**FURTHER ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT TO FORMATION**

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| **Issue** | **Analysis** | **Screen Shot** |
| **Black Lives Matter** | Beyoncé is crouching the roof of a waterlogged New Orleans police cruiser, floating in the floodwaters of the post-Katrina city. Then a stream of footage: a shot of a man with glowing grills, the back of a police jacket, the neighborhoods, a black preacher, homes flooded. In the opening images, Beyoncé puts us in the middle of a community and casts the police as a peripheral presence. Fast forward to the final scenes: A kid, dressed in a black hoodie, dances in front of a line of police officers. When he finishes, he stretches out his arms and the audience — thinking, maybe, about the Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice references bundled up in these shots — braces for the moment when the cops go for their guns. But instead, they all put their hands up and the camera pans across the message "Stop Shooting Us" spray-painted on a brick wall in the background. And then Beyoncé sinks a cop car, the same one she was riding in the opening scene. She lies on the roof as the vehicle goes under, looking more like the victor than the car's drowning victim. The police cruiser is no match for the full force of Beyoncé. Taken all together, the video is a statement — one in which no explicit mention of the Black Lives Matter movement is made because no explicit mention is necessary.  "Formation" shows, rather than tells. Beyoncé touches on BLM imagery, but situates it within a larger video argument: More than just mattering, black life should be celebrated. |  |
| **Powerful ode to black heritage** | "Formation" pulls its imagery from various periods in southern history and makes over each in her image. Beyoncé with her coterie of elegantly dressed ladies, sitting in the parlor of what's possibly a plantation house, owning every inch of that room.  Queen Bey, out in front of her male lady-in-waiting types, throwing up two bejeweled middle fingers as she sings, "When he fuck me good I take his ass to Red Lobster, 'cause I slay." Because she is supremely herself, which brings us to... |  |
| **The Illuminati myth vs. feminist reality** | In "Formation," Bey roundly dismisses the rumor that she and husband Jay Z are members of the shadowy underground elite organization. "Y'all haters corny with that Illuminati mess / Paparazzi, catch my fly, and my cocky fresh / I'm so reckless when I rock my Givenchy dress."  Beyoncé has amassed staggering wealth. She's erected her own empire. But she hasn't achieved her success through covert governmental control or weird cult sorcery. She's done it on her own, which is what makes this newest song so fantastic: It demolishes the sexist concept of a sugar daddy. "When he fuck me good I take his ass to Red Lobster, cause I slay / If he hit it right, I might take him on a flight in my chopper, 'cause I slay / Drop him off at the mall, let him buy some J's, let him shop up, 'cause I slay / I might get your song played on the radio station, 'cause I slay / I might get your song played on the radio station, 'cause I slay / You might be a black Bill Gates in the making, 'cause I slay / I just might be a black Bill Gates in the making, 'cause I slay" Queen Bey will be the one handing her man some money so that he can go and buy himself something pretty. She's the one who can launch his career because she owns the airwaves. She's the one with the indomitable career. She's the one calling women to "get into formation" and slay with her. The men in this video are either silent and statue still behind her or features of candid footage that flash onscreen for a few seconds. "It's also not insignificant that she's electing to parade her substantial wealth and ability to outearn most men in the music industry (including her husband, Jay Z) during the Super Bowl — the flagship event of male virility and violence in this country," Wortham said. Indeed, it's not. 2016's halftime show is going to include a black-feminist-self-love anthem. Which is why... |  |
| **She slays, in every sense of the word.** | Consider the word "slay." It's one with many meanings. As used by kids these days, it can mean "to kill it" — whether it is your look or your life — and it can mean "to take someone or something down," as in, internet trolls and/or haters.Beyoncé breathes even more fire into "Formation" by layering it with language that says something meaningful in each of its contexts. Slay, Bey, slay. |  |
| **Katrina** | Beyoncé and Kelly Rowland's charity, the Survivor Foundation funded the construction of the Knowles-Rowland Temenos Place Apartments, in Houston, Texas to provide housing for "at risk populations" and those left homeless by the hurricane. According to the Huffington [*Post*](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/09/beyonce-hometown-houston_n_5570609.html), she'd donated some $7 million to the project as on Sept. 2014. In "Formation," Beyoncé reminds viewers that the destruction Katrina wrought hasn't been completely cleaned up; that much of the south is still laboring under the weight of rebuilding whole cities and innumerable lives. It's maybe not a call to action, but she's certainly calling the lingering damage to our attention. |  |
| **Black self-love** | “I like my baby hair, with baby hair and afros. I like my negro nose with Jackson Five nostrils” — this of course addresses the culture of open social hate and bullying towards girls like her daughter who stands proudly in her beautiful afro, and her husband, Jay, both of whom are often childishly mocked for their physical appearances. Throughout the video Beyoncé rocks a number of black hair styles including her own natural afro. That may not mean much to you if you don’t have black hair, but know — it’s a struggle. Especially for little girls. |  |
| **Women in White. Men in black.** | The clothing worn in these scenes represent a time before and after slaves were freed around the 1900s. White corsets, binding the women — during a time when slaves were technically “free” but still being oppressed. The black attire scene depicts a more empowered and free people, with the men dressed up in nice suits and Beyoncé adorned in jewelry and blatantly flicking off the camera in front of a plantation. |  |
| **NOLA (New Orleans, Louisiana) Parade.** | Church. Hair salon. Lobster. Culture. Period. Let’s not get into all that. If you get it, you get it. If not, no worries. Just bounce. |  |
| **MLK.** | A man holding up a newspaper is briefly seen. On the cover? Martin Luther King Jr., with the words: “The Truth - More Than a Dreamer”. At this point, we are definitely in deep. Not just in flood waters. This is a history lesson living on in the present. This is modern day sh\*t y’all. |  |
| **Formation** | There are several choreographed sequences of “ladies in formation” but one takes place at the bottom of an empty pool. Formation is first introduced at the beginning of the song in the form of family references, then women. We need each other during tough times. Especially when we’re literally drowning. In water or in haters and “illuminati mess”. Stick together. As ladies, as family, or as survivors under flood waters. We’ll get through it together. |  |
| **B-boy.** | There’s a powerful scene of a little boy in a black hoodie break dancing in front of a line of police in riot gear. He stops dancing and puts his hands in the air. All the policemen put their arms in the air in response. Peace at last. A clip of graffiti on a wall comes across the screen that says, “Stop shooting us”. It is what it is. |  |
| **Black Panthers.** | Her dancers were dressed in black panther gear — as in the Black Panther Party who practiced militant self-defense of minority communities against the U.S. government. Forget Super Bowl 50. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of the black panthers. Are you getting the picture now? |  |
| **Michael Jackson.** | Subtle yet clear, not only was Bey, Bruno Mars and all their dancers decked out in black panther gear, she also paid homage to former friend and idol (R.I.P.), Michael Jackson. Her outfit was chosen as a tribute to what he wore during his Super Bowl performance of We Are the World in 1993. Remember how that song went?  “There comes a time when we hear a certain call When the world must come together as one There are people dying And its time to lend a hand to life The greatest gift of all  We can’t go on pretending day by day That someone, somewhere will soon make a change We are all a part of God’s great big family And the truth, you know, Love is all we need...” |  |