduced new questions and considered new sources of information (e.g., Lerner 1979; Smith, 1974; Stacey & Thorne 1985). They challenged gender bias and sexism in the research process and worked to give an intellectual legitimacy to a variety of issues related to women and gender more broadly. (*Feminist Measures in Survey Research*, 19)

According to Humm, in the 1840s the first wave of feminism began to grow into a substantial political force in America, the driving forces of which were in the anti-slavery and temperance campaigns led

by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Stanton and Anthony were driving forces behind the suffrage movement in the United States (2–3). The first wave of feminism took place on both sides of the Atlantic at the same time, and the link between the United States and Britain is clear in the development of the suffrage movement. According to Susan Osborne, the British women’s suffrage campaign spanned sixty-one years from 1867 to 1928 when full voting rights for women were finally secured by the Equal Franchise Act (19). The first wave of feminism can be generalized to have focused heavily on the suffrage movement, and achieving suffrage shifted the focus of feminism on other women’s issues.

The shift to the second wave of feminism happened gradually after the two World Wars. Nancy Hewitt claims that it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment when feminists in the 1960s first identified themselves as part of second wave (1). Hewitt suggests that even though feminists of the 1960s sought after their foremothers like Antony and Stanton (2), other important issues had arisen to the feminist discussion. In Hewitt’s words,

Indeed, despite the diversity among celebrated foremothers, many feminists and scholars of feminism identified the first wave as comprising largely white, middle-class women focused on achieving narrowly defined political goals, most notably suffrage. In contrast, they claimed the second wave as more inclusive and more transformative. (2)

While the second wave of feminism aimed at being more inclusive, Black feminism was born during this time, as Black female activists felt that feminism did not answer their needs. hooks argues that “Black women were told that we should find our dignity not in liberation from sexist oppression but in how well we could adjust, adapt and cope” (*Ain’t I A Woman*, 7). This experience of exclusivity and lack of support from White, middle-class second wave feminists led to the distinction between mainstream feminism and Black feminism.

According to Astrid Henry, members of the second wave can be read as Baby Boomers (people born between 1947 and 1961), while third-wave feminists are easily collapsed into the larger category Generation X (people born between 1961 and 1981) (5). Naomi Zack argues that the third wave of

feminism stems from the idea of inclusivity and the realization that “second-wave feminism did not speak for all women” (1). Intersectional theory has heavily influenced both third-wave feminist movement and theory. Intersectional approach to feminism aims at taking a step away from the second wave of feminism, which is now thought to be predominantly middle-class, privileged and White. Intersectional third-wave feminism attempts to take into consideration other disadvantages women face besides their gender – race, sexual orientation, and disability, for example. Intersectionality will be discussed in more detail in section 3 of this thesis.

Liljeström et al. argue that the feminism of today attempts to search for strategies and ways of thinking that question, disturb and stir the existing orders, the purpose of which is to create change also in the power structures (9). Furthermore, according to Harnois, feminist scholars today increasingly advocate for feminist transformations that move beyond traditional academic boundaries (*Feminist Measures in Survey Research*, 19), referring to the intersectional nature of the third wave of feminism.

Contemporary feminism is a dialogue between different fields of study, theory corpora and areas of knowledge (Liljeström et al. 11). With this in mind it appears that third wave feminism and feminist theory and thought include a vast number of different approaches and emphases.

Additionally, one has to pay attention to the generation gap between the three waves, since feminists from different waves are participating in the discussion about the future of the movement. The shift from the main thoughts and ideas of second-wave feminism to third-wave/fourth-wave feminism has caused plenty of debates within the field. It can be suggested that to some degree, the topic of this thesis is the result of the debate between the second and the third wave feminists.

In addition to the third wave of feminism, 1990s feminist discussion also gave birth to the theory of post-feminism. According to Rosalind Gill, post-feminism as a term is still used in various manners, and it could be characterized as a type of feminism after the Second Wave (147) that has moved on

from feminist core idea that women need to strive for gender equality. In post-feminist thinking, the world has moved past gender binary thinking and towards a new era of gender politics that is not defined by equality. Post-feminism is not to be confused with third-wave feminism, which emerged during the same time period with post-feminism.

The introduction to feminism as a movement and a field of study provides the research its theoretical base and starting point to understand why the two other theoretical approaches – Black feminism and intersectional theory – were born. In this thesis the development of feminism from a mainly White, middle-class movement to an inclusive intersectional feminism is crucial in understanding the heritage from which both bell hooks and the group post writers stem from. Black feminism and intersectional theory developed because there was a need to view women's issues in a more diverse manner by minority groups such as African-American women. Furthermore, Black feminists felt strongly that mainstream feminism did not support their cause in a way that would promote the bettering of Black women's lives in American society. Both Black feminism and intersectional theory have brought attention to the ways in which mainstream feminism has failed to promote and articulate the challenges Black women face in their lives. Regardless of the flaws and exclusivity of mainstream, second-wave feminism, it is the reason why other feminisms such as Black feminism or intersectional feminism have been developed. This is the reason why understanding the history and roots of feminist movement and theory is important in the context of this thesis.

2.2 Black feminism

Black feminism, as argued by Hazel V. Carby, is a feminist approach to attempt to theorize the interconnection of class, gender and race as it occurs in the lives of Black women (112). Black feminism is generally characterized as an intersectional approach to feminism, which distinguishes that Black women face discrimination both based on their gender and their race. Carby suggests that Black feminist have been, and still are, demanding that the existence of racism must be acknowledged as a structuring feature of the Black women's relationship with White women (112).

Black feminism developed during the American Civil Rights Movement when Black women activists felt that Black men were not advocating for the struggles of Black women enough. The focus of the Civil Rights Movement was indeed to fight for equality to African-Americans in the United States, but Black women activists were not content with the extent in which their oppression and challenges were taken into consideration. As Beale, hooks and Marable argue, African-American women have long been included in Black social and political organizations, but with the exception of Black women's organizations, male-run organizations have not stressed Black women's issues (qtd. in Collins 8). Paula Giddings claims that Black women intellectuals have expressed themselves as both African-American and women, and historically these women have not held top leadership positions in Black organizations (qtd. Collins 8). The development of Black feminism is connected to lack of support from both African-American men and White women. As Evelyn M. Simien suggests, by ignoring the fact that Black women experience sexism in ways different from White women, and therefore the group consciousness literature fails to address the unique situation of Black women (22).

In *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins describes the problematics of discussing feminist issues as a minority. Hill Collins suggests that minority issues are only listened to if their ideas are framed within the language that is familiar for the dominant group (xiii), the dominant group being White feminists, or White people in general. At the core of Hill Collins' writing is the determination to "place Black women's experiences and ideas at the center of analysis" (xii), which White, middle-class feminism has not been able to achieve. Hill Collins comments on her own research by pointing out that "White, middle-class readers will find few references to so-called White feminist thought" (xii).

Hence it can be argued that by making not only African-American women, but also African-American feminist scholars the focus of her research, Hill Collins illustrates the challenge mainstream feminism faces – its standard of analyzing and constructing reality is predominantly White by default. Whiteness does not have to be pointed out or made visible, since it is the norm. White feminists do not recognize the struggle of Black women due to their own privileges and African-American men are

not able to differentiate their struggle from the struggle of Black women. It can be argued that Black feminism attempts not only to put Black women in the center of feminist analysis, but also to make visible the problematic relationship between whiteness and blackness.

The place of Black feminism in the third wave of feminism has been widely discussed, and the need for Black feminist theory has been questioned by younger, third-wave African-American feminists. There is discussion about the challenges of bowing to the “feminist foremothers” of the second wave and at the same time looking into the future in the third wave. Kimberly Springer argues that even though third-wave Black feminists do not want to reinvent the feminist wheel, young Black women are still attempting to stretch beyond the awe-inspiring legendary work of Black feminist foremothers such as bell hooks and Angela Davies, “whose work cannot be matched”(1079; 1068).

In Springer’s words,

Yet, in linking with the work of feminist foremothers, contemporary, young Black feminist writers continue to explain feminism’s relevance to Black communities. Far from reinventing the feminist wheel, young Black feminists are building on the legacy left by nineteenth-century abolitionists, anti-lynching crusaders, club women, Civil Rights organizers, Black Nationalist revolutionaries, and 1970s Black feminists. They are not inserting themselves into the third wave paradigm as much as they are continuing the work of a history of Black race women concerned with gender issues. (1079)

Springer’s claim suggests that Black feminism has many different voices, and like the debate between hooks and the young feminists’ group post suggests, Black feminism is not a uniformed front in questions about Black women. In addition, Springer argues that the young Black feminist writers’ need to keep on arguing on why feminism is relevant in Black communities, as well as continuing on the heritage of second-wave Black feminists. Interestingly, Springer argues that for young Black feminists it is more important to continue the work of Black feminism in communities that struggle with race issues than align themselves with the “third wave paradigm.” This could be a way of differentiating Black feminism from the mainstream third-wave, White feminism.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the theoretical background of Black feminism is central to understanding the debate between bell hooks and the Black feminist group post writers that are analyzed in this thesis. The introduction to the birth, development and theory of Black feminism is key to understanding the theoretical background that guides both bell hooks's and the group post writers. Black feminism is a very specific theory in feminist studies, as it discusses the challenges of a very specific group of women. The research topic of this thesis discusses exclusively African-American women, which makes understanding the foundations of Black feminism necessary. Furthermore, understanding why Black feminism came to be also helps one to understand what led to the birth of intersectional theory and intersectional feminism, as both Black feminism and intersectionality are linked to the development of feminism to a more multicultural and diverse field of study. To conclude, analyzing the debate about feminism in Beyoncé's *Lemonade* between hooks and the group post writers requires understanding the history and theoretical background of Black feminism.

2.3 Intersectional theory

Intersectionality is a theory that acknowledges the reality that people, regardless of their gender, have certain attributes that either work for them or against them. These attributes could also be called privileges or disadvantages and include attributes such as race, sex, gender or social status. In 1989, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw published *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, in which Crenshaw introduced intersectional theory for the first time (Devon W. Carbado 811). Crenshaw is generally credited as the first person to use intersectional theory as an analytical tool in her research of Black women's employment issues in the United States (qtd. in Guidroz et al. 44). According to Cho, Sumi et al., intersectionality has been deployed in disciplines such as history, sociology, literature, philosophy, and anthropology as well as in feminist studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, and legal studies (787). As Carbado suggests, scholars across the globe draw on intersectionality, as do human rights activists, community organizers, political figures, and lawyers (811).

According to Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and themselves. (2). Hill Collins and Bilge argue that conditions of social and political life can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor, and that there are generally many factors that are involved in mutually influencing ways. In this manner intersectionality is a way of understanding how complex and multifaceted the world truly is (2). One can easily examine their own position on the intersectional ladder by examining how their attributes influence their lives. For instance, a White, middle-classed Western woman has a lot of attributes that function as privileges, yet being a woman means that they still face challenges because of their gender. On the other hand, a Black, middle-classed, queer, Western woman faces the challenges of both race and gender in their lives, which presents them with challenges that their White, Western female counterparts do not experience. Recognizing these privileges and disadvantages is at the heart of intersectional theory, and how it is applied in practice at its simplest form.

As Harnois suggests,

Social psychology research rooted in intersectionality draws attention to the ways in which multiple inequalities work with and through one another to structure individual's identities and ideologies. (*Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality, and Women's Political Consciousness of Gender* 365–366)

In other words, intersectional advantages and disadvantages have an impact on the way an individual's identity is shaped and how it mirrors with people around them. Harnois also claims that an intersectional perspective raises the important but seldom addressed question of how memberships in other types of minority groups, and how beliefs about inequalities other than gender, intersect with women's gendered political consciousness (*Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality, and Women's*

Political Consciousness of Gender, 366). These other memberships could be race, sexual orientation, disability, and social status.

As mentioned earlier, intersectionality has been deployed in feminist theory. Intersectionality is an integral part of third-wave feminist theory, and the current emphasis of feminism is highly rooted on the ideas developed by Crenshaw. Third-wave feminists have brought attention to the one-dimensional outlook feminism has provided to liberate women, as the movement during the first and second waves failed to recognize the multitude of challenges women face besides their gender.

The exclusive nature of feminist theory has not been an easy discussion for second-wave feminists who, due to their own privileges, have failed to observe women's issues from an intersectional and diverse viewpoint. According to R. Claire Snyder, "third-wavers depict their version of feminism as more inclusive and racially diverse than the second wave, so much so that some second-wave feminists complain that the third-wave narrative makes the second wave seem whiter than it was" (qtd. in Clark Mane, 71). Indeed, the lack of intersectionality in second-wave feminism has been criticized vastly by third-wave feminists, who argue that second-wave feminism only defended the rights of White, heterosexual females.

During the third wave, intersectionality has become an inseparable part of the feminist thinking and theory. The future of feminism is seen as intersectional, which has enabled women from different backgrounds and paths of life to feel that feminism also promotes their rights and struggle. Third-wave, intersectional feminism aims at developing from the movement of middle-class White women to a movement that represents women of all genders, races, disabilities and orientations. While this development has not been easy, one could argue that this kind of inclusivity and acknowledgement of diversity is necessary for feminism.

Intersectionality is included in the theoretical framework of this thesis for two reasons.

Firstly, intersectional theory is directly linked to the development of Black feminism. Black feminism was born out of the understanding that second-wave feminism mainly focused and catered for middle-classed, White women, thus leaving out women who face challenges in life besides their gender. Intersectionality gives feminist theory an analytical tool to recognize how different attributes determine the privilege or disadvantage of an individual in society. It could be suggested that intersectionality has provided feminism a way to view womanhood and being a woman in a more diverse manner. The most crucial notion intersectionality brings to feminism is the understanding that although women experience disadvantages because of their gender by default, there are also other factors that create inequality and hierarchy within women.

Secondly, intersectionality provides a useful tool for the researcher to evaluate and understand their own position and privileges. It can be argued that although the researcher always aims at positioning themselves objectively, no one is able to approach a topic by completely stripping down their own perceptions or experiences of the world. For the writer of a master's thesis on a topic that discusses race and gender, intersectionality provides a tool to foreground and highlight the possible challenges and thought patterns that might affect research, no matter how unconscious those challenges or thought patterns might be. Being aware of their privileges or disadvantages provides the researcher the opportunity to question their own observations on a topic and examine them through an intersectional lens. In fields such as cultural history or feminism, intersectionality as an analytical tool provides the researcher the opportunity to make their thinking more critical and transparent.

Intersectional theory was included in the theoretical framework of this thesis to help and guide in the analysis process of bell hooks's and the roundtable feminists' group post. Recognizing intersectionality in a cultural studies topic that discusses race, racism and feminism of the minorities provides a tool for the researcher to pay particular attention to their own position and gaze of observing the world. No matter how objective academic writing and research strives to be, a researcher always examines the world through their own lens, privileges and assumptions. As a White, middle-class, heterosexual, university-educated woman in Finland, my views and

interpretations on Black feminism, race issues and discrimination are merely well-argued guesses that are based on reading background material, listening and studying the topic. Intersectionality provides a background thought to the analysis, which will be discussed in the researcher positionality section of the thesis.

3 Research material

This section describes the research material used in this study. The research materials include Beyoncé's visual album *Lemonade*, bell hooks's essay *Moving Beyond Pain* and the collection of eleven short commentaries from *the Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain."*

3.1 Beyoncé: *Lemonade*

Lemonade is the sixth album by the American recording artist Beyoncé. *Lemonade* first premiered as an HBO television special on April 23, 2016. After the premiere, the album was globally released exclusively on the music streaming service Tidal. After being released and promoted on Tidal, the album was also launched for sale on iTunes.

In addition to being a traditional music album, *Lemonade* is also a visual album. The songs each have their own music videos that can be viewed separately, but together compose an hour-long music video film. The music and the videos tie *Lemonade* into a single artistic entity that tell a story about a woman who experiences heartbreak and finds redemption after experiencing anger and frustration.

The lyrics of *Lemonade* discuss blackness, womanhood and female empowerment. The lyrical content is connected to the political struggle of African-American women, their relation to African-American men, and how both men and women could heal and move forward together.

The visual imagery of *Lemonade* celebrates African-American culture and fashion. *Lemonade* puts Black female bodies to the center of the film: Black women on *Lemonade* do everything from playing drums to dancing ballet. The women in the film are almost exclusively African-American. The visual images are often strong: Beyoncé smashing car windows with a baseball bat, Black women looking directly at the camera in everyday clothes or the mothers of police violence victims Michael Brown,

Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner sitting on chairs with portraits of their sons in their hands. Videos also portray a police car sinking into the water and a small boy rising his arms to a line of armed policemen.

Lemonade is composed of eleven sections that are named thematically. The sections – Intuition, Denial, Anger, Apathy, Emptiness, Accountability, Reformation, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Hope and Redemption – function as the fundamental storyline of the album and are heavily reflected in the song lyrics and video content. According to Patricia Garcia, *Lemonade* features Beyoncé reciting poems from the English poet Warsan Shire, including *For Women Who Are Difficult To Love*, *The Unbearable Weight of Staying* and *Nail Technician As Palm Reader*.

3.2 bell hooks: *Moving Beyond Pain*

bell hooks, pseudonym of Gloria Jean Watkins, is an American scholar and feminist whose work examines the varied perceptions of Black women, Black women writers and the development of feminist identities. hooks spells her pseudonym in lowercase letters to focus attention on her message rather than herself (Encyclopedia Britannica).

After the publication of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* on 23 April, 2016, hooks wrote an essay as a reaction to the album. The essay was published on the website of bell hooks Institute on 9 May, 2016. The essay, named *Moving Beyond Pain*, is an analysis of the themes and motives of *Lemonade*.

bell hooks discusses Beyoncé using female empowerment and the Black female body in *Lemonade* as a commodity. hooks argues that instead of being seemingly targeted to Black women, *Lemonade* is in reality a marketable package for the masses to consume, regardless of their color, gender or cultural background. According to hooks, Beyoncé has characterized herself as feminist in an interview for Elle magazine and has wanted to “give clarity to the true meaning” of the term. However, according to hooks, Beyoncé's construction of feminism cannot be trusted. Rather, hooks argues that

In the world of fantasy feminism, there are no class, sex, and race hierarchies that breakdown simplified categories of women and men, no call to challenge and change systems of domination, no emphasis on intersectionality. In such a simplified worldview, women gaining the freedom to be like men can be seen as powerful. But it is a false construction of power as so many men, especially Black men, do not possess actual power. And indeed, it is clear that Black male cruelty and violence towards Black women is a direct outcome of patriarchal exploitation and oppression. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

hooks suggests that the feminism in *Lemonade* is simplified and the ability of Black women to be like Black men is not truly powerful: hooks argues that Black men do not possess actual power in society, and that Black male cruelty and violence towards Black women is a direct outcome of patriarchal exploitation and oppression. Black women cannot gain true power and independence similar to Black men, since that power is not given even to Black men in American society.

According to hooks, in *Lemonade* the emotional hurt of Black women is indeed voiced, but the desire and attempt to change is not mutual. hooks argues that no matter how hard women in relationships with patriarchal men work for change, forgive, and reconcile, men must do the work of inner and outer transformation if emotional violence against Black females is to end. hooks suggests that it is only when both White and Black women resist patriarchal romanticizing of domination in relationships, can Black females start to “refuse to be victims.”

3.3 *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks and “Moving Beyond Pain”*

hooks’s essay was received with mixed reviews. Some applauded her critical approach to *Lemonade*, while others strongly disagreed with her. After bell hooks’s essay *Moving Beyond the Pain* was published, a group of African-American feminists decided to write a series of short commentaries that was published as a blog post on an online community called *Feministing*.

The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain" includes eleven short commentaries that are responses to hooks's essay. The eleven commentaries were collected by Lori Adelman, who calls *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"* a "group post". Adelman writes in the introduction of the group post that the commentaries are an attempt at a fair, forward-looking response and dialogue on a topic that is meaningful to its writers.

The eleven writers of *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"* are Michael Arceneaux, Sesali Bowen, Wade Davis, Cassie da Costa, Melissa Harris Perry, Blair LM Kelley, Jamilah Lemieux, Collier Meyerson, Joy-Ann Reid, Doreen St. Felix and Quita Tinsley.

Reactions of the group post question hooks's essay on various different topics, many of them criticizing hooks on her disability to see how her own work as a published author and feminist speaker make her a commodity, just like Beyoncé. Many texts also struggle with the dilemma of hooks being an extremely influential Black feminist scholar that the group post writers have looked up to as young feminist researchers, and despite this having to disagree with hooks on her criticism on *Lemonade*. Another prominent theme in the eleven group posts is hooks's claim that Beyoncé enforced patriarchy in her work, which is a claim that the group post rejects.

4 Analysis: “I’ma riot through your borders”

The analysis section of this thesis discusses three different themes that arise from bell hooks’s essay *Moving Beyond Pain* and the group post *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain.”*

Selecting three themes that stand out from the group of eleven short texts is a challenge for the researcher, and not all observations and arguments made in the group post cannot be analyzed. The three themes have been selected on the basis that they reoccur in several texts in the group post, and that they present a fruitful and engaging dialogue with hooks’s essay *Moving Beyond Pain*. Furthermore, the selected themes are also particularly interesting and thought-provoking for the researcher.

In addition, the three themes discussed in the analysis provide a good overview of the tone and themes of the group post. From the three themes selected for the analysis, the reader should have a good understanding on what themes the writers of the group post find most problematic and discussion-worthy in hooks’s essay. In addition to analyzing the dialogue between hooks’s essay and the group post, the analysis will also attempt to link the discussion to the themes and images from Beyoncé’s audio-visual album *Lemonade*. In this manner, the analysis will construct of examining three different materials – bell hooks’s essay, the group post and the audio-visual album.

The three themes selected for the analysis are patriarchy, commodity and violence.

In each section, I will first describe the theme in more detail and introduce the theme in the context of *Lemonade*. Finally, each section discusses the theme through *Moving Beyond Pain* and *The Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain”* and attempts to find the frictions and commonalities between the texts.

4.1 Patriarchy: “I am the dragon breathing fire, beautiful man I’m the lion”

The first section of the analysis discusses patriarchy. As Lawrence-Webb et al. argue, a society is considered patriarchal when men establish or inherit a social order where they dominate positions of power and authority, or when important achievements are attributed to the actions of men (626). In addition, Lawrence-Webb et al. suggests that patriarchy is a sociological structure that becomes globally embedded in all of our institutions in society (627). The definition of patriarchy in sociology and feminist studies is rather unanimous, yet some feminists have also attempted to extend the impact of patriarchy to not just women, but also men. This is the case with Black feminism, as many Black feminists view patriarchy as White, and thus also hurting Black men.

Patriarchy has been one of bell hooks’s main themes throughout her career as a writer and a feminist scholar. hooks’s definition of patriarchy is, in her own words, “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy”. This patriarchy, according to hooks, is the reason the world is as unequal as it is, and the purpose of her work and research is to bring attention to the ways in which patriarchy is oppressing women, particularly women of color. hooks argues that “patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation” (*Understanding Patriarchy*).

Before examining the debate concerning patriarchy between hooks and the roundtable group post, key themes in *Lemonade* that relate to the discussion about patriarchy are briefly defined. To begin with, *Lemonade* is a celebration of women, strength, perseverance and an anti-patriarchal manifestation towards the dominant, male culture. *Lemonade* is filled with song lyrics and images that both challenge and reject patriarchy: “Who the fuck do you think I is? You ain’t married to no average bitch, boy!” (*Don’t Hurt Yourself*) and “Looking at my watch he should have been home, tonight I regret the day I put that ring on” (*Sorry*), for example. The lyrics speak of the personal (i.e. betrayal in a committed relationship), yet the images of *Lemonade* give the personal lyrics a broader context. For instance, the intimate lyrics about struggles in a relationship are juxtaposed with close-up images of African-American women of all ages, looking directly at the camera. There is anger in

Lemonade, and it is targeted towards the Black man. *Lemonade* laments patriarchy and what it does to women, but it also speaks on what it does to men.

There are very few men in *Lemonade* and when they are, they are only given supporting roles. On Beyoncé's previous album, Jay-Z had a more visible role and he rapped the verses of the modern-day hip-hop ballad, *Drunk In Love*. On *Lemonade*, there is no room for Jay-Z's voice, only Beyoncé's. On *Lemonade*, Jay-Z is dressed in a white T-shirt, and portrayed next to Beyoncé, while the lyrics convey the message of reconciliation and forgiveness:

Dishes smashed on my counter from our last encounter, pictures snatched out the frame, bitch I scratched out your name and your face, what is it about you I can't erase?
(*Sandcastles*)

On the one hand, Jay-Z could be interpreted as representing patriarchy and hurt against women. On the other hand, as hooks suggests, Black men are affected by the patriarchy too, which makes Jay-Z not only human, but also a victim of the toxic patterns of male behavior. hooks has written about the position of Black men in American society and in relation to patriarchy in *We Real Cool – Black men and masculinity*. In her writing on Black men, hooks discusses how the patriarchal society infects Black men. In hooks's words,

Sadly, the real truth, which is a taboo to speak, is that this is a culture that does not love Black males, that they are not loved by white men, white women, Black women, or girls and boys. And that especially most Black men do not love themselves. How could they, how could they be expected to love surrounded by so much envy, desire, hate? Black males in the culture of imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy are feared but they are not loved. (*We Real Cool – Black men and masculinity*, xxi)

Black men in *Lemonade* are portrayed hurting and cheating on their women, and their behavior is met with downright rage. However, *Lemonade* also seeks reconciliation and love with Black men, and the film does not end in separation or hatred but forgiveness. hooks calls this "romanticization of domination in relationships" and refusal to reject patriarchal patterns.

In *Lemonade*, the patriarchal gender roles are switched and challenged. For instance, Beyoncé uses images of New Orleans-based tradition of Mardi Gras Indians in *Lemonade*. In *Lemonade*, the Mardi Gras Indian is a woman, yet traditionally the roles of Mardi Gras Indians are exclusively reserved for men. This is another example of how *Lemonade* challenges patriarchy. Furthermore, on the song *Formation*, Beyoncé declares that she “just might be the next Black Bill Gates in the making”, referring to the billionaire and founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates. With this statement, Beyoncé rises herself up to the likes of Bill Gates, who is a White man with affluence and is considered the pinnacle of success in patriarchal society.

Defying patriarchy in *Lemonade* is visible in the lack of men, as there are only a few in the music videos. The only men the viewer sees on the audio-visual album are also African-American – Beyoncé’s real-life husband Jay-Z, Beyoncé’s father Matthew Knowles in old video clips, an old man playing a guitar, and men who are portrayed with their female partners. In addition, mothers of gun violence victims hold the pictures of their sons on camera. Furthermore, the men are not visibly seen on film until the very end of *Lemonade*. This is when the women reach the stage of “reconciliation” with lyrics singing “forward” – moving on, past the pain that is caused by a patriarchal society that is violent to both Black men and women. This is the scene where we see mothers holding photographs of the gun-violence victims Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and Eric Garner in their hands.

In *Understanding Patriarchy*, hooks suggests that

To end patriarchy, we must challenge both its psychological and its concrete manifestations in daily life. There are folks who are able to critique patriarchy but unable to act in an anti-patriarchal manner”. (*Understanding Patriarchy*)

Interestingly enough, this inability to act in an anti-patriarchal manner is something hooks accuses Beyoncé of in *Moving Beyond Pain*.

According to hooks, Beyoncé's interpretation of feminism cannot be trusted, and this is because Beyoncé's vision of feminism "does not call for an end to patriarchal domination." Instead, hooks argues, Beyoncé's feminism merely insists equal rights for men and women, calling Beyoncé's feminism a form of "fantasy feminism." In hooks's words,

In the world of fantasy feminism, there are no class, sex, and race hierarchies that breakdown simplified categories of women and men, no call to challenge and change systems of domination, no emphasis on intersectionality. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

In addition, hooks suggests that Beyoncé is creating an illusion with her fantasy feminism and the aspiration of Black women to be equal like Black men, calling Beyoncé's world view "simplified." According to hooks, the world view Beyoncé has created with her art is a "false construction", as "Black men do not possess actual power." By this statement hooks is presumably referring to the fact that Black men are in a disadvantage to White men in society, and thus have no true freedom. Furthermore, hooks continues by claiming that "the male cruelty and violence towards Black women is a direct outcome of patriarchal exploitation and oppression." In addition to arguing that Beyoncé's art does not challenge patriarchy, hooks suggest that instead Beyoncé places herself in the position of a victim. In hooks's words,

It is only as Black women and all women resist patriarchal romanticization of domination in relationships can a healthy self-love emerge that allows every Black female, and all females, to refuse to be a victim. Ultimately *Lemonade* glamorizes a world of gendered cultural paradox and contradiction. It does not resolve. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

The criticism hooks presents on Beyoncé about her ability to challenge patriarchy in *Lemonade* is met with criticism from the writers of the group post. Collier Meyerson points out that although Beyoncé did not "singlehandedly reject patriarchy" on *Lemonade*, "she certainly didn't reinforce it." Indeed, does hooks suggest that by forgiving her man and seeking reconciliation Beyoncé is merely repeating old patterns that maintain patriarchal abuse of women? Whereas hooks is highly critical of Beyoncé's strife to destroy patriarchy, the group post writers are both more sympathetic and expect less from

Beyoncé. On the one hand, hooks views Beyoncé to have such affluence and power as an artist that she should use her platform more boldly to promote and dismantle anti-feminist structures in society. On the other hand, *Lemonade* is not merely a commentary on the struggle and challenges of Black women in America, but also a highly personal confession about Beyoncé's private relationship with her husband. Although patriarchy is the reason for Black women's struggle, men affected by the patriarchal society are still, too, human.

Melissa Harris Perry takes on this theme in her group post text and argues against hooks's disapproval of Beyoncé staying with her cheating husband and continuing to be a victim of the patriarchal society. Harris Perry claims that "*Lemonade* is a messy, dramatic portrait of Black women's life and that is form of patriarchal resistance." Harris Perry views Beyoncé's humanity and the humanity towards others as a way to challenge and break patriarchal patterns. By doing this, Harris Perry suggests, Beyoncé "forces the voices of Black women's experiences into the mainstream." Beyoncé's story is, according to Harris Perry, human – something that hooks's essay fails to see.

In *Bad Feminist*, Roxanne Gay argues that feminism is often held to "an unreasonable standard where the movement must be everything we want and must always make the best choices" (Introduction x). Moreover, Gay argues that

Feminism, of late, has suffered from a certain guilt by association because we conflate feminism with women who advocate feminism as part of their personal brand. When these figure-heads say what we want to hear, we put them up on the Feminist Pedestal, and when they do something we don't like, we knock them right off and then say there's something wrong with feminism because our feminist leaders have failed us. We forget the difference between feminism and Professional Feminists. (Introduction, x)

This dilemma presented by Gay is visible in the debate between bell hooks and the group post writers. According to several group post writers hooks appears to, in the words of Gay, hold Beyoncé up to an unreasonable standard. Bowen discusses this theme in her group post text:

Even after her trite critiques, I'm still not sure what bell hooks wants from Beyoncé. After reading hooks' latest critique, on *Lemonade*, I feel almost certain that what she wants from Beyoncé is something that she herself has yet to bring to the table. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"*)

Bowen calls hooks the "Beyoncé of her genre" and challenges hooks by arguing that even hooks has not been able to bring down the patriarchy, so why should she demand such a thing from Beyoncé? A similar claim is made by Harris Perry. Harris Perry appears to find hooks's demands on Beyoncé disproportional, as she points out that "I presume hooks does not expect a music video to end patriarchy – not even decades of hooks's own feminist writing have accomplished that." Indeed, hooks is highly critical and demanding on Beyoncé, perhaps due to Beyoncé's powerful status as a world-famous pop artist. Bowen and Harris Perry also suggest that perhaps hooks does not understand her own position as the "Beyoncé of her genre" – she, too, has enjoyed tremendous power and affluence in the feminist dialogue for decades. The Black feminists of the roundtable group post approach hooks with an understanding and humility that hooks is not able to approach Beyoncé's *Lemonade* with. The discussion about dismantling patriarchy, according to the group post writers, is not solely on the shoulders of influential Black women like bell hooks and Beyoncé, and it would be absurd to demand so.

Several of the group posts that discuss patriarchy in their comment question hooks's strict demands towards Beyoncé on what *Lemonade* should have achieved. Harris Perry discusses the challenge of balancing between challenging patriarchy and seeking personal fulfilment in a relationship with a man. As Harris Perry suggests, "patriarchy is evil and must be dismantled. Intimacy can be painful, but must be embraced." By suggesting this she challenges hooks' s argument that to dismantle patriarchy once and for all, women must stop being victims and forgiving men who do them wrong. In *Lemonade*, Harris Perry seems to argue, Beyoncé both rises against patriarchy and finds humanity in the men who are also hurt by it. Dismantling patriarchy can be done with reconciliation, and that does not make the woman a victim, Harris Perry's argument suggests.

Reconciliation is an aspect of *Lemonade* hooks is highly critical of: she suggests that the reconciliation and forgiveness of women is not enough. In hooks's words,

No matter how hard women in relationships with patriarchal men work for change, forgive and reconcile, men must do the work of inner and outer transformation if emotional violence against Black females is to end. We see no hint of this in *Lemonade*. If change is not mutual then Black female emotional hurt can be voiced, but the reality of men inflicting emotional pain will still continue (can we really trust the caring images of Jay-Z which conclude this narrative). (*Moving Beyond Pain*).

In their group post text Jamilah Lemieux suggests that it is "laughable" for hooks to even suggest that Beyoncé could be a force in dissolving the patriarchy because her currency is fame and it "simply isn't her job." This is an interesting claim, since it suggests that being a commodity makes dissolving patriarchy somehow less efficient. Lemieux elaborates by arguing the following:

Nothing produced by America's preeminent Black pop star is ever going to resemble anything close to the complete unraveling of hundreds of years of subjugation and mistreatment. Patriarchy is the disease, not Beyoncé. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"*)

Lamieux seems not to expect much from Beyoncé – although she is sympathetic towards both Beyoncé and *Lemonade*, she does not expect Beyoncé to challenge or dissolve patriarchy even if she is a world-famous and influential pop star. This is a different viewpoint in the debate, since Lamieux clearly does not view Beyoncé as having enough credibility to comment on patriarchy in a manner that would actually create change. Lamieux argues that dissolving patriarchy "is not Beyoncé's job", yet artists have always criticized society and its problems through their art – Madonna with *Like A Virgin* or the *Erotica* album, for example. It certainly is not anyone's job to do anything, and pop music can be purely entertaining, but the influence of pop art can also not be overlooked. Bowen offers a similar argument in her response to hooks, who suggests that hooks's claims about Beyoncé "glamorizing a world of gendered cultural paradox and contradiction" are overproportioned. Bowen suggests that hooks simply "wants too much" from Beyoncé, pointing out that Beyoncé began to

research feminism a few years ago, and thus her feminist attempts cannot be criticized in such a harsh manner. “Auntie bell, I love you, but you gotta chill”, Bowen concludes.

Cassie da Costa’s take on hooks’s *Moving Beyond Pain* attempts to examine *Lemonade* as an “imaginative work”. According to da Costa, *Lemonade* is not an “assemblage of symbols or signifiers that affirm or condemn female violence, victimhood, or patriarchy”, but a work of art that struggles with those themes through artistic expression. Da Costa suggests that as *Lemonade* discusses imperfection, it also creates imperfect images. Beyoncé has attempted to provide through her art a vision of an imperfect woman discussing issues far greater than a marriage crisis of two individuals. *Lemonade* balances between the personal and the public – relationship issues and civil rights issues. However, the personal and the public are bound to collide in the lives of African-American men and women, whose relationships are nevertheless affected by the painful heritage of slavery, segregation and civil rights movement. “*Lemonade* does not resolve”, hooks argues. *Lemonade* is an imperfect utopia where patriarchy is challenged, but not destroyed. Perhaps, for Beyoncé, *Lemonade* is a starting point, not a resolved case. As Beyoncé sings on the second last track on *Lemonade*, *All Night*:

But every diamond has imperfections
But my love’s too pure to watch it chip away (*All Night*)

To conclude, it can be argued that patriarchy is perhaps the strongest theme in both hooks’s essay and the roundtable group post responses. Patriarchy’s central role in the discussion derives from two reasons. Firstly, patriarchy has been a key theme in bell hooks’s work as a feminist scholar and she has written about the topic extensively in her previous work. Secondly, when hooks criticizes Beyoncé for not dismantling patriarchy, the group post writers’ reaction is naturally a response to hooks’s arguments and their knowledge on hooks’s expertise in discussing patriarchy. The group post writers are most likely very familiar with hooks’s work and have probably studied the concept of patriarchy in feminism and Black feminism through her texts. The friction between hooks and the roundtable group post writers is not that they disagree about what patriarchy is or what it does to women and men;

they disagree about whether Beyoncé could or should “dismantle” patriarchy through her artistic work in *Lemonade*.

It can be argued that hooks’s demands towards Beyoncé on ending patriarchy, and actually “dismantling” it, are extreme. Furthermore, she is conveying a mixed message by demanding *Lemonade* to put an end to patriarchy when female-leaders, politicians, scholars, and thousands of feminist activist have not succeeded to do so in the hundred years of feminist movement. As Cynthia Elope comments on the feminist activists’ notable pro-women achievements around the world: “No single one of these notable successes has toppled patriarchy. Even all together, these achievements have not pushed Humpty Dumpty permanently off his patriarchal wall” (161). Indeed, one could ask hooks: if Beyoncé claiming herself as the “next Black Bill Gates in the making” is not stepping into the shoes of the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, then what is?

The central friction about patriarchy in *Lemonade* is not solved in the debate: hooks argues that Beyoncé has not succeeded in dismantling it, and the group post writers suggest that this is something Beyoncé simply cannot do or should not be responsible for. Furthermore, the group post writers suggest that hooks’s demand is downright unrealistic and ridiculous. The group post writers approach *Lemonade* with less demands and more sympathy than hooks, suggesting that the artwork can be both flawed and groundbreaking at the same time. The debate between hooks and the roundtable group post writers reveals that hooks demands Beyoncé to do something that no other powerful woman has yet accomplished: to end patriarchy once and for all. Gay writes in *Bad Feminist* about shooting feminists down from their pedestal for not being perfect (Introduction, x). This is what hooks appears to be doing to Beyoncé in *Moving Beyond Pain*, as she struggles to find anything positive Beyoncé has done in *Lemonade* to dismantle patriarchal dynamics. Furthermore, hooks is so demanding towards Beyoncé’s feminist attempts that it creates an impression that she simply has decided not to like anything Beyoncé does. This same notion is not expressed in a straightforward manner in the group post responses, but it is certainly hinted upon.

One could argue that ending patriarchy does not begin with a spectacular piece of pop art, but by making the power structures of the society visible, by doing feminist research and by educating both men and women on how patriarchy is impacting the lives of everyone; not just the lives of women. Beyoncé is certainly engaged in the feminist discussion with her music and art, and feminist themes will probably be a part of her upcoming artistic endeavors. Despite this, her contribution to feminism will probably be much less than what hooks wishes of Beyoncé, but more than most feminists will ever succeed in doing. Beyoncé will most certainly encourage young women, and young Black women in particular, to dive into the world of feminist thinking, and to realize that calling oneself a feminist is a positive and an empowering statement.

The second part of the analysis will discuss commodity and commodification in *Lemonade*, which is another key theme hooks brings up in *Moving Beyond Pain*.

4.2 Commodity: “Always stay gracious, best revenge is your paper”

Commodity feminism is a variety of feminism that co-opts the movement’s ideals for profit. The daughter of the President of the United States Donald Trump, Ivanka Trump, has been accused of using commodity feminism through her #WomenWhoWork campaign to sell her lifestyle brand (Alia E. Dastagir). The idea of commodity has been associated with female artists before Beyoncé, and she probably will not be the last one. In the past, artists like Madonna have used their body both as a commodity to sell records and as an expression to promote female sexuality, equality and the freedom to “express yourself.” Carla Freccero argues that Madonna has played with the codes of femininity to “undo dominant gender codes and to assert her own power and agency, and the power and agency of other women” (70). Feminism in popular culture, and therefore in capitalist money-making, is not something invented by Beyoncé.

The release of Beyoncé’s audio-visual album *Lemonade* was well-planned and executed. The album was published without any announcements or promotion and it was released exclusively on music

streaming service Tidal, which is owned by Beyoncé's husband Jay-Z. The album later became available on iTunes, but it has not been published on Spotify to this day. Furthermore, Beyoncé's activity wear clothing line, Ivy Park, was launched at the same time with *Lemonade*. In *Lemonade*, Beyoncé is seen wearing Ivy Park items such as a hoodie with the slogan "IVY PARK" written on the front. Mako Fitts Ward suggests that through Tidal and other business ventures, Beyoncé has gained a tremendous amount of power and is one of the most influential cultural producers and music industry entrepreneurs in the modern period, and that this position is "groundbreaking" for a Black woman (152).

The first music video off the album, *Formation*, was downloaded on YouTube, but the link to the video was secret. If you tried searching for the video on YouTube it would not appear on the search, but you had to know someone who had shared the video in order to watch it. The marketing method of *Lemonade* was efficient, and the buzz around the audio-visual album created itself through Beyoncé's fans in the social media. In Ward's words,

The sheer reach of her marketing empire fuel the enthusiasm of her ardent fans – the BeyHive – whose "ride or die" devotion to Queen Bey is unparalleled. Through online message boards like the TheBeyHive.com and social media accounts like @Bey_Legion (Twitter) and @beylite (Instagram) that have generated over. Million followers, Beyoncé's fans have direct access to the professionals who bring her creative vision to life. (153)

Ward's argument suggests that Beyoncé has been able to use marketing in the social media age to her benefit, which allows the hype to follow her whatever she does. This also makes it possible for Beyoncé to let go of traditional marketing methods.

Beyoncé's public image has become increasingly restricted and controlled as her fame has risen. Beyoncé has arguably created a mystical image of herself as an artist, which is an approach that forces the media to follow her next endeavors closely. A crucial part of the "Beyoncé brand" and commodity is tied to this mystery, which keeps the audience on their toes at all times. This is the reason why

Beyoncé has been able to move towards the type of anti-marketing strategy that was implemented in the marketing of *Lemonade* instead of a straightforward, traditional marketing campaign with interviews and press tours.

The relationship between feminism and commodity is challenging and multifaceted. Commodification of the female body can refer to the hypersexualization of women in images – advertisements, movies, magazines and art. In the era of the music video, Black women have been hypersexualized and commodified in hip-hop music. According to Murali Balaji, “sexualized, stereotyped content has been replicated for mass consumption, often countervailing any attempts to present Black women in nonsexual and nonobjectified ways” (6). Through objectification and commodification the female body becomes an object through which one can sell, profit and exploit. However, in the times of increasing gender equality and post-feminism, women have begun to become active in using themselves as a commodity by choice. Commodification is no longer a position that women are subjugated to, but a conscious choice. Claire R. Snyder suggests that third-wave feminists interact with men as equals, claim sexual pleasure as they desire it and actively play with femininity, and that the women’s desires “are not simply booby traps set by the patriarchy” (179). In addition, it should be noted that the feminist movement approaches female commodification in a different manner as opposed to male commodification. Men are rarely seen as victims of commodification or something they should avoid due to being objectified, whereas women are still seen as victims of objectification and money-making. One explanation for this is the inequality of the sexes, in addition to the idea that women are always under the subjugating male gaze. The view of women solely being objects of commodity has evolved from this notion and therefore Beyoncé’s commodification can also be suggested to be self-made and purposeful. Beyoncé, who has commodified herself, her art and her image, has done so in her own terms.

We live in a capitalist society. As soon as one makes something for a living and begins selling it, one’s art becomes a commodity. At what stage does making art into a commodity turn from acceptable to unacceptable? An artist selling mixtapes from their basement is as much of a commodity as a multi-

million-dollar artist in the sense that they both use their art and skills to make a profit. Naturally, the platform and influence of an unknown artist is marginal compared to Beyoncé, but let us assume that the unknown artist and Beyoncé both made an album with feminist themes. They would discuss similar themes, create similar images and messages. There appears to be friction in the debate on discussing topics such as feminism or racism in art that is also highly commodified. Can art and commodity walk hand in hand without jeopardizing the credibility and sincerity of the work of art? Does commodification diminish *Lemonade*'s themes or its impact on Black women's empowerment? In addition, one should ask if the commodification of art in popular culture is something that is more acceptable for White artists, since they represent and personify the power that we are accustomed to seeing in our culture.

hooks's essay *Moving Beyond Pain* opens with a paragraph where hooks addresses the commodification and capitalism in *Lemonade*. hooks writes,

As a grown Black woman who believes in the manifesto "Girl, get your money straight" my first response to Beyoncé's visual album, *Lemonade*, was WOW—this is the business of capitalist money making at its best. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

This observation by hooks is by no means a new revelation, as the world we live in is capitalistic. Beyoncé certainly is not the first artist to capitalize their art – in fact, it would be absurd to claim that any pop artists born in the consumerist era would not have done the exact same thing. Artists such as Michael Jackson have also discussed matters such as race and discrimination in their art while being thoroughly commodified. Eric Lott argues that Jackson's "Black or White" music video, for example, was a report of the contradictions of racial identity in the United states (550). As soon as something is sold in exchange for money, be it songs, clothes, paintings or films, it becomes commodity. hooks appears to see *Lemonade* and its "capitalist money making" in a negative light, placing the purpose of *Lemonade* to be business above art.

Lemonade has received acclaim for bringing Black women to the center of artistic narrative. *Lemonade* has also been geared towards Black women, who are able to identify themselves with the audio-visual album in a way that White women simply are not able to. In her essay, hooks strongly disagrees with this notion:

Viewers who like to suggest *Lemonade* was created solely or primarily for Black female audiences are missing the point. Commodities, irrespective of their subject matter, are made, produced, and marketed to entice any and all consumers. Beyoncé's audience is the world and that world of business and money-making has no color. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

hooks disagrees with the argument that *Lemonade* was created for primarily Black female audiences, basing her argument on Beyoncé marketing her music for larger, global audiences. hooks does not take into consideration that while *Lemonade* may cater to a larger audience than merely Black females, different people relate and listen to *Lemonade* for different reasons. While Black women in the United States are able to view and relate to *Lemonade* in a manner that no other groups can, *Lemonade* has other themes and touching stones other audiences can appreciate. Hooks's argument that "Beyoncé's audience is the world" certainly is true, as she is one of the most famous pop artists in the world today. Nevertheless, hooks appears to see something wrong on the fact that "money-making has no color", which means that whatever Beyoncé does, is appealing globally. While *Lemonade* certainly has made a lot of money for Beyoncé, does that take away from the reception of Black women, or that other people find *Lemonade* to be relatable for other reasons besides the Black women's struggle and empowerment?

This argument is also raised by Michael Arceneaux, who throws the ball back and points out that hooks, too, has commodified herself through her work as a feminist scholar. In Arceneaux's words,

And someone who sells books and gives speeches at premier universities should also know that just because something is designed to make money doesn't inherently mean it is corrupt or compromised. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"*)

Acrona's argument is at the core of the debate on whether commodification somehow takes on the credibility of the message of an album, or any work of art for that matter. Acrona challenges hooks's position as a scholar and writer who is undoubtedly successful in her field. Sesali Bowen points out a similar observation towards hooks, calling her the "Beyoncé of her genre (a superstar and artist with unique social capital and affluence)." Both Acrona and Bowen therefore suggest that hooks is not able to observe herself objectively and see that she, too, possesses power that is tied to capitalist money-making and success.

hooks suggests in her essay that *Lemonade* is daring because its chosen commodity is the Black female and that *Lemonade* positively exploits images of Black female bodies. According to hooks this is done by placing Black women at the center, and describes the visual representations of Black women as "versatile" in terms of "sizes, shapes and textures with all manner of big hair." hooks observes that real-life images of ordinary, overweight not-dressed-up bodies are placed within a visual backdrop that includes stylized, choreographed, fashion plate fantasy representations. Clearly this is an issue for hooks, since she contrasts the realistic characters appearing in a carefully constructed piece of commercial art.

hooks goes further and argues that although Beyoncé's first visual look on *Lemonade* is the highly controversial hoodie (when worn by American Blacks), it is at the same time part of her own sportswear collection Ivy Park. For hooks, the combination of political commentary and capitalist commodity is an issue. In hooks' words,

Lemonade offers viewers visual extravaganza – a display of Black female bodies that transgresses all boundaries. It's all about the body, and the body as commodity. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

Lemieux comments on this in her group post text by discussing hooks's approach on the Black female body, commodity and sex positivity. Lemieux suggests that hooks should consider "sex positivity that

is at the heart of the feminism that us younger folks have come to embrace.” Lemieux also argues that the male gaze, which is traditionally seen in feminism as an oppressive act, can also be something to enjoy:

I wish that she’d considered the joy many of us find in our bodies, in sex and yes, even in the male gaze that she seems to find inherently tied to the evils of patriarchy — as if we are violating a code by wanting to be wanted. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain”*)

Lemieux writes that she is “disappointed” that hooks’s interpretation of *Lemonade* reduces the display of Black female bodies to a commodity. Lemieux appears to be referring to a kind of wave gap between second-wave feminists like hooks and young third-wave feminists like her. Lemieux’s argument about the male gaze is certainly something that hooks’s generation of feminists have opposed fiercely. Lemieux suggests that younger feminists’ take on the male gaze is not entirely negative, and that there is also joy and positivity in being admired by men. By “violating a code” Lemieux is most certainly referring to the second-wave feminists’ idea that male gaze towards women is exclusively oppressive and violent. This idea by Lemieux relates to Beyoncé’s commodification of her art and body where the woman has say and control on herself, despite the fact that she is gazed by man in a sexual manner. hooks views both commodification and the male gaze as oppressive at all times, whereas Lemieux suggests that there can be something positive and powerful about being admired and gazed.

Joy-Ann Reid writes about hooks’s notion that Black women have always been bought and sold. Reid argues that in American history, Black women were “objects, to be owned and traded and sold or hung from trees like laundry.” Reid discusses Beyoncé’s decision to include the Black tennis player Serena Williams on *Lemonade*, calling Williams “perhaps the most bestialized, ill-portrayed, underappreciated Black woman in America.” In *Lemonade*, Williams is portrayed in a tight bodysuit, “unabashedly twerking til the break of dawn.” Reid suggests that images of Williams dancing in

Lemonade conveys a message that Black women “still have not escaped the ‘dewomanizing’ of their bodies.” Reid suggests the following:

If Beyoncé is commodifying our sexual beings, she is doing so by seizing the receipts from the dominant culture’s hands. If she is demanding our place on the pedestal in front of our men, she is doing so by shoving “Becky with the good hair” off those heights. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and “Moving Beyond Pain”*)

Williams has been criticized publicly about her body and appearances throughout her career, and her figure has been often called “man-like” (Gina Vivinetto). Beyoncé choosing Williams to appear in *Lemonade* not only is a comment on those who have criticized Williams’ appearances, but it also puts Williams’ body and skin color on the commodified pedestal that is traditionally been intended for White women. “Becky with the good hair” refers to lyrics in *Lemonade*’s song *Sorry*, where Beyoncé insinuates that her husband cheated on her with a White woman: “Becky with the good hair.” The discussion about hair is deeply rooted in Black culture in America, where Black women have systematically treated their hair in ways that made them look more White – straight and blonder. Similar themes about appearing more White have been discussed in Toni Morrison’s book *The Bluest Eye*, where the little girl’s biggest wish is to look like Shirley Temple.

Reid’s argument that Beyoncé is seizing the receipt from the dominant culture’s hands refers to *Lemonade*’s almost exclusively Black cast of women. In *Lemonade*, White people in general are pushed to the margins and blackness is brought to the center. The television show *Saturday Night Live* made a sketch about *Lemonade* after its publication, discussing the “blackness” of Beyoncé’s new album. The sketch involved a dramatic realization by White people that “Beyoncé is Black” – something that White Americans had not realized before *Lemonade*’s publication. In the sketch this realization lead to an apocalypse-like collapse of New York City, in addition to the mental breakdown of White Beyoncé fans. Reid appears to be suggesting that even if Beyoncé is commodifying Black women, she is doing so on her own terms. Furthermore, Reid describes Beyoncé as demanding Black women their place on the pedestal in front of Black men. Here Reid is referring to the same themes

that Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* discusses – that White has always been more beautiful than Black. One can suggest that this notion is turned upside-down in *Lemonade*, as Black women are celebrated and brought to the center. Even if Reid views *Lemonade* as commodity, she nevertheless suggests that the impacts this commodity has on Black women in America is more important than the problem of capitalization or commodification.

Despite viewing *Lemonade* as commodity, hooks also argues that the audio-visual album is able to shift the gaze of White mainstream culture on how the audience sees the female Black body. hooks observes the Black female body in a historical context and states that from slavery to the present day, “Black female bodies have been bought and sold.” hooks argues that the commodification in *Lemonade* is different because of its intent, which is to “seduce, celebrate and delight and to challenge the ongoing present day devaluation and dehumanization of the Black female body.” Nevertheless, hooks points out that this radical repositioning of Black female images does not truly overshadow or change conventional sexist constructions of Black female identity. This notion is followed by the argument that even though *Lemonade* attempts to offer multidimensional images of Black females, the album still stays within a conventional stereotypical framework where the Black woman is “always a victim.” Here, too, hooks appears to want more of Beyoncé and *Lemonade*; it is as if hooks is suggesting that Beyoncé is not able to take her feminism to the next level, and the result is still oppressing the Black woman. In order for Beyoncé to stop being a victim, hooks suggests Beyoncé, the women of *Lemonade* and presumably all Black women, should “move beyond pain.” In hooks's words,

To truly be free, we must choose beyond simply surviving adversity, we must dare to create lives of sustained optimal well-being and joy. In that world, the making and drinking of lemonade will be a fresh and zestful delight, a real life mixture of the bitter and the sweet, and not a measure of our capacity to endure pain, but rather a celebration of our moving beyond pain. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

hooks's suggestion of "moving beyond pain" is not explained further, and the reader is left with many questions. What hooks truly means by "moving beyond pain", and what is it that hooks ultimately wants Beyoncé to do, is left open.

To conclude, if hooks is suggesting in *Moving Beyond Pain* that Beyoncé has commodified feminism to make money, one could ask: Is feminism really that popular? If feminism really was such a money-making machine, would the world be entirely feminist by now? Beyoncé is such a popular artist across genre borders globally that anything she makes at this stage of her career is bound to sell records. One could suggest that Beyoncé merely lets feminism ride on her wings while selling records at the same time. In addition, Beyoncé's music and image is easier to digest than intersectional feminism, or otherwise the world would be much more equal. On the other hand, Beyoncé's intersectional feminist utopia is easier to buy than it is to achieve in the real world. Beyoncé is more comfortable to digest than intersectional feminism, or otherwise the world would be much more equal.

In addition, it can be suggested that Beyoncé has commodified and branded herself very carefully, and her public image is controlled and commodified to present a certain image of her as an artist. Commodity has a painful undertone in the context of feminism, as female bodies have been used and are still used as a way of selling and exploiting. Feminist theory also often juxtaposes commodification with patriarchy, as the power structures of the world (capital) are thought to be in the hands of men. While this is still accurate, the situation has also changed as equality and women's rights have progressed, and women like Beyoncé are able to commodify themselves on their own terms. The female body is still commodified and put under the oppressing gaze but it is done consciously, willingly, and from a position of power. Even though Beyoncé is a woman and has an ethnic disadvantage of being Black, she still has tremendous affluence and power due to her economic and social status, which gives her power that the majority of women do not have. Therefore it could be argued that Beyoncé commodifying herself and her art is not subjugating to being a victim, but being an active and independent participant in the capitalistic money-making music industry.

The key debate between *Moving Beyond Pain* and the roundtable group about commodity centers around the following problematization: Does commodification of Black women, Black culture and women in *Lemonade* devalue its message? hooks's argument is that *Lemonade* brings nothing new to the table of Black women's representation in the American society and media, and that Black bodies are presented against a commercial backdrop. This, according to hooks, prevents Black women from moving forward in society towards a time free from commodification and the oppressing, patriarchal gaze. The difference of opinion between hooks and the group post writers is also a generation-gap-issue: the group table post, who presumably represent the third-wave-feminist movement, also find joy and positivity in the male gaze. To hooks, the gaze is always oppressing and commodifying, whereas the group post writers suggest that the gaze can also be empowering and something to be enjoyed.

Yes, *Lemonade* is a commodified work of art that is not exclusively targeted to Black women (although it probably resonates with them the most), but to anyone willing to purchase it. Furthermore, it also brings Black women to the center and pushes them away from the marginal. It can be argued that this type of commodified representation is something that not just Black women, but all women of color, need. In addition, in a world that places whiteness above blackness, commodification of Black women and their bodies brings blackness closer to the mainstream consumption culture. It can be suggested that commodification without a female body against her will and without responsibility is indeed oppressive, but Beyoncé's *Lemonade* can be viewed to represent a new era where a woman decides how and in what ways her body and work is commodified.

4.3 Violence: "I got Hot Sauce in my bag, swag"

The final section of the analysis focuses on analyzing the discussion on violence between hooks and the group post.

Lemonade is presumably based on Beyoncé's own real-life experiences, although the album itself is a "fantasy fictional narrative" (*Moving Beyond Pain*) with Beyoncé as its lead character. hooks suggests that one of the album's carrying themes is rage that is a consequence of the betrayal of Beyoncé's man. The Black woman in *Lemonade* is filled with anger, as images of Beyoncé smashing cars in a flamboyant yellow gown create images of a strong woman gone on a violent rampage against her man. hooks argues that the image of Beyoncé in her yellow gown is highly sexualized and "the embodiment of a fantastic female power, which is just that – pure fantasy." hooks views *Lemonade*'s world of female power a "fantasy" because in hooks's opinion women do not possess any real power, and to hooks *Lemonade* is not a reflection of how the world really is.

hooks interprets Beyoncé's rage as glamorizing anger, whereas the writers of the group post approach the topic with more understanding. According to Sesali Bowen, hooks's use of the term, "glamorize", "betrays a blind spot that fails to recognize Beyoncé's humanity." The interpretation and purpose of Beyoncé's violent behavior and rage is a central point of friction in the debate between hooks's and the group post writers. Is Beyoncé's violence in *Lemonade* both an artistic expression and a sign of humanity, or a representation of reality that can cause real harm to women struggling with patriarchy? This question is at the core of the debate between hooks and the roundtable group post.

The violent, baseball-swinging Beyoncé, dressed in a yellow gown, has been claimed to represent Oshun, a deity of the Nigerian Yoruba religion. According to Samuel Murrell, Oshun is the ruler of oceans and waters, is called "the giver of life", and loves everything yellow. She helps people in times of need, but will viciously defend her integrity and honor when assailed" (111). Rowland Abiodun suggests that Oshun is believed to have the power to influence the destinies of men and gods, and her presence is crucial to the sustenance of life and order on earth (3). Beyoncé as Oshun in her yellow dress is both violent and defending her integrity, like Murrell describes Oshun. According to Robinson,

What follows is an emergence from baptismal waters. Donning the saffron garb associated with Yoruba orisha Oshun, whose presence endures in Black Southern religious practice, Beyoncé emerges from the water un-dissembled. As such, she is both joy and rage, bringing forth more water in which the street's children can play, busting out windows with her bat Hot Sauce, and relishing a theretofore unrealized freedom to be emotionally human. (Robinson)

Robinson suggests that Beyoncé as Oshun is showing what it is to be emotionally human with feelings of both happiness and anger. The resemblance and symbolism to Oshun is evident as Beyoncé opens the doors of a mansion with masses of water streaming down the stairs, her yellow dress wet. The violent, baseball bat-swinging Beyoncé is both angry and joyful, a mixture of sadness and liberating happiness. This image of Beyoncé, according to Bowen, is “human”, whereas Cassie da Costa describes it an “imaginative work” that deals with “imperfection.” The roundtable group post writers’ take on *Hold Up* is a cathartic one, where expressing one’s feelings is seen as a positive thing. hooks does not approach *Hold Up* or the baseball-swinging Beyoncé in a similar manner as Robinson, Bowen and da Costa. To the contrary, hooks does not interpret the violent baseball scene or Beyoncé’s anger as a cathartic or human expression. In addition, hooks does not suggest that the anger or baseball bat-swinging could be an artistic expression. hooks appears to argue that *Hold Up* is promoting actual desire to destroy objects or people and glamorizes violence as pop culture commodity, rejecting da Costa’s argument about *Lemonade* being an “imaginative work”. Instead, hooks argues that

Female violence is no more liberatory than male violence. And when violence is made to look sexy and eroticized, as in the *Lemonade* sexy-dress street scene, it does not serve to undercut the prevailing cultural sentiment that it is acceptable to use violence to reinforce domination, especially in relations between men and women. Violence does not create positive change. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

hooks suggests that Beyoncé’s violence reinforces domination, and does not create positive transformation. Whereas indeed it is true that violence rarely creates positive change, there is an aspect of violence in *Lemonade* that hooks does not take into consideration. Bowen suggests that even though violence does not solve any issues constructively, hooks refuses to see how the violent

scenes may have an artistic, creative purpose. Bowen's interpretation of violence in the *Hold Up* scene relies on emotions and humanity, and moreover – realism. According to Bowen,

For example, in her reading of Beyoncé's "violent" scene in the visuals for "Hold Up" she ignores the blatant references to the orisha Oshun, and how she may have influenced Beyoncé's creative direction. Furthermore, her use of the term, "glamorize" betrays a blind spot that fails to recognize Beyoncé's humanity. Not sure about you, but I've definitely felt a desire to let people who have hurt me catch these hands. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"*)

This notion by Bowen also relates to the universality of *Lemonade's* message. When on the other hand *Lemonade* speaks very specifically to Black women, it also speaks to all women around the world due to the themes of betrayal, deception and being hurt by one's partner. Bowen's suggestion implies that there is something universal and human about anger too – rage and violence are not constructive feelings, but they are human in the sense that all people experience them. Also, expressing anger and rage is not constructive, but it is relatable and part of the human experience. In addition, expressing violence and anger in one's art also has a cathartic nature to it, both to the artist and the audience. However, hooks does not see Beyoncé's expression of anger towards her man as liberating or cathartic, but instead characterizes the violence as a "celebration of rage." In hooks's words,

Among the many mixed messages embedded in *Lemonade* is this celebration of rage. Smug and smiling in her golden garb, Beyoncé is the embodiment of a fantastical female power, which is just that—pure fantasy. (*Moving Beyond Pain*)

In addition, instead of describing Beyoncé's anger as liberating with a mixture of joy and sadness, hooks describes it as "smug." Bowen suggests that

Viewers/listeners relate to the very real and very human emotion of feeling so hurt and angry that violence manifests itself as a thought. Despite the undeniable glamour of Beyoncé, to argue that revealing the complexities of her emotions equates to a glamorization of violence is a gross oversimplification. (*A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain"*)

This is a crucial difference between hooks and the roundtable group post: hooks seems not to find any reasons where violence, or even the fantasy of violence, could be justified, whereas the group post writers want to draw attention to the emotional reaction a person experiences when faced with betrayal. Beyoncé's violent baseball bat-swinging rampage can be interpreted both as an actual desire to cause violence to men, or as an artistic utopia where even the ugliest emotions are not forbidden and are expressed freely.

According to Arceneaux, hooks, who has called Beyoncé a terrorist in a recorded interview, is wrong to complain about female violence in *Lemonade* due to her own use of violent language. Arceneaux suggests that because Beyoncé's public image is so "controlled", there is "something to be said about her allowing herself to publicly show that level of anger." Thus Arceneaux also views Beyoncé's violence as an artistic expression.

hooks argues that even though the violence in *Lemonade* is made to look sexy and eroticized, it does not serve to dismantle the current cultural sentiment that violence is an acceptable form of domination. "Violence does not create positive change", hooks argues. While it is evident that violence does not promote change in a safe and positive way in the real world, hooks does not consider or problematize the difference between art and reality. In art, feelings and thoughts that are not acceptable in everyday life, can be portrayed and exposed in a safe way. It can be argued that *Lemonade* does not promote or glorify violence, but uses it in images and words to convey messages through art. Furthermore, the violence in *Lemonade* is not specifically targeted towards a particular person. Moreover, the bursts of anger and violence can be interpreted as expressing feelings that manifest themselves in violent images and lyrics, instead of asserting dominance. hooks views this as glamorizing violence, whereas Bowen suggests that "revealing the complexities of her emotions equates to a glamorization of violence is a gross oversimplification." This is a friction that hooks and the roundtable group post writers disagree on, and there is no common ground around this debate because the interpretations of Beyoncé's motifs for violence in *Lemonade* are so different.

There are other violence-related themes in *Lemonade* that neither hooks nor the group post writers touch on. *Lemonade* discusses and manifests violence in both subtle and unsubtle manners, which all relate to the Black woman's experience in the context of American history. Violence in *Lemonade* is not limited to Beyoncé smashing car windows with her baseball bat as the deity Oshun. What neither hooks nor the group post writers do not address is Beyoncé's commentary on police brutality towards Black people and her support to the Black Lives Matter movement. In the American society, to African-Americans, police is a threatening force instead of a protecting one. This is commented in *Lemonade* with two images: the first is Beyoncé sinking to the water on top of a police car, and the second one with the small African-American boy raising his hands to an armed line of policemen. In the same scene, a graffiti with words "Stop shooting us" appears on the screen.

The history of Black women in the United States is itself violent due to slavery, and it is manifested in the images of Beyoncé's audio-visual album. Examples of this violence, or the memory or echo of violence, are powerful. Black women sitting on giant southern lynching trees or spending a sunny day on a slave plantation in embellished antebellum dresses connects the violent past of African-Americans in the United States to the dream-like world of *Lemonade*, where women have total control over their lives and bodies.

In conclusion it can be suggested that the discussion about violence in *Lemonade* between hooks and the roundtable group post is concentrated on whether Beyoncé glorifies violence or not. Furthermore, the main question raised by the group post suggests that hooks is not able to distinguish artistic expression from the real world; according to several group post writers hooks does not view the world of *Lemonade* as an utopia or an artistic construct, but appears to see *Lemonade's* world parallel to reality. Several of the group post writers find hooks's interpretation of *Lemonade's* violence extremely literal. Indeed, hooks does leave the reader with an impression that she does not observe *Lemonade* as an imaginative art work at all. Furthermore, just like in the case of commodity, hooks holds Beyoncé morally responsible for showcasing violence in a manner that "promotes it instead of trying to move beyond pain."

Violence is not a carrying or permanent theme in *Lemonade*, and it is present on the beginning of the album and music videos. The climax of violence happens during *Hold Up* and *Don't Hurt Yourself*, when Beyoncé is portrayed at her most violent, both physically and verbally. Beyoncé portrays herself as imperfect in *Lemonade*, and calls herself out in the song *Hold Up*: "What's worse, looking jealous or crazy, jealous or crazy?" is certainly not a flattering self-analysis, especially when accompanied with a baseball bat ironically named *Hot Sauce*.

A key point of friction in the debate about violence is the motif behind Beyoncé's violence. hooks points out that violence does not solve anything, which is true both in the general sense and also in *Lemonade*: the violence in *Lemonade* is not a route to anything, it is merely a violent outburst of feelings. Therefore hooks's main argument is that because the violence in *Lemonade* does not solve anything and it has no clear purpose, the pop culture imagery and carefully crafted, commercial backdrop is there to merely "glamorize" the violent acts. On the other hand, the group post writers do not approach violence in *Lemonade* as literally as hooks does: A recurring theme in the group post responses is that while violence itself is not a source of positivity, venting out violent fantasies through art is a positive way to channel and manifest emotions since no one is harmed.

The Beyoncé of *Lemonade* does not attempt to be perfect or polished. Imperfect people often have unhealthy thoughts and feelings, such as randomly smashing other people's car windows in anger. This is truly a relatable imaginary scenario to anyone, man or woman, who has felt betrayed, cheated on or lied to by their partner. To many people, Beyoncé smashing car windows is a description of a situation many of us have at some point in our lives dreamed of, yet never executed.

5 Discussion: Research positionality and intersectionality

As a White, Western woman, the majority of the culture I consume and purchase is designed to please me. I relate to the art I view on a personal level and the people I watch on television and films look like me, talk like me and act like me. *Lemonade* is different. I can relate to the anguish of betrayal in a relationship, but I can never relate to the history of oppression, colorism, racism and discrimination against Black women in the American society. I cannot relate to the dialect, the underlying references to Black culture, and the communal experience of sharing and being a Black woman in the United States. I often think of the moment when I experienced being in a minority for the first time. This happened in 2009 when I travelled on the New York subway from midtown Manhattan to the Bronx. By the time the train reached Harlem, I was the only White person in the subway cart. It was a baffling experience, and a moment I have reached back to during the writing process of my thesis. With this in mind, I wanted to include a section in my thesis that discusses the themes of research positionality from the viewpoint of intersectionality. Throughout this writing process it has become clearer that being aware of my position and intersectional attributes does matter, and it should matter more to students and staff at universities.

Including this section in the thesis was important to me. Having familiarized myself with intersectional theory through studies in sociology and gender studies, I had been increasingly thinking about my role and responsibilities as a researcher when I decided to write my thesis on Beyoncé and the Black feminist debate about feminism in *Lemonade*. In discussion of the researcher's responsibility, it is considered important to think about honesty, visibility and the aspiration to report things as they are. During the last few years, I have thought about my studies in English Philology from the viewpoint of positionality. As a White, Finnish woman, there have not been many moments when I have felt it necessary to discuss positionality, or even realized that it may influence the way I conduct research and form opinions. Not until recently have I thought about my position in relation to others, since I considered myself as an open-minded, tolerant, accepting and liberal person with an academic education. I did not think that positionality mattered, but I simply did not understand how one's

background shapes the way one views the world. For the most part, I suggest, it is a question of intersectional attributes that are given to us by chance. In addition, as a Western woman with an academic education, I have been granted with power and privilege that majority of people in the world do not possess.

This section of the thesis aims at discussing the analysis section by paying attention to research positionality and intersectional theory. Recognizing intersectionality in a cultural studies topic that discusses race, racism and feminism of the minorities provides a tool for the researcher to pay particular attention to their own position and gaze of observing the world. Although the researcher by default always aims at objective and honest research, the researcher nevertheless examines the research topic from their own, personal viewpoint. The attributes, be they gender, race, class or sexual orientation, have an impact on the way one observes the world, other people and phenomena. Even though it is not possible for any researcher to step outside their mind and body to examine themselves from the outside, the researcher can still be aware of their own position and how it affects the research process, interpretations and conclusions. According to Leavy et al.,

Focusing on our own positionality within the research process helps to break down the idea that research is the “view from nowhere.” We are also reminded of the many ways our own agendas impact the research process at all points in our research—from the selection of the research problem to the selection of method and the ways in which we analyze and interpret our findings—which is crucial for creating authenticity in the research process. Representation is part of a process and is imbued with power and authority. (Introduction, xxx)

By examining their research positionality, the researcher recognizes and becomes aware of their position and how their social, ethnic, cultural and religious background might have an unintentional influence on their thoughts, conclusions and work. As Leavy et al. suggest, it is about understanding that research does not happen in a vacuum, and that there are many ways in which the researchers’ personal agendas have an impact on how one conducts research and observes topics. Naturally, an agenda does not indicate that it is something negative or harmful; merely that everyone has

attributes and factors that contribute to the way in which one views the world. Brian Bourke argues that

To achieve a pure objectivism is a naïve quest, and we can never truly divorce ourselves of subjectivity. We can strive to remain objective but must be ever mindful of our subjectivities. Such is positionality. We have to acknowledge who we are as individuals, and as members of groups, and as resting in and moving within social positions. (3)

Bourke's argument supports Leavy et al., as Bourke suggests that a researcher cannot separate themselves of subjectivity. Nevertheless, even if a researcher is able to write and conduct research at a highly objective level, there are issues that the researcher cannot wash away from their researcher persona. Ethnic background, sex, gender and social status shape human beings from the minute we are born on this planet, and even if we aim towards objectivity all our lives, we are still products of our background. Furthermore, we can never really understand or feel issues that we have not ourselves experienced, even if we studied them extensively for years.

This is something that I have come to realize when studying topics that discuss race and cultures that are viewed from the perspective of whiteness. I am White by ethnicity, so my experience and the way I look at things have been shaped through that lens, whether I want it or not. Even though I am interested in hip-hop culture, Black culture, African-American history, the history of sexual minorities in the United States and Black feminism, I have come to realize that I will always be an outsider, both as an academic and as an individual. This does not mean that one cannot conduct research on these topics, but I argue that it requires more awareness on power structures, how intersectionality works and how my whiteness, privilege and position have an impact on my researcher gaze, and positionality. Bourke writes about studying race as a White man:

As a White man, what does it mean to critically examine issues of race? Heading Freire (2000), I have to be careful that I do not attempt to speak for research participants who are people of color, that I do not attempt to work on their behalf to help them rise up. According to Freire, such efforts on my part would in fact be counter-liberating, as my

position situates me as an oppressor. In order to be an ally and advocate, my work has to reflect the voices of those who participate in research. (3)

Bourke writes about being an ally and an advocate, which are words that have been used in discussion about racism and cultural appropriation in public discussion during the past couple of years. Instead of attempting to explain issues on behalf of e.g. ethnic minority groups, an ally is there to listen, support and help. In academic research, I have at times felt that White researchers, myself included, who for example study topics that discuss cultures that are not in the position of power, are sometimes praised and credited for "giving a voice" on an important issue that would not "otherwise be paid attention to." We are given the idea that such a topic would not be noticed or important without the help of a White researcher, who has shone light on the topic by choice. I am not suggesting that the majority of White researchers take on a topic to play the White Savior or to gain some kind of minority acceptance credits, but that it is an omnipresent undercurrent that has to be made visible. Moreover, the topic is delicate, challenging to notice and requires constant awareness.

I find the idea of "giving a voice" extremely problematic. It can be argued that an underlying thought is that as a researcher, conducting research on minority groups – based on gender, race or ethnic background – one is able to bring awareness and "give voice" to a particular group's struggles or issues. The problem with such thought pattern is the disproportion of power, which is directly linked to intersectional theory. There is someone who allegedly does not have a voice, and someone who has a voice and is able to give it to the other person. In the case of this research topic the thought pattern of giving a voice could be the following: A White, Western woman decides to conduct research on a topic that discusses Black feminist thought and race issues in America. The topic is not popular or mainstream, but when the White researcher takes on the topic and writes about it, the topic becomes interesting and "something that has not been conducted research on before". For example, the Danish professor Erik Steinskog at Copenhagen University made news headlines when the media discovered that he was teaching a course called "Beyoncé, Gender and Race" at the university. In an interview to BBC, Steinskog told the following:

One of the goals is to introduce Black feminist thought, which is not very well known in Scandinavia. Beyoncé is important in understanding the world we live in. [She] is one of the biggest pop artists today, which makes her important in an analysis of contemporary times. I am taking the discussion from the US to Europe. It makes it possible to discuss theoretical issues and say, “Do they look different from a European perspective? What do you think about when you think about race?” (BBC)

Although Steinskog gave a statement that clearly indicates that he has deep understanding of Black feminist thought and intersectionality, his position reveals itself when he claims that he is “taking the discussion from the US to Europe.” I doubt an intersectional university course would have never made headlines if a Black woman was teaching about Beyoncé at a university and attempted to raise awareness on Black feminist theory and issues. Steinskog is a White, Western man, and his position gives him space, power and affluence.

hooks has written extensively about patriarchy and the patriarchal system; the topic was discussed in the analysis section of this thesis. As a researcher of this topic, I have had to become aware of the reality that as a White, Western woman I also benefit from the patriarchal system, and that to a large extent I enjoy and make use of the privileges that whiteness and being Western provide me. Other women, due to disadvantages such as ethnicity, race, sexual orientation or social class, make them more vulnerable and disadvantaged in the context of patriarchy, and place them in a position where they do not have access to the same power and position that I have as a White, Western woman. This is not a White man’s burden, but a conscious realization of how privilege impacts not only what we do in our personal lives, but how these structures have shaped and continue to shape our worldview in a profound manner.

I have to be aware that while I very well might have solid, fact-based information about the history and current state of Black feminism, racism, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, I am in no way capable of analyzing the thoughts and feelings of people who actually experience these things in their daily lives. In addition, I am in no way capable of understanding or wholly interpreting how an art work that discusses these themes impacts people

who can relate to the art due to their own ethnicity or social background. Sophisticated guesses can become statements when they are not assessed through the lens of intersectional research positionality. It can be argued that although research on topics that discusses cultures, phenomena or people from a position of privilege are not blind-spotted like this on purpose. When the researcher does not pay attention to their position and how it affects the way they observe the world around them, their position has an impact on the way they observe their study topic.

In the end, I suggest that this has to do with understanding nuances in researcher positionality. Underlying nuances have to be taken into consideration, and one has to question how thought patterns and interpretations are born. For example, if I do not evaluate myself consciously, I am not able to recognize and understand how my intersectional attributes impact the way I think and conduct research. I observe and interpret things from the viewpoint of my own culture and background. I am White, European and a female, which instantly places me at the top of the privilege chain. Nevertheless, I am interested in hip-hop feminism, Black feminism and intersectionality, and they are a part of my personal narrative as well. I have the privilege of both enjoying the benefits of my White, Western background and spending my time conducting research on an album that discusses the oppression of Black women in America. As much as I sympathize, listen and attempt to understand, I am still an outsider who has the privilege of observing the phenomena from the safety of my whiteness.

From an intersectional viewpoint, a White, middle-classed woman analyzing Black feminist essays and texts provides challenges that I am certainly not guilty of, but should be aware of. If we observe this phenomenon from an intersectional viewpoint, my position and privileges as a White, Western researcher places me in the same continuum of Western academics and writers who have been able to conduct research on any topic they find interesting. Before White, Western women had access to education, academic essays had been written by White men for centuries. Although I face disadvantages that White men do not face in society, I am nevertheless in a more privileged position because of my ethnicity than, Black women, for example. This position has given me a certain power

and status that is not something I should feel personally guilty about but should definitely be aware and cautious of when conducting research.

Often, when discussing research positionality, a certain question arises: Who has the right to conduct research on a particular topic? Academic research is objective, so all topics and interests of observations must be equally accessible to anyone who wishes to conduct research on them. I agree with this statement, and I suggest that the answer to conducting research about anything lies in recognizing your own research positionality. For example, when a culture or a phenomenon that is not the norm (in other words, non-Western, non-White, non-heterosexual) is approached as an exotic novelty and is interpreted without understanding, the research positionality can be blinded by privileges. This was a challenge for me during the analysis process of my thesis. Positioning myself to examine and observe the material without being overly intrusive in interpreting Black culture and falling into the trap of the white gaze was difficult, and I was very aware of each statement and observation I wanted to present about the discussion between hooks and the roundtable group post. To an extent, I think that it made my analysis a bit restricted and I did not write and observe as freely as I would have with another topic.

In addition to being a White, Western woman, another attribute that can have an impact on my research positionality is being a massive fan of Beyoncé. This was an attribute that I did not recognize immediately. Being such a long-time admirer of Beyoncé's music and art, I noticed that at times I was positioning myself strongly to support the writers of the group post writers instead of hooks. I am not sure if this is because of me being a fan of Beyoncé and her music, or because I intellectually and academically had come to the conclusion that hooks's arguments were at many times irrational and disproportional. I was surprised about how much I wanted to defend Beyoncé in my arguments, although I feel I succeeded rather well in analyzing the texts from both sides of the spectrum. On the other hand, I was encouraged to voice my own opinions in the analysis, which I also did. In voicing my own thoughts about hooks's text and the group post, I tried to be aware of both being a White, Western woman, and being a fan of Beyoncé. This was challenging, yet very interesting and fruitful.

Writing about my privileges was surprisingly difficult. Writing this section, I felt at times ashamed. I also felt that I was preaching or pointing a finger at whiteness. A voice inside my head was constantly throwing counter-arguments at me: I am not guilty of being White, I am not guilty of my position and privileges. I find it liberating when I have come to understand that while I am not guilty of my privileges, I have to embrace how my privileges impact the way I observe the world, and I have to conduct research with that thought process in mind. My passion to understand structures in society and what role gender, race and other attributes have in all of this have brought me to this point. It is challenging to write about my position, because it is unusual in an academic context. I have not been taught to write about this topic academically, and this is the first time I am attempting to articulate my thoughts about my research position. Although I have never done this before during my studies, this analytical tool would have been useful in writing my bachelor's thesis, for example. I conducted my bachelor's thesis on religious lyrics in house music. In the thesis I also discussed race and sexual orientation in the American society, this time focusing on the African-American and Latino gay communities that gave birth to house music in New York and Chicago in the 1970s.

In conclusion, I feel that including the aspect of research positionality in my thesis has been the most rewarding and precious part of the thesis-writing journey. Examining myself, my thought process and research personality has taught me not only to self-reflect, but also to be respectful and aware of my position in relation to others. Furthermore, this process has given me practical tools that I am already using in my current position as a Communications Specialist.

I argue that discussing intersectionality, privilege and positionality should be done more at universities and institutions of higher education. Furthermore, I argue that the discussion should be started earlier in secondary and upper secondary school. In the future, I would like to see more students of all fields of study having a general idea on how their position affects the way they observe the world, conduct research and function in work life. I suggest that these are skills that everyone, not just humanists, need to understand in order to work and communicate in the world of globalization.

Examples of recognizing one's privileges can be found from my university, where the Sámi students recently faced death threats and racist slurs for speaking out on what they felt was cultural appropriation towards their traditions. Based on the ignorant backlash from some of my fellow students it seems to me that all of us could benefit from understanding cultures, understanding privilege and understanding power structures in society and between cultures.

In an imagined future reality, we do not need intersectional theory, feminism or awareness on researcher positionality. In an equal utopia, everyone comes from the same place of opportunities, power, chances and acceptance. Unfortunately, I fear this will not be a reality for a long time. I also want to point out that me discussing my privileges here does not make me a saint, a better thesis writer or a person. What I feel this process has given me is a better understanding of how privileges influence me and the way I think. In addition, I am glad that I was able to discover this way of approaching research before my master's studies came to an end, since I feel I will greatly benefit professionally of being able to analyze the world with an intersectional approach in mind.

6 Conclusion: “How I have missed you, my love”

On April 14, 2018, a few days before the conclusion of this thesis was written, Beyoncé gave her first performance since the birth of her twin babies in 2017. Performing at the Coachella Culture and Arts Festival in California, Beyoncé had crafted a two-hour show with a hundred-member marching band, dance squad and choir, consisting exclusively of Black performers. Beyoncé was the first Black woman to ever headline at Coachella, and commented at the beginning of her show: “Thank you Coachella for allowing be to be the first Black woman to headline. Ain’t that ‘bout a bitch?” (Izadi Elahe). She performed all of her biggest hits, including several songs from *Lemonade*. The show was drenched in Black culture and history; one of the most political parts of the show was Beyoncé singing *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, which is known as the Black national anthem, and then transitioning to sing *Formation* from *Lemonade*, which is an energetic celebration of Black culture and heritage. It can be argued that with her Coachella performance Beyoncé proved that she is continuing to “explore what blackness means to her through her music and performances” (Joi-Marie McKenzie). This performance, which was made two years after the publication of *Lemonade*, showcases that Beyoncé will probably not shy away from discussing race, blackness and feminism in her upcoming artistic endeavors. Two years after the publication of *Lemonade*, its themes, images and message are still current and visible in Beyoncé’s work.

The theoretical background material laid the groundwork for the analysis section of the thesis. The theoretical background supported the analysis section by providing tools to understand feminism as a phenomenon better, and to offer a deeper understanding on how Black feminist theory has developed, and how it manifests itself in the discussion between hooks and the roundtable group post. In addition, mirroring the theoretical framework of intersectional theory with my personal journey as a researcher provided a frame for conducting self-reflective analysis on my research positionality.

The first aim of the thesis was to analyze the discussion between bell hooks's *Lemonade* essay *Moving Beyond Pain* and the counter commentaries of *A Black feminist roundtable on bell hooks, Beyoncé and "Moving Beyond Pain."* The analysis particularly focused on comparing bell hooks's arguments with the roundtable group post by examining differences of perception and possible similarities. Furthermore, in addition to discussing the friction between hooks and the roundtable group post, the analysis also aimed at connecting the discussion to *Lemonade's* themes and discuss the phenomenon further.

The second aim of the thesis was to conduct a discussion about my experience as the researcher of this thesis, and particularly focus on research positionality from an intersectional point of view. In the discussion section of the thesis, I examined how the research process was impacted by being aware of my own position as a writer, as well as mirroring my thoughts and interpretations through intersectional theory. The discussion also brought out what challenges arise in the writing process when a White, Western female researcher attempts to be aware and write out her privileges and the ways in which those privileges can have an impact on the way she interprets and examines an academic topic. The research positionality analysis helped and guided me also during the analysis process of the thesis, and proved to be the most fruitful and thought-provoking section of the writing process. Assessing my research positionality brought additional value to the thesis by showcasing that being aware of one's position and privileges in research does matter, and that the researcher is able to find new dimensions in their thinking by taking intersectional theory into consideration.

Based on the analysis it could be suggested that the friction between hooks and the roundtable group post is related to both the feminist wave gap between hooks and the roundtable group post writers, as well as personal interpretations of an work of art. The main friction between hooks and the roundtable group post centers around what *Lemonade* should have achieved in the context of Black feminist movement.

hooks is right when she argues that *Lemonade* does not solve anything: this is completely true. However, it can be suggested that hooks is the only one who has demanded that *Lemonade* should have solved anything. Dismantling patriarchal structures has not happened to this day, and while Beyoncé certainly has become a poster woman for feminism worldwide, she is not capable of dismantling patriarchy with a dozen music videos.

A different approach to *Lemonade* is this: Instead of solving and dismantling patriarchy, perhaps the purpose of *Lemonade* is to liberate and to simply depict the experience of a woman who has been betrayed and goes through a process of anger that finally leads to personal reconciliation. Furthermore, even if *Lemonade* offers a commodified version of a reality, it is still a piece of art and commentary where Black women in the United States are placed in the center and brought to mainstream. It can be argued that this is valuable itself. hooks's arguments towards *Lemonade* are highly demanding, which is a theme that is repeated through each roundtable group post response. While a work of art can certainly change the world, it is unrealistic to suggest that a single work of art could accomplish such a thing. *Lemonade* is not a manual on how to end male dominance. It exposes and shares Beyoncé's personal experience that weave into the greater narrative, and to the narrative of Black women in the United States. This does not mean that *Lemonade* has to resolve, it merely showcases the reality how Beyoncé sees and experiences it.

The topic offers many possibilities for future study, as does Beyoncé as a cultural phenomenon. Beyoncé is an artist that will be researched more extensively as her already impressive career continues. Beyoncé refers to herself in her song *Formation* from *Lemonade* as "that bitch" who "causes all this conversation", which she certainly has done. She offers a fascinating and vast amount of material for anyone interested in studying cultural studies, the feminist movement and popular culture.

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