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1. Preliminary Remarks

- ¹ On April 23, 2016, with no advance advertisement, Beyoncé¹ released *Lemonade*, a complex artwork that combines and interrelates various visual and auditory media and aesthetics. It was distributed both via traditional and digital outlets. *Lemonade* is a work of popular art intertwining mass culture, technology, and the public discourse. By doing so, the album functions as a “means of social and cultural self-understanding” (Hebel 402) and as a decisive source and a shaping force of a society’s values (Fiske 43–45). The release of the album was preceded by her contested performance at the culturally significant Super Bowl halftime show in February 2016, where she challenged contemporary race relations by drawing aesthetically on the Black Panther movement. This performance and the release of *Lemonade* took place only a few months before Donald Trump became the Republican nominee, in the midst of a presidential campaign of contested visions for the United States, bringing to the fore an increasing polarization of the American cultural and political landscape. The release of *Lemonade* on the streaming network Tidal (co-owned by Beyoncé) was accompanied by the HBO screening of a “visual album”² that features Beyoncé’s songs in the form of video clips which are connected through narrated passages of the poetry by the British-Somali poet Warsan Shire. The release of the album was followed by individual singles and her Formation World Tour (between April and October 2016). The hard copy of *Lemonade* contains a music album with twelve songs, a booklet with production stills of every chapter of the visual album, and the visual album itself, which will be the main focus of analysis in this article. Through the publication of this transmedial, intramedial, and

intermedial artwork, Beyoncé created a sensation that not only boosted the sales of her album but also enabled her to make a statement on contemporary political issues.

- 2 All forms of publication of *Lemonade* were aimed at a global audience that watched her performances live, via internet streaming providers, or on TV. Therefore, it is vital to look at intermediality in this artwork “against the backdrop of [its] medial networks” (Rippl 1). *Lemonade*, as a work of popular culture, is an artwork that is “not narrowly intellectual or creatively elitist and ... generally though not necessarily disseminated through the mass media ..., [it] consists of the spoken and printed word, sounds, pictures, objects and artifacts” and is therefore genuinely intermedial (Browne 11). Additionally, because of processes of digitalization and an increasing global interconnectedness, the time difference between performance, digital dissemination, and meta-discourse on social media has almost reached simultaneity. This synchronicity between performance and reception intensifies the connection between Beyoncé and her audience and thus increases her cultural power. Beyoncé’s popularity, creativity, and entrepreneurial talent enable her to influence the public discourse and weigh in on political issues. With *Lemonade* she uses her clout³ to speak out on the African American experience of discrimination and suffered injustices in the past and the present, and particularly the experience of African American women. At the same time, she portrays her own success story as the realization of the American Dream accomplished through hard work, sacrifices, and resilience. The reactions to *Lemonade* by liberal media and from within the music industry were overwhelmingly positive, claiming that she made African American women again the center of a southern regional culture and historiography (e.g. Robinson n.p.).⁴ Conservative outlets, however, criticized her for its explicit language and depicted violence (Ozzi, n.p.).
- 3 It is the argument of this article that *Lemonade* is a highly interconnected intermedial collage, interrelating visual and auditory dimensions, various media, genres, and visual and musical aesthetics. The nexus between music, singing, dance, and performance art, and the juxtaposition of absence and presence of both sound and vision lies in the embodied performance of Beyoncé and the singers in visually significant and recurring locations. I define “embodied performance” as an artistic performance that is tied to a specific spatio-temporal situation but also relies on the corporeality of the artist—in Beyoncé’s case being an African American female artist from the American south—for processes of signification, e.g. in the form of specific gestures, hair styles, or dresses. The performance as art form is thus overlaid with a subversive impetus that stems from performative acts that produce and shape reality (Butler, Hempfer). This layered constellation of intermedial references fulfills a number of functions: Firstly, intermedial references are a means of cohesion that are responsible for the unified character of the visual album. Secondly, intermedial references result in a transcultural signature of the artwork. Thirdly, through intermedial references Beyoncé locates *Lemonade* within the cultural history of the United States and American music history in particular. Finally, intermediality acquires cultural-critical functions which in particular pertain to experiences of discrimination by people of color in the US.
- 4 In her previous work Beyoncé has proven that she is not only an excellent singer but a performance artist, as she traverses between musical and performing art genres, e.g. in *Carmen: A Hip Hopera* (McCarthy 17, Trier-Bienieck) in which the musical genres of Hip Hop and of opera, both having strong performative dimensions, are brought together. In the visual album *Lemonade*, there is no clear hierarchical relationship between

auditory and visual dimensions. Therefore, instead of assuming an approach that takes the literary or visual as a starting point, the following analysis is interested in a more balanced and comparative approach that focuses on the intricate relations and the interplay between word, music, visuality, and performativity. From a theoretical and methodological point of view, intermediality will be used in a very broad sense to “refer[] to the relationships between media and is hence used to describe a huge range of cultural phenomena which involve more than one medium” (Rippl 2). Analyzing the intermedial dimensions in particular of a work as complex as *Lemonade* allows for a better understanding of the relationships and functional spectrum of auditory and visual dimensions, their materiality and ephemerality, notions of production, textual aesthetic and conditions of synaesthetic experience by the recipient. However, it also allows to explore the boundaries of traditional interpretive frameworks of intermediality when applied to multilayered intermedial constellations.

2. Intermediality: Theoretical Perspectives

- 5 Since the 1980s, intermediality has served as a theoretical framework that can be productively applied to the constellations between various media and art forms and references across media boundaries. It enables us to investigate and improve our understanding of the meaning-making processes entailed in a given cultural configuration both from diachronic and synchronic perspectives, e.g. in works of literature, visual artworks, performance art, or music. Research on intermedial practices is particularly conclusive as it determines “how people communicate: with one another, with the past, with others” (Bal 169).
- 6 At the same time, Rippl makes us aware of the fact that the question of how to define “intermediality” and its foundational concept “medium” depends on the research question, the theoretical approach, and the cultural phenomenon under investigation (Rippl 2). A definition of media as “the production and distribution as well as the storing and reception of signs” will be used here, as it focuses on the “need[] to be linked back to the social and material dimension of media” (Emden and Rippl 8). Beyoncé’s success is not least the result of her understanding “that media do not simply carry signs, that is, they are not simply the tools of communication; rather, they are themselves signs, both in their symbolic and their material dimension” (Emden and Ripp 8). *Lemonade* can be described with both Grišakova and Ryan’s as well as Wolf’s definitions of intermediality; for the former, intermediality comprises both “any kind of relation between different media” and “the participation of more than one medium—or sensory channel—in a given work” (Grišakova and Ryan 3). Wolf conceptualizes intermediality as the “direct or indirect participation of more than one medium in the signification and/or structure of a given semiotic entity (a ‘work’), an involvement that must be verifiable within this entity” (Wolf 2015 460).
- 7 Wolf and Rajewsky have proposed concepts and subcategorizations for intermediality that allow for a systematization and description of the relationships between various art forms in *Lemonade*. Firstly, Rajewsky defines “media combination,” as “a communicative-semiotic concept, based on the combination of at least two medial forms of articulation” (phenomena that Wolf would term “multi- or plurimediality”) (Rajewsky 53; Wolf 2005 255). Secondly, “media transposition” is in her model “the transformation of a given media product... or of its substratum into another medium.”

Finally, “intermedial reference” means the imitation or evocation of a medium in another medium. Wolf integrated these three forms of intermediality into a larger framework in which intermediality (that involves the crossing of media boundaries) exists alongside intramediality (for relationships within the same medium), e.g. when a work of music refers to another musical piece. “Transmediality” then refers to phenomena that exist irrespective of their medial manifestation, e.g. irony or narrativity (Wolf 2014 20–25). *Lemonade* is a complex plurimedial artwork that combines and interrelates various art forms, e.g. instrumental music, vocal music, spoken language, dance, choreography, performance art, photography, documentary film, television, music videos, or home videos. Further, it combines various musical traditions and genres—e.g. Hip Hop, RnB, pop music, country, blues, reggae, or jazz—, visual styles, and aesthetics. The above introduced concepts of intermediality allow for an investigation on these various levels.

- 8 An intermedial angle lends itself to the investigation of *Lemonade* due to its performative dimension and its material manifestation in a filmic medium. Connecting to the argument of this article, in particular the performing arts, as Georgi claims, have the quality to integrate every other art and medium (530). This too, as Straumann has it, holds for film as a “synthetic medium which devours and transforms other arts and media together with their respective iconographic traditions and techniques—a process that renders film an intermedial form of expression from the start” (Straumann 251). Already Aristotle was aware of the significance of the correlation between the multimedial character of the performance of a tragedy and its affective dimension. The impact of an artwork on the one hand relies on the quality of the performance. On the other hand, in a more general sense, the artwork “produces” a certain situation and thus impacts the discourses that shape communities and societies, shapes and shifts their values, norms, and political agendas.

3. Functions of Intermedial Constellations in Beyoncé's *Lemonade*

- 9 The DVD with the visual album, titled “Visual,” opens with the menu and the options to either “PLAY ALL” or “CHAPTER SELECTION,” the former resulting in the playing of the whole album in a chronological order, the latter option leading hypermedially to two further screens that allow for the choosing of individual chapters. This paratextual menu frame is underlaid with the looped theme of the song “Formation” that Beyoncé performed at the Super Bowl. The album is structured into 24 parts: “*Intuition*,” “Pray You Catch Me,” “*Denial*,” “Hold Up,” “*Anger*,” “Don’t Hurt Yourself,” “*Apathy*,” “Sorry,” “*Emptiness*,” “6 Inch,” “*Accountability*,” “Daddy Lessons,” “*Reformation*,” “Love Drought,” “*Forgiveness*,” “Sandcastles,” “*Resurrection*,” “Forward,” “*Hope*,” “Freedom,” “*Redemption*,” “All Night,” and “Formation.” As 24th part, the album ends with an extensive credits section that lists the people who participated in the production of *Lemonade*. The italicized titles in the above list refer to chapters between songs that consist of filmic images featuring as a voice-over Beyoncé reciting texts that are based on poems by the British-Somali poet Warsan Shire. These texts, according to Hess, are “the backbone of Beyoncé’s album and its exploration of family, infidelity, and the black female body” (Hess n.p.). These chapters between songs thus interrelate Warsan Shire’s poetry with songs and performances by Beyoncé. Even though all songs have a

distinct character, they are interlinked by themes, visual and auditory leitmotifs, and symbols. Also, the performative elements in various recurring settings function as means of cohesion between the individual chapters. The visual album then has—in opposition to the music album—a dramaturgy that derives from the constellation between the songs and the lyrical, spoken passages that add an affective dimension by either referring to or evoking emotional responses. In order to allow for a better understanding of the compositional practices, I will, in the following, describe and analyze the structure of and intermedial constellations in the first four chapters.

- 10 Visuality, performance, and the auditory dimension are integral parts of *Lemonade*. In opposition to the music album that only contains the music tracks, in the visual album various media in different constellations create cohesive forces that are integral for processes of signification. Instead of assuming a hierarchical relationship or the dominance of one medium, in *Lemonade* the entanglement between various medialities rather assume a notion of interdependency and interrelation through either discrepancy or congruence (Wenzel 9). The album draws on itself and is intricately interrelated through proleptic and analeptic visual and auditory references that result in its coherence. The individual parts of the album are interlinked by the embodied performances of Beyoncé and the dancers in various settings which become soundscapes that vary in loudness, ranging from almost silence at the beginning of the album, when we only hear the rustling of the wind, to the yelled lyrics of “Don’t Hurt Yourself” that are accompanied by powerful instrumentalization.
- 11 The first chapter, “Intuition,” begins with a montage of Beyoncé in settings that recur throughout the visual album: A parking garage that is also the background of the album’s front cover, a plantation home and its natural surroundings, a dilapidated fort that is surrounded by tall grass (a remainder of the wars fought in the South of the US), and, significantly, a stage with a red curtain and a row of footlights. This visual montage is complemented by a soundscape that also recurs throughout the album: a threatening metallic sound in the parking garage, the wind and the chirping of birds in the black and white plantation setting, the rustling of the wind and the tall grass surrounding the fort. The sounds of nature are superseded by vocal music when, during a pan shot of tall grass, a women’s ensemble starts singing individual staccato notes which culminate in a musical pause. The next images show Beyoncé walking through the tall grass outside the fort. Then, the filmic images show a red curtain, the camera tilts down and captures Beyoncé sitting between the curtain and the row of footlights. Only at this point, more than one minute into the album, the song “Pray You Catch Me” begins (1:04). After the first verse and the chorus, this song about trust and betrayal in a romantic relationship is interrupted by a narrated passage. This sequence begins with a black and white shot at the roots of trees with Spanish moss and a wooden cabin behind a plantation house which is overlaid with the word “Intuition” (01:59) in white, cursive letters. This setting has been already alluded to during the chorus when women in antebellum clothing stand in a brick tunnel of the fort. The view onto the plantation setting is again accompanied by the sound of wind and birds. Beyoncé then recites the following:

I tried to make a home out of you, but doors lead to trap doors, a stairway leads to nothing. Unknown women wander the hallways at night. Where do you go when you go quiet? You remind me of my father, a magician, able to exist in two places at once. In the tradition of men in my blood, you come home at 3 a.m. and lie to me.

What are you hiding? The past and the future merge to meet us here. What luck.
What a fucking curse. (2:05–3:14)

- 12 Only after this passage—the first instance of Warsan Shire's poetry in the form of a voice-over—the song "Pray You Catch Me" sets in again. It ends with Beyoncé standing on a high rise at night in front of billboards with illuminated advertising. The sequence sung by the women's choir that leads into the song is repeated and culminates in her falling down from the building. Instead of crashing into the concrete however, she falls into a bedroom filled with water. The view of her submerged body, illuminated from behind, is overlaid with the word "Denial," the title of the third chapter in which the spoken words thematize the speaker's efforts to conform to the wishes of a male other who could be a romantic partner but who is also described with the characteristics of a deity: "I tried to change. Closed my mouth more, tried to be softer, prettier, less awake. Fasted for 60 days, wore white, abstained from mirrors, abstained from sex, slowly did not speak another word.... Went to the basement, confessed my sins, and was baptized in a river. I got on my knees and said 'Amen' and said 'I mean'" (4:29–5:40).
- 13 Visual and verbal processes of signification overlap in various instances with the spoken words, e.g. when Beyoncé's body is visually doubled as she says "mirror," or when the word "abstinence" is matched with the view of the bed, or, when the camera shows a bible floating in the water as she says "I grew thickened skin on my feet, I bathed in bleach, and plugged my menses with pages from the holy book" (5:57–6:06). The themes of religiosity and spirituality are resumed in the first frame of the next chapter, the song "Hold Up." It is a view onto the staircase of a house with double doors that are opened from the inside by Beyoncé, only to release a torrent of built-up water that runs down the white stairs. "Hold Up" is another song about infidelity, the lack of trust, and the suspicion of being betrayed. The lyrics also express the feeling of being measured by standards impossible to fulfill. The aggressiveness of the lyrics is matched by the visuals of the clip: Holding a baseball bat, Beyoncé destroys a hydrant and numerous cars that are parked on the street; finally, she strikes against the camera. As the camera seems to fall to the ground, the color scheme changes from bright colors to black and white. At this point, there is an abrupt switch to the melody of a music box playing the theme of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* that accompanies a destructive rampage with a monster truck that runs over and crushes a line of cars. While the music box is still audible and, in combination to the violent images, creates an eerie atmosphere that seems almost gothic, the visuals change to a parading marching band followed by cheerleaders in a run-down inner cityscape. This collage of the sound of a music box and the footage of the marching band is overlaid with the word "Anger," which refers analeptically to the previous and proleptically to the next song, "Don't Hurt Yourself," which is predominantly set in a parking garage. At the end of this song, the music box sets in again and constitutes the background to the chapter "Apathy." This brief description already shows cohesive forces between individual chapters and intermedial relations between auditory and visual dimensions via the embodied performance of Beyoncé and the other performers. In the remainder of the album, the songs are on an auditory level either interrelated or interrupted by spoken passages or moments of silence which can be accompanied by blackouts. This results in a soundscape of presences and meaningful absences. *Lemonade* thus presents not so much a sequence of songs but rather a soundscape that combines natural sounds, instrumental music, and singing and juxtaposes it to visual and auditory stillness and pauses that install a contemplative rhythm into the visual album.

- 14 The performative aspect is present throughout the visual album. We hear Beyoncé recite poetry by Warsan Shire, she performs her songs which involves acting, singing, and dancing, and she also interacts with the camera and in this way appears to seek eye contact with the audience. In “Freedom” e.g. she stands behind bowls of fire which function as footlights on a stage in the southern plantation setting. In “Hold Up” she even interacts with the camera when she smashes it with a baseball bat.
- 15 Performativity is not only a central theme of *Lemonade* but through the embodied performances the above-mentioned forms of intermediality are brought together, interconnecting the aesthetically varied visualizations of the settings and performances. Beyoncé’s and the performers’ bodies become media of signification through on the one hand their performative actions in relation to the auditory and textual dimensions of the album but also through their embodied presence as women of color, wearing different clothes and dresses, make-up, and hair styles, through their body and finger gestures, the choreography, and their facial expressions. The aspect of performativity is introduced in the very first sequence, when Beyoncé is seen on a stage between a curtain and footlights. Throughout the visual album, the stage is a recurring visual and meta-aesthetically charged motif that interconnects the individual chapters. The theme of seeing and being seen, and thereby being recognized pervades both the spoken passages and the lyrics of the songs. In “Anger” e.g., she accuses a male other of not recognizing her: “Why can’t you see me? Why can’t you see me? Why can’t you see me? Everyone else can” (13:15–13:28). In the song “Sorry” e.g., the verse “Middle fingers up” is accompanied by this gesture of defiance by both Beyoncé and the dancers who, in this song, either sit on chairs inside a plantation house or on benches inside a bus or a military vehicle. These different settings are interconnected through the finger gestures and the forwards and sideways rocking body gestures of the dancers.
- 16 The album’s reliance on the body as a symbolic force relates to the female body as a central subject of both Shire’s poetry as well as Beyoncé’s songs. The female body is a source of nurturing, a life-giver in the process of birth, when in *Hope* she recites “That night in a dream, the first girl emerges from a slit in my stomach” (48:48–48:53). On hearing the word “slit” the camera moves through an opening in a wall, symbolizing the opening through which the child emerges. In particular in this scene the artistic process itself is analogized to the act of giving birth and thus acquires a meta-aesthetic function.
- 17 In *Lemonade*, inter- and transcultural signatures emerge through an intermedial constellation of both the transversal character of music and the combination of and with visual references that bring together European, African, African American, and Caribbean influences. The transcultural signature manifests itself in *Lemonade* in the form of instrumentation, the integration of Warsan Shire’s poetry and again, in the embodiedness of Beyoncé and the dancers’ performances that epitomize and celebrate cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity. This appeal to accept variety in people, their looks, skin color, and hair styles also bears a feminist dimension which becomes manifest in references to the Black is Beautiful movement of the 1960s, e.g. in the display of a variety of hair styles and facial features. In “Formation,” she hints at her own mixed heritage singing “My daddy Alabama, momma Louisiana / You mix that negro with that Creole, make a Texas bama / I like my baby heir with baby hair and

afros / I like my negro nose with Jackson Five nostrils" (58:37–58:53), a sequence that is accompanied by images of her daughter with an Afro hair style.

- 18 The album features a variety of transcultural references to various regions in the US, Central America, and Africa—hair styles, clothing, or specific regional settings, e.g. the southern fauna, or the explicit references to her home state Texas. In "Sorry," the dancers' hair is styled and braided in a variety of ways, their white make-up resembles African masks, and, towards the end of the song, Beyoncé is seen sitting on the floor with a hairstyle resembling Nefertiti's conical headdress. Another example of many is the song "Hold Up" in which she appears in a yellow dress that, together with the ubiquity of water, references the Yoruba deity, Oshun (Wright n.p.). Furthermore, famous women of color whose work also bear transcultural signification appear throughout the visual album, e.g. the French-Cuban duo Ibeyi (Lisa-Kaindé and Naomi Díaz) who sing in Yoruba, the actresses Cloe and Halle Bailey, Amandla Stenberg, Quvenzhané Wallis, Zendaya, the tennis player Serena Williams, or the model Winnie Harlow, who suffers from the skin disease vitiligo that results in black and white patterns on her skin.⁵ Their appearance in *Lemonade* add to the transnational and intercultural orientation of the artwork as their work is intertwined with Beyoncé's.
- 19 With *Lemonade*, Beyoncé inscribes herself into an American cultural and musical history by interrelating her own life and work—apparent in autobiographical references—with the work of other artists. This is achieved either by referencing their work or by collaborating with them. *Lemonade* includes a number of home video clips in which the autobiographical dimension of the album becomes apparent. E.g. the songs "Daddy Lessons" and "Sandcastles" are interrupted and accompanied by home videos of Beyoncé's childhood and marriage, respectively. The chapter "Redemption" includes a home video of her grandmother's 80th birthday, where she claims "I had my ups and downs, but I always find the inner strength to pull myself up. I was served lemons, but I made lemonade" (52:52–53:05). Before this clip, Beyoncé recounts the recipe for lemonade as an intergenerational form of knowledge that also constitutes a cure and a means of healing and working through traumas of the past and the present, on both individual and collective levels. This process is symbolized by her grandmother, the "alchemist" (52:16), whose process of "sp[inning] gold" (52:17–52:18) from lemons enables processes of redefinition, reappropriation, and re-interpretation. On a personal level this form of appropriation expresses itself in the line "My torturer became my remedy" (53:32–53:35). The eponymic reference to lemonade is again taken up at the beginning of the last song "Formation" in the form of a black frame and the word "Lemonade" in bold white letters. In "Formation," a highly political song, the reference to lemonade extends to a supra-individual level and to notions of discrimination and traumatization but also the ability to work through, overcome, and grow through suffering.
- 20 Through the appropriated visual styles, *Lemonade* inscribes itself in the visual history of the United States. A recurrent visual style in the album is the grainy but colorful aesthetic which is reminiscent of polaroid images but also the documentary photography of inner cityscapes and portraits of African American women by Gordon Parks. These portrait shots of women constitute forms of "remediation" as Grusin and Bolter would have it, meaning the "appropriat[ion of] techniques, forms, and social significance of other media" (Bolter, Grusin 65).

- 21 Beyoncé's work also references the work of other African American artists, e.g. Michael Jackson or Nina Simone, to name just two. References to Michael Jackson's work can be detected in the elaborate choreographies and narrative and plot-driven music videos. Also, the outfits worn at the Super Bowl halftime show on February 6, 2016 were reminiscent both of the uniforms worn by members of the Black Panther movement, but also of Michael Jackson's performance outfits. Homages to other artists are more subtle, e.g. the reference to Nina Simone's work is implemented in the integration of a vinyl cover of the album *Silk and Soul* in the song "Sandcastles" (41:35–41:39). Finally, the collaboration with other musicians and artists, e.g. Jack White, Kendrick Lamar, The Weeknd, or James Blake, embeds *Lemonade* in and connects the album to a wider cultural context. For the song "Freedom" she worked together with Kendrick Lamar and thereby connected her performances with his, in particular to his 2016 Grammy performance, in which he entered the stage as part of a chain gang, addressing the disproportionately high rate of African American men within the prison population of the US.
- 22 Intermediality and the performative mode in *Lemonade* fulfill cultural-critical functions that manifest themselves in references to racially motivated injustices against African Americans in both the past and the present and on individual and collective levels (e.g. through slavery, police brutality, or negligence during Hurricane Katrina) and references to the Civil Rights and the Black Lives Matter movements.
- 23 The critical dimension of this performative mode is manifested in the performing African American female body in specific settings. Plantation houses in the south point to slavery (e.g. *Intuition*, "Sorry," *Hope*), barren inner cityscapes reference police brutality, flooded areas refer to Hurricane Katrina (e.g. "Formation"), a bus alludes to the Middle Passage (e.g. "Sorry," *Apathy*), and the setting of the football stadium (e.g. "Reformation," "All Night") on the one hand points at a corner stone of American sports culture but also at the exploitation of African American college students. These settings epitomize the African American—and in particular the female African American—experience of suffering, exploitation, discrimination, sexual abuse, and disenfranchisement in the US. In "Don't Hurt Yourself" the dancers wear dresses where the sleeves are connected and through which their hands are literally tied, symbolizing a restricted agency through structural discrimination. The portrait shots of women's faces is a recurring visual theme in *Lemonade*, e.g. in the chapter "Resurrection," when this montage has a voice over of a conversation between two women who talk about the possibility of a future for their children. One of them claims that the answer is love on the one hand and the belief in Jesus on the other hand. This optimistic view is counterpointed when, during the following song, "Forward," Gwen Carr, Sybrina Fulton, and Lezley McSpadden who lost their sons Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and Michael Brown in police shootings hold pictures of their dead children. "It's in those moments that Beyoncé displays most profoundly what Butler called 'hyper empathy—the ability to identify with and feel the pain of others. Which, of course, has always been at the heart of black music, black style'" (qtd. in Als n.p.).
- 24 Integrated into the album are, in addition to the spoken passages by Beyoncé, other spoken passages that either match the visual level or serve as a voice-over. In the song "Don't Hurt Yourself," the line "Motivate your ass, call me Malcolm X" (14:37–14:40) is followed by a recording of Malcolm X claiming, "the most disrespected person in America is the black woman, the most unprotected person in America is the black

woman, the most neglected person in America is the black woman" (14:40–14:59). This sequence serves as a voice-over for a silent montage of the portrait shots of African American women on the streets (see above) before the song sets in again. Further references to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s interconnect the songs "Don't Hurt Yourself" with the chapter *Apathy* when Beyoncé is looking out of the window of a bus in a visual reference to the photograph of Rosa Parks on a bus in 1955 (17:51), or in the visual reference to Martin Luther King Jr. who is on the cover of the newspaper "The Truth," held up by an African American man in the song "Formation."⁶

- 25 "Formation," the last song of the album, bears special significance. Already in the starting menu, in the intermedial and proleptic reference through the looped theme of "Formation," the political dimension of the album becomes manifest. Beyoncé performed the song "Formation" at the Super Bowl halftime show, a spectacle which provoked public attention by its many references to the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, police brutality, and the legacy of slavery in the structure of oppression and discrimination against people of color. She and her dancers wore leather clothes and black berets that referenced the clothes worn by the Black Panther movement. This song thus references discrimination against people of color in the United States but also forms of resistance, both in the past and the present. At the beginning of the song, Beyoncé is sitting on the roof of a New Orleans police car that is halfway submerged in a flooded cityscape, a reference to Hurricane Katrina that flooded New Orleans in 2005 and cost the lives of disproportionately many people of color.
- 26 The tone of the album is rebellious, at times angry but also conciliatory and hopeful. The performance features gestures of defiance, of reclaiming the past and the present throughout the album: A feast of African American women, images of them sitting and standing on large magnolia trees (49:30), the act of dancing inside plantation homes that feature paintings of an imaginary African American nobility (in "Formation"). With "Formation" the album ends in a demand for peace and justice. The song's last sequence shows a young boy in a hoodie opposite a line of police men. This image is montaged with a pan view of graffiti that says "Stop shooting us." When the young boy holds up his hands the gesture is reciprocated by the policemen. The album closes with the halfway submerged police car sinking with her on top of it and a final view of Beyoncé in a white corsage and a parasol. In the form of this visual montage the feminist statement of the album is connected to a political statement that calls for more justice for African Americans. Their performances however also epitomize the process of spiritual and emotional healing, self-empowerment, and the resistance against oppression.

4. Conclusion

- 27 In Beyoncé's visual album *Lemonade* intricate constellations of auditory, visual, and performative dimensions create an aesthetic that fulfills cohesive, transcultural, and critical functions. Beyoncé thereby locates herself in a tradition of African American artists who are outspoken about racial injustice in the United States, e.g. Langston Hughes who performed his Jazz poems with instrumental accompaniment, Nina Simone, or Billie Holiday. The album provokes acts of listening and viewing that are ethically charged by bringing to the fore, on the one hand, practices of racism and

discrimination against people of color and in particular women, but on the other hand juxtaposing these with forms of resistance against oppression, artistic creativity, and forms of healing and working through – as epitomized in the title of the album, *Lemonade*.

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NOTES

1. The artist's name "Beyoncé" will be used in this article to refer to Beyoncé Knowles-Carter.
2. The artwork *Lemonade* by Beyoncé will be referred to as "visual album." This term highlights the visual and auditory dimensions of the album but also hides its complexity that results from multilayered interrelations of medialities, art forms, and forms of signification.
3. In 2016 she was added as 51st on the *Forbes*' List of the world's 50 most powerful women, a list that comprises women entrepreneurs, politicians, CEOs and decision makers.
4. Many reviews focus on the interrelations between the lyrics of her songs on infidelity and betrayal in her marriage and her own relationship to her husband Jay-Z (cf. *Empire*)

5. Als claims that the major inspirational force of this movie was the African American science fiction author Octavia Butler, in particular referring to the black female body.
 6. There is a significant overlap, both textual and visual between the visual reference in "Formation" and the article by Charlene Muhammad in the newspaper *The Final Call*, published on January 19, 2016.
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ABSTRACTS

In 2016, Beyoncé published *Lemonade*, a work of art that exists in various manifestations: as a music album that includes twelve songs, as live performances (including her world tour and her appearance at the Superbowl halftime show), and as a "visual album," an art film that consists of the music video clips for each individual song and visually and auditorily complex "chapters" which feature the poetry by Warsan Shire. This article focuses on the visual album as intermedial artwork that can be described as a soundscape in which the intermedial constellations fulfill a number of functions: Firstly, intermedial references are a means of cohesion that are responsible for the unified character of the visual album. Secondly, intermedial references result in a transcultural signature of the artwork. Thirdly, through intermedial references Beyoncé locates *Lemonade* within the cultural history of the United States and American music history in particular. Finally, intermediality acquires cultural-critical functions which in particular pertain to race relations and structural forms of discrimination against people of color in contemporary America.

INDEX

Keywords: intermediality, sound, vision, performativity, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Werner Wolf, Gabriele Rippl, Kendrick Lamar

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