



Women's Power Reflected in Beyoncé's Song "Run the World (Girls)"

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Abstract. By analyzing the song 'Run the World (Girls)' by American singer Beyoncé, this paper explores the singer's musical expression of female empowerment and her call for female empowerment, using costumes, dance moves, and props with a morale boosting rhythmic layers and melodic layers that shout out the lyrics of women leading the world, inspiring and the music serves as a medium for public reflection. Music is a medium that brings together the public to think about the power of women. Power is often referred to as a masculine trait, but Beyoncé breaks the stereotypes that society has long formed about women by supporting the idea that women can realize their worth, that women can build nations and that power can be a social identity for women.

Keywords: Beyoncé · Run the World · feminism

1 Introduction

Society is reflected in pop culture. The issue of gender identity has always been a poignant one as modern social development is becoming an increasingly serious concern. Whether they are expressing humorous, provocative, or constructive messages, they provide listeners with varied perspectives on today's culture and can disclose a lot about existing societal views. The empowering song "Run the World (Girls)" by American singer Beyoncé is taken from her fourth studio album '4' and was made available as the album's debut single in April 2011. The track is a blend of futuristic electro-pop and R&B. Beyoncé composed the song to develop new voices that supported the strength of women by fusing various cultures, the times, and the blending of many civilizations. In today's culture, there are several social identity categories, and various identity positions correlate to the various societal expectations to which they are subject. Within these categories, artists investigate and analyze various identity positions. Popular music serves as a forum for addressing accepted views on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other aspects of identity since it reflects and influences societal norms [1]. Beyoncé also desired to promote female empowerment and encourage the power of women's independence and self-empowerment.

The uses and contexts of music are complex and diverse, its functions cover the spectrum from the individual to society, and music can promote a sense of social identity in human groups. Music can also act as a composite of sound and performance to realize

the social issues its authors want to raise [2]. Beyoncé displays her passionate desire to convey women's empowerment in this song through dancing and words that stress the power of women in the growth of the planet. The dance of the female army in the film, which is accompanied by music, is an expression that may reach a broader audience and beyond the boundaries of ordinary verbal communication, allowing more people to respect women's power and better promote women's equality and their social identity. Music could aid in the evolution of human society by facilitating coordinated activity and serving as a more effective medium for achieving social consensus among some social groups. In addition to providing entertainment for existing groups, musical performances are crucial in enhancing their public image [3]. In social movements, the desire to coordinate activities is accompanied by the impulse to coordinate people's emotions and ideologies, which typically enhances people's emotional ties, shapes their ideology, and aids in completing or altering their ideas and opinions about an event. In this song, Beyoncé promotes respect for women and calls for an end to long-standing gender stereotypes. To break free of the stereotypes that hold women back and raise awareness of the enormous power that women wield, she uses her music as an illustration of the cage in which they are imprisoned. The fact that Beyoncé has a sizable fan following, plays a prominent position in society, and speaks out in favor of women's power, especially for black women, all help to advance this social movement.

2 The Relationship Between Current Artistic Production and Feminism

Beyoncé's video, costumes, props, and dance routines for her female-empowering pop song "Run the World (Girls)" show in different forms that women can exercise leadership, power, and dominance through the courageous use of their femininity. They deserve to be treated equally and with respect. Female artists from a range of musical genres have been identified as feminists since the early 1990s, and they have been exploring a specific sort of female sexuality in their stage performances, lyrics, and musical styles [4]. Beyoncé and her backing dancers preach female empowerment in figure-revealing lingerie on this track, dancing wildly, dancing their bodies across the desert, standing on a reformed car, blasting, and fighting are all powerful expressions of confidence, all in support of women's freedom and not keeping them in cages of meekness and decency. Beyoncé's brand of feminism encourages women to be able to speak for themselves rather than incorporating their voices into a collective identity that encompasses all women. This includes the unfavorable perception of black women as being victims of a reinforced social order where they are required to imitate white women and repeat the constricting and demeaning ideas held by white people. Beyoncé's art clearly shows her connection to feminism with a clear focus on black female empowerment. She has spoken at TED conferences about feminism and written articles with the title "Gender Equality is a Myth!" Black and white artistic themes are seen as an important component of feminism, and this is also present in popular music. The song's significant usage of African elements demonstrates Beyoncé's outspoken support for feminism, particularly for black women. Black women have long been subjected to racialized gender oppression and Beyoncé has creatively used music videos to accommodate the inner workings of

more black women, music videos in which Beyoncé is sexy and empowered by focusing on black women and their supple bodies, and their confidence as women fighting for their power.

The most memorable and emblematic element of Beyoncé's message of female empowerment could be seen in the video for the song. Beyoncé can be seen as a member of a female 'army' in the Mojave Desert, dressed in armor, lingerie, and a range of figure-revealing couture costumes. As Daniel Harris describes in 'The Aesthetics of Crossdressing', cross-dressing has always been a form of resistance ingrained in a racialized and gendered structure of authority [5]. Beyoncé portrays herself as a combative, powerful, and confident woman in all of her music videos with her attire. The track begins with an electronically synthesized drum beat and a vocal chant, heralding a battle to be fought, as Beyoncé kneels on the roof of her car and pounds hard, reflecting the confidence and determination of women to fight to the end. Interspersed with images of bound women, Beyoncé and her female companions dance to a synthesized electronic drumbeat and backing music in a hyper-programmed sequence that includes dances borrowed from the vocabulary of modern African movement, as well as bodies twisting with abandon, shoulders, and bodies, and hips ambling in sequence in sensual dance poses. This is followed by a scene in which an army of women led by Beyoncé in body-revealing high fashion assembles to approach a group of heavily armed, violent men in combat. In this dance the female 'army', mostly women in black high heels, black corsets, colored skirts, garters, and capes, show off their flexible and powerful dance moves in front of the camera, in a very confident and combative state, exaggerating their beautiful and healthy bodies, highlighting their female authority and challenging. They are very confident and militant, exaggerating their beautiful and healthy bodies, highlighting their female authority, and challenging deep-seated stereotypes. The vocals are performed utilizing electronic synth reverberation fragments and piano pieces, with the rhythmic component of the song mostly consisting of prolonged electronic drumming. Beyoncé begins to sing the verses before the chorus, writhing her body in the sand and swaying her shoulders as she dances in sync with the two backup dancers in front of her. She deftly rolls and twists her body in the sand as the female army re-joins her, revealing a gorgeous figure and a fighting conviction. Beyoncé's mission statement for female empowerment embodies support for gender identity, for breaking through stereotypical shackles, and strategically using her femininity and eroticism to draw more attention to the power of women, a long-standing influence of the perception that femininity is seen as an outfit for obeying patriarchal laws under the predatory nature of the capitalist economy that relegates femininity to white women and always carries a negative label of degradation for black women. The video captures the performance of the political perception that black women in reality are not treated with long-term respect, an indictment reflected in the costume dance and lyrics in the video for this Beyoncé track.

3 The Technology Governance

Technology advancements have made it feasible to deliver music in an accessible audio-visual manner. The barrier that prevents the music from being introduced by text alone or by the listener's imagination is dissolved through the employment of characters, scenes,

gestures, and phrases in the film. The ability to make whatever decisions they want, whenever they can, regardless of what the people in charge may say, is a revolutionary choice that women, especially black women, cannot select to not be considered as objects in a racist hetero-patriarchal society. The video for 'Run the World (Girls)' was directed by renowned filmmaker Francis Lawrence. The different couture clothes Beyoncé wore in the music video received acclaim for her impeccable sense of style. Beyoncé danced sexily in these high-end depictions of feminine armor, unfazed by the male riot police officers standing next to her and donning a Brian Lichtenberg patchwork fur vest. She dressed in a Givenchy outfit and a black fringed Norma Kamali costume for the dance performance on the beach, which included Beyoncé and two enormous hyenas. At the spring fashion show for Jean Paul Gaultier, Beyoncé makes an appearance in a sequence wearing a black dress. The video opens with Beyoncé, draped in hair, wearing a white dress and gold heels, galloping on a black horse across an open, desolate plain. Then a scene appears of Beyoncé standing in a black, broken-down car dressed all in black, leading a large group of women. The girl's clothing can serve as a form of restraint or release for her: "The girl's uniform and mask can contain the girl's personality while elevating her identity as belonging to a specific type, and this function can be both suffocating and liberating. Beneath the veil of the maiden, there is room for negotiation, playfulness, and even power subversion" [6]. The word "revolution" is spray-painted on this ramshackle vehicle. Male troops wearing armor and shields also rush toward them. Interspersed with a canvas of blackheads and a scene of a woman in lingerie half standing on a cage and what appears to be a crucified woman and a black bull, it is clear that this is a video set in Africa. The video cuts to a close-up shot of Beyoncé slowly looking up with her head in a priestess headdress. Confidently facing the rampant comments and gestures of the opposing soldiers, then they begin their dance on the sand, with elements of confident and powerful street dance and courageous combat among the opposing soldiers, before intercutting with Beyoncé in a white dress, holding two hyenas in each hand, implying that women can also hold power in their hands, with a silver sequined skirt and gold armor giving Beyoncé a queenlier look. At her command, the car burst into flames, and the male soldiers became fearful and defensive. Next Beyoncé is dressed extravagantly in a yellow outfit, which is meant to depict the polytheism of the natural elements and the Yoruba religion and divination techniques as they are practiced across the Americas. Through the dancing bodies of ritual participants, Orisha is present in the community to share knowledge, and offer safety and direction from the spirit realm [7]. For cis, coolie, trans, and gender non-conforming people, Orisha has long been a symbol of femininity and divine feminine power. Oshun stands for fertility, love, and beauty. She dresses in yellow and gold and uses the ability of rivers and lakes' delicious waters to give and steal life. Beyoncé and her dancers assert that black power and black women's lives do matter by claiming the beauty of black femininity via the utilization of pop culture extravaganza, well-known myths and tales, portrayals of beauty and sexuality, and African religious traditions. The chorus then begins with Beyoncé dancing with her partners in a dark green dress, her powerful and agile movements causing the soldiers on the other side to take up their shields and begin to defend themselves, the women's army advancing closer and closer to the male soldiers as can be seen in the reflection of their shields, undeterred by the heavily armed soldiers, reflecting the sheer power of

the women and their strong belief in the revolution, and the music video ends with the women saluting the male soldiers confidently and proudly.

While gender is a fictitious performance that adheres to or defies socially imposed norms of behavior, the script for this performance is lengthy, complicated, and ingrained from conception [8]. Beyoncé is trying to lead the way in breaking the long-held misconception that women can play their roles as family members and can be no less powerful than men in their careers, and her lyrics repeatedly refer to the need for girls to break free from the shackles of meekness and softness that society and politics have trapped them in. According to Jayna Brown, “feminist theory does not sufficiently explain how racial discourses create the meanings of gendered bodies or the degree of violence implicit in their racialization,” in her chapter on “The Body” in *Keywords in African American Studies*. They also don’t take into account that not all bodies can be identified as female in the same way [9]. Beyoncé uses many African elements in her music videos such as elephants and blackheads, metaphorical chains of female freedom using props such as cages and crosses, followed by dancers who perform attempts to break out of the cages and blast cars to represent their rebellion and also represent Beyoncé leading women, especially black women who are more vulnerable to ridicule and oppression in society from the past to the present. The film does evoke some of the subliminal notions that Black women in particular need to exert their power, and hide their sexuality and that a sensuous presence may not be the best course of action in favor of a more “respectable” image. The lyrics in the introduction are “Girls, we run this mutha (Yeah!)”. The chorus of the song is repeated before Beyoncé inspires women striving to realize their worth, congratulating women who have earned a bachelor’s degree and expressing her congratulations and admiration for women who have managed to be both successful in their careers and capable of becoming respectful mothers. The music here uses audio-treated vocals and piano as the melodic layer and army drums as the rhythmic layer, the two musical textures are paired together to express the ample strength of women and the support and encouragement for modern women. The lyrics are full of support for women Beyoncé cries out to financially self-sufficient women: “This goes out to all my girls/ That’s in the club rocking the latest/ Who will buy it for themselves and get more money later”. Beyoncé represents a woman’s beauty in this video, but she also demonstrates a man’s attitude when she declares, “Girls we run this mutha.” It demonstrates the power of women. In the song, she says: “My persuasion can build a nation/Endless power/ With our love we can devour. You’ll do anything for me.” Power is frequently described as a manly quality. When she goes on to suggest that women can have children and go back to work right away, she adds the phrase “ Strong enough to bear the children /Then get back to business.” The lyrics here are a direct appeal to the fact that women can be no weaker than men at work even while taking care of their families, and that having children and still being able to return to work shows the greatest strength of women. Beyoncé also demonstrates in her songs her belief in gender equality, her respect for women, and the fact that women can succeed in their careers and make money. In the lyrics: “Disrespect us, no they won’t/ Boy, don’t even try to touch this” “To all the men that respect what I do, please accept my shine” “ How we smart enough to make these millions” embodies the idea that if a woman works in the business world and earns more than a man, then some people will be jealous of that woman and speculate on others

with malicious thoughts. Deserve to be respected. Beyoncé states that women can also earn millions of dollars and that men should respect and accept her initiative.

Beyoncé's declaration of female emancipation in this track is based on an overt expression of gender orientation, supporting women's independence, the idea that women can work like men, earn high wages and promote respect for women. The video also focuses on Beyoncé's 'fight against' the hardened political notion that black women should remain pure and decent. This is because during the Reconstruction period after the American Civil War it was socially accepted that the majority of the black population, especially the female population, had to struggle to assimilate white standards and frameworks of behavior. Black women, in particular, try to debunk rumors of sexual decadence by imitating white women's behavior and demeanor [10]. It can be seen that in this historical context, the long oppressive colonial enslavement and the racial segregation that persisted in the early twentieth century forced black women to live with greater caution, and this oppression and discrimination prevented them from achieving true freedom. The women on the cross and in the cage in Beyoncé's video also seem to suggest that black women in particular need to assert their power and break free as part of the world's female population and that they cannot develop and progress by hiding their abilities and enforcing constraints on themselves to suit the needs of the dominant society. Beyoncé and her companions embody the strength and power of women through their costumes, body gestures, and fluent harmonies, which emphasize the power of women and their ability to be able to fight the good battle, not only to succeed in business but also to juggle the responsibilities of the family, trying to embody the freedom and respect of women by breaking down traditional ideas and prejudices. Beyoncé's song has a deeper message that relates to a long-running social and political discussion regarding the gender identity of black women and the stereotypes that are perpetuated about them. Women need to stand up against those who do not support women's independence and freedom and disrespect them. Especially the dance routines and costumes and interspersed props in this music video exemplify the related to the long-standing conviction of some black women that they need to declare and promote their gender identity and work towards making changes as a result of it being a source of empowerment and authority.

Ironically, even though the song features Beyoncé's call for female empowerment and a strong confrontation with an army of men representing questioning women and resistance, Beyoncé's female army is shown in the video forced to face a group of men in full black bulletproof vests, wearing body armor with protective shields, carrying guns and armed with police brutality weapons, who are refusing to back up a little bit and keep quiet, showing how female power is often ignored and disrespected by men in modern society, while the female army, while dressed in beautiful clothes of freedom and confidence, are mainly in lingerie and high heels, showing a huge difference in their fighting prowess. The obstructive forces faced by the female military in the music video look like the insurmountable power of the state in modern society, and Beyoncé's enchantment of hegemonic masculinity actions and sociologically identified femininity is equally damaging, as the real world has long been a place where black women are often denied these standards and frameworks of behavior in practice, and the social behavior of women addressed in the song may be different to that faced by black women

in particular in reality. It is crucial to mention here that feminist fundamentals have been incorporated into various historical contexts, cultural, political, and socially constructed frameworks and that female power has been defined in the mainstream news in various ways, and that this development of ideas over time has been mixed with a primitive feminist, conservative media trend, targeting a female audience so that traditional and past ideas and concepts of femininity have been preserved to this day and age while different ideas have developed and intermingled. Feminism is related to a “set of new meanings” in popular culture, which suggests it is a “consuming force”. However, the significance of the costumes and songs in both the music video and the live performance is a reaction to the fact that the costumes and the feminine or African elements that appear in the video are an ideal way to express a strong desire to inspire female empowerment, with the dancers using twisted dance moves to vividly portray both the limitations and shackles placed on the female community, as well as Beyoncé’s crisp, fighting dance moves. Beyoncé’s image of struggle against black female stereotypes and her defiant emphasis on female empowerment, confidence, and freedom is well reflected in the costumes and choreography she and her partners wear, which not just make an aesthetic appeal but also bring awareness to the power of women in the current cultural context.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, analyzing the lyrics, choreography, costumes, and props in Beyoncé’s music video for “Run the World (Girls)” reflects Beyoncé’s role as a feminist, supporting women’s empowerment and their struggle for equal treatment, respect, work, and social identity. The lyrics encourage and support women to be who they are, that women can play different roles in both career and family, and that women can be stronger than businessmen. Beyoncé also uses specifically African elements in the setting of this music video to support black women, whose long-standing racism and oppression have become a more vulnerable part of this war, Beyoncé’s emphasis on reform and escape from the cage metaphor for black women being broken to learn about white women and the devalued femininity of black women is the socio-political point Beyoncé wants to make in this track, as she leads the female resistance struggle, undeterred by the hindrance of the political side represented by the male soldiers.

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