

An Analysis of Beyoncé's MVs from the Perspective of Multimodal Metaphors

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Abstract

In recent years, multimodal metaphor has become a prominent research topic in cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, emphasizing the collaborative role of language, image, sound, and gesture in meaning construction. However, existing studies have predominantly focused on static or semi-static texts such as advertisements, comics, and posters, with relatively limited attention to dynamic audiovisual media like music videos (MV). This study explores Beyoncé's representative MVs from the perspective of multimodal metaphors, aiming to uncover how linguistic, visual, auditory, and kinetic modes interact to construct complex layers of meaning and convey ideological and emotional messages. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Multimodal Metaphor Theory (Forceville, 1996, 2006), this research adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Using ELAN 6.8 software, the study identifies, categorizes, and analyzes different types of multimodal metaphors in selected Beyoncé MVs, including *Formation*, *Freedom*, and *Brown Skin Girl*. The findings reveal that multimodal metaphors in Beyoncé's works not only function as aesthetic and expressive devices but also serve as ideological tools that articulate themes of racial identity, gender empowerment, and cultural resistance. Furthermore, the interaction between dominant and subsidiary modalities demonstrates the dynamic mechanism of cross-modal mapping, through which abstract concepts such as freedom, power, and identity are embodied and visualized. This research enriches the theoretical application of multimodal metaphor in dynamic media discourse and contributes to a deeper understanding of how contemporary popular music participates in socio-cultural meaning-making through multimodal communication.

Keywords

multimodal metaphor; conceptual metaphor; music video; Beyoncé; cognitive linguistics

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of multimedia technology and digital communication, meaning-making in contemporary discourse is no longer confined to linguistic modes alone. Instead, it is increasingly realized through the interplay of multiple semiotic systems such as language, image, sound, and gesture. This shift has led to

the emergence of multimodal metaphor, a concept that extends traditional metaphor research from the verbal domain to a broader multimodal context. Originating from Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), multimodal metaphor emphasizes that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical ornament but a fundamental mechanism of human cognition that allows people to understand abstract concepts through concrete experiences across different sensory channels. Forceville (1996, 2006) further advanced this perspective by proposing that metaphors can be constructed and perceived through various modes, including visual, auditory, and kinetic modalities, thus highlighting the importance of multimodal interaction in communication.

Within this theoretical framework, the music video (MV) serves as a quintessential multimodal discourse that integrates linguistic, visual, auditory, and bodily elements to produce rich layers of meaning. As a unique form of cultural expression, the MV combines the narrative dimension of cinema with the expressive immediacy of music, creating a complex semiotic environment in which multimodal metaphors play a key role in shaping thematic and emotional interpretations. Despite its prevalence and influence in popular culture, academic research on MVs from the perspective of multimodal metaphors remains scarce, particularly in the field of cognitive linguistics. Existing studies have mainly concentrated on advertising, political cartoons, and film posters, leaving a theoretical and methodological gap in the systematic exploration of multimodal meaning-making in music videos.

Beyoncé, one of the most influential figures in global popular music, provides an ideal case for such an investigation. Her MVs, including *Formation*, *Freedom*, and *Brown Skin Girl*, are not merely artistic products but cultural texts imbued with ideological and symbolic significance. They frequently address issues such as racial identity, gender equality, and social justice, employing complex multimodal strategies to evoke emotion, challenge dominant narratives, and construct alternative cultural identities. The recurrent use of visual symbolism, choreographed movement, and lyrical expression in her MVs demonstrates a high degree of multimodal coherence and metaphorical richness that warrants systematic analysis.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how multimodal metaphors function in Beyoncé's MVs to convey emotion, ideology, and identity. Specifically, it seeks to identify the dominant types of multimodal metaphors, analyze their distribution patterns, and explore the functional tendencies underlying different metaphorical constructions. By integrating conceptual and multimodal metaphor theories with empirical multimodal analysis, this research intends to deepen the understanding of how meaning is collaboratively produced across modes in audiovisual media. Moreover, it attempts to extend the theoretical applicability of multimodal metaphor to dynamic cultural texts, offering new insights into the cognitive and ideological mechanisms of contemporary popular music discourse.

2. Literature Review

Research on multimodal metaphor stems from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which views metaphor not as a stylistic ornament but as a fundamental cognitive process that shapes human perception and communication. According to CMT, people understand abstract concepts through mappings from more concrete, embodied experiences. Building on this foundation, Forceville (1996) introduced the notion of pictorial metaphor in *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, expanding metaphor research beyond the linguistic domain to include visual, auditory, and kinetic forms. Later, Forceville and Urios-Aparisi (2009) developed a systematic framework for identifying multimodal metaphors, which has since been widely applied to media such as advertising, film, and political cartoons. The core idea of multimodal metaphor theory is that meaning emerges through interaction among different semiotic modes. Forceville (2008) proposed three key conditions for identifying multimodal metaphors: the existence of two conceptual domains (source and target), a recognizable cross-domain mapping, and sufficient contextual cues for interpretation. He also outlined four construction types—verbo-pictorial, contextual, hybrid, and integrated metaphors—which describe how language, image, sound, and gesture cooperate to construct metaphorical meaning. International research has extended these frameworks to various fields: El Refaie (2009) explored cultural metaphors in political cartoons; Mittelberg and Waugh (2009) analyzed conceptual mappings in sign language; and Bobrova (2015) examined cross-modal metaphors in advertising, emphasizing cultural influence. These studies collectively demonstrate that multimodal metaphors are both communicative strategies and cognitive mechanisms for organizing human experience. In China, multimodal metaphor research began later but has expanded rapidly. Early scholars such as Zhao Xiufeng (2010, 2011) and Feng Dezheng (2011) localized Western theories within Systemic Functional Linguistics and Visual Grammar. Subsequent studies analyzed advertisements, political cartoons, movie posters, and national symbols, revealing how different modes interact to build meaning and reflect cultural values. However, most domestic work remains qualitative, focusing on static visual materials. Empirical and quantitative approaches, particularly those involving sound and movement, are still developing. Compared with other multimodal genres, studies on music videos (MVs) are relatively scarce. MVs integrate lyrics, rhythm, cinematography, color, and performance into a unified semiotic system, making them ideal for multimodal metaphor research. Yet, most existing studies in cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis have treated music and image separately, overlooking their interactive meaning-making potential. Internationally, Quin and Cellyne (2016) analyzed gender metaphors in Dholuo Benga music, while Dąbek (2020) examined spatial metaphors in musical experience; however, both focused mainly on auditory and linguistic modalities. In China, a few scholars, including Jiang Ying (2014), Tian Miao and Wu Yue (2016), and Lin Jie (2021), explored MVs from multimodal perspectives, but their analyses

emphasized representational and interpersonal meanings rather than metaphorical construction, and lacked systematic frameworks.

Overall, the existing literature reveals that multimodal metaphor has evolved into a key theoretical paradigm linking cognition, language, and media. Yet its application to dynamic audiovisual discourse, especially music videos, remains underdeveloped. Beyoncé's MVs, characterized by rich symbolism, cultural depth, and social commentary, provide a valuable corpus for addressing these gaps. By applying multimodal metaphor theory to her works, the present study aims to deepen understanding of how different semiotic modes collaborate to construct meaning, emotion, and ideology in contemporary popular music.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interpretation with quantitative analysis to examine how multimodal metaphors function in Beyoncé's music videos. The primary aim is to explore the types, distribution, and communicative functions of multimodal metaphors in her representative works, and to reveal how different semiotic modes—linguistic, visual, auditory, and kinetic—cooperate to construct meaning and convey ideology. The central research questions guiding this study are: (1) What types of multimodal metaphors are predominantly employed in Beyoncé's MVs? (2) What communicative and ideological functions do these multimodal metaphors perform?

3.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), first proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), revolutionized the traditional understanding of metaphor. Prior to their work, metaphor was generally regarded as a stylistic or rhetorical device confined to poetic language. Lakoff and Johnson challenged this view by arguing that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of human thought, shaping not only linguistic expression but also the way people perceive, reason, and act in the world. According to CMT, abstract concepts are understood and structured in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences through systematic cross-domain mappings between a source domain and a target domain. For instance, the metaphor "TIME IS MONEY" reflects how the abstract notion of time is conceptualized through the familiar and tangible experience of money, generating everyday expressions such as "spend time," "save time," or "waste time."

The theory rests on the principle of embodied cognition, which posits that human conceptual systems are rooted in bodily experiences and perceptual interactions with the environment. Consequently, metaphor is not an ornamental feature of language but a pervasive and necessary component of cognition. It enables individuals to organize complex and abstract domains—such as emotion, morality, or identity—through physical and sensory schemas derived from lived experience. Later de-

velopments in cognitive linguistics, such as image schema theory and conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), have further enriched the explanatory scope of metaphor research, demonstrating that metaphoric thinking operates dynamically across multiple sensory modalities.

3.2. Multimodal Metaphor Theory

Multimodal Metaphor Theory (MMT), developed primarily by Charles Forceville (1996, 2006, 2008) and later expanded by Forceville and Urios-Aparisi (2009), extends the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to encompass visual, auditory, and kinetic modalities. The core proposition of MMT is that metaphors are not limited to verbal expressions; rather, they can be realized through any sensory or semiotic mode capable of representing a conceptual mapping. When the source domain and target domain are conveyed through different modalities—such as image and sound, or language and gesture—the result is a multimodal metaphor.

Forceville (2006) defines a multimodal metaphor as one in which the metaphorical mapping is distributed across two or more modes, with at least one being non-verbal. He identifies three essential conditions for recognizing such metaphors: (1) the presence of two distinct conceptual domains, (2) a perceivable mapping between them, and (3) sufficient contextual cues that make this mapping interpretable. Importantly, the viewer or listener plays an active role in constructing metaphorical meaning, relying on cultural knowledge, contextual information, and perceptual inference. This interpretive process highlights the experiential and situated nature of multimodal communication.

MMT has been widely applied in analyzing advertisements, film, political cartoons, and digital media. It emphasizes that multimodal metaphors often achieve persuasive and affective effects through cross-modal integration—where sound enhances visual meaning, motion complements linguistic cues, and color or rhythm reinforces emotional tone. Forceville (2008) categorizes multimodal metaphors into several construction types, each reflecting different configurations of modal interaction:

Contextual Metaphor – The metaphor arises from a particular situational or narrative context, where meaning depends on the surrounding environment rather than explicit linguistic or visual markers.

Verbo-Pictorial Metaphor – The source and target domains are realized through verbal and visual modes respectively, forming a complementary relationship (e.g., text captions paired with images).

Hybrid Metaphor – The source and target are visually fused within a single image, resulting in a gestalt perception where both domains coexist inseparably.

Integrated Metaphor – The source and target are blended at both the formal and semantic levels, producing a unified representation that transcends individual modalities.

These categories provide analytical tools for identifying the types and functions of

multimodal metaphors within complex audiovisual texts such as music videos. They also clarify how different modalities contribute to the collective construction of metaphorical meaning.

4. Interpretation of Construction Types of Multimodal Metaphor

4.1. Contextual Metaphor

Contextual metaphors arise when the mapping between a source and a target domain is licensed by a situated narrative context rather than by explicit lexical or visual tokens alone. In Beyoncé's MVs, contextualization is frequently achieved through *mise-en-scène*, temporal and spatial indexing, and intertextual references that cue culturally shared frames. For instance, flood-ravaged urban backdrops, processional tableaux, or ritualized gatherings create historically saturated situations that invite viewers to construe WATER as REBIRTH, MARCH as RESISTANCE, or HOME as DISPOSSESSION/RETURN. Crucially, the metaphorical force does not stem from any single sign but from a configuration: cinematographic choices (wide shots of devastated streets, aerial tracking over neighborhoods), sonic textures (drone pads, choral swells, field-recording ambience), and performance choices (measured pacing, solemn gaze, shoulder-to-shoulder formations) jointly activate the scenario. Within such contexts, a child's dance in front of uniformed officers can be interpreted as LIFE/INNOCENCE confronting POWER, while a still body of water juxtaposed with lamenting melisma suggests COLLECTIVE GRIEF seeking PURIFICATION. These readings are stabilized by culturally available narratives—post-disaster reconstruction, civil-rights marches, Black spiritual traditions—so that the viewer completes the cross-domain mapping with minimal explicit verbal guidance. Contextual metaphors thus rely on narrative plausibility and socio-historical salience; they are powerful for ideological communication because the “evidence” appears embedded in the world of the video itself. Their functional tendency in Beyoncé's corpus is to naturalize positions on identity, justice, and belonging by staging them as lived situations rather than argumentative claims, thereby leveraging pathos and ethos more than logos.

4.2. Hybrid Metaphor

Hybrid metaphors operate by visually fusing elements from two otherwise distinct domains into a single gestalt, so that the target appears to “wear” the properties of the source. In MV discourse, hybridity is often realized through costume, props, set design, and compositing that make the performer a living emblem—CROWNED HAIR as CROWNED SOVEREIGNTY, PEARLS or BEADS as HISTORICAL LINEAGE, or a BODY enmeshed with CHAINS as STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINT. Beyoncé's videos frequently mobilize luxury iconography, ancestral motifs, and vernacular Black aesthetics in one frame; the conjoined appearance yields a fused sign where WOMAN

becomes NATION/ARCHIVE/ROYALTY. Because the source and target are perceptually inseparable, the viewer experiences the mapping pre-reflectively: the sovereignty implied by a crown-like headpiece is not merely asserted but seen, the dignity of posture and framing completing the gestalt. Sound design strengthens the hybridity by aligning timbral signatures (e.g., drumline cadences or gospel harmonization) with the fused image, so that “royal” connotations extend from attire to sonic space. Choreography can also hybridize, folding athletic power into elegance to create WOMAN IS FORCE/ELEGANCE IS ARSENAL. Functionally, hybrid metaphors in Beyoncé’s work foreground embodied authority—they collapse the distance between subject and symbol, turning identity claims into visible ontologies. This mechanism is especially effective for countering reductive stereotypes: the fused figure refuses separation between femininity and power, tradition and modernity, intimacy and collectivity.

4.3. Verbo-Pictorial Metaphor

Verbo-pictorial metaphors distribute the mapping across verbal and visual modes, with lyrics or on-screen text cueing the conceptual frame while imagery specifies or intensifies it. In Beyoncé’s MVs, lexical items such as freedom, formation, brown skin, spirit, home, or lion frequently anchor the target domain; the visual track then supplies source-domain schemata—thresholds, doors, deserts, oceans, bridges, and ascents—that render abstract predicates experientially legible. When a lyric thematizes liberation or endurance, the camera often traces upward trajectories, open horizons, or bodies breaking lines, inviting the inference FREEDOM IS VERTICAL ASCENT or RESILIENCE IS FLOW. Conversely, when words name embodied identity (e.g., skin, body, lineage), the visuals may shift to intimate portraiture and tactile textures, enacting DIGNITY IS RADIANCE or HERITAGE IS SKIN/CRAFT/FAMILY. The music’s formal organization—cadential arrivals, sudden drops, or call-and-response passages—functions as a discourse organizer that times the appearance of critical images at lyrical peaks, maximizing cross-modal coherence. Compared with purely contextual metaphors, verbo-pictorial constructions are more didactic: the verbal line narrows interpretive latitude while the image supplies concrete instantiation. Their functional tendency is twofold: pedagogically, they scaffold audience uptake of complex ideas (e.g., intersectional empowerment) by coupling a named abstraction with a vivid scene; rhetorically, they amplify solidarity through chant-like textual motifs whose meanings are repeatedly “proven” by the visuals.

4.4. Integrated Metaphor

Integrated metaphors blend source and target not only at the level of appearance (as in hybridity) but at the level of temporal, affective, and formal integration across modes, such that the metaphor unfolds as a process rather than a single emblem. In

Beyoncé's videos, integration is often achieved when choreography, camera motion, harmonic rhythm, and color grading co-evolve to enact a mapping like HEALING IS CIRCULATION, EMPOWERMENT IS ACCUMULATION OF ENERGY, or COMMUNITY IS POLYPHONY. A recurring technique is the alignment of bodily cycles (breath, sway, step) with musical cycles (pulse, groove, refrain), so that the body literally carries the music; the viewer experiences POWER as a kinesis that passes through individuals into the collective. Color palettes may modulate from cool to warm across a section, cinematically rendering TRANSFORMATION IS DAWN or REVELATION IS ILLUMINATION, while lensing shifts from isolating close-ups to ensemble wides mark IDENTITY AS RELATIONAL BECOMING. Because the mapping is distributed across time, its persuasiveness lies in felt inevitability: by the time the chorus returns, the audience has lived through the metaphor's logic. Integrated metaphors thus excel at narrativizing ideology—turning commitments to freedom, love, or kinship into temporal journeys with tension and release. In Beyoncé's corpus, they frequently culminate in ritual forms (circle formations, processions, call-and-response codas) that fuse sacred and secular grammars, making the blend not just a reading but an event that performs what it claims. Functionally, integrated metaphors are the most expansive: they coordinate attention, emotion, and group synchrony, thereby converting private affect into public stance and anchoring cultural memory in repeatable form.

5. The Main Function Achieved by the Multimodal Metaphors in Beyoncé's MVs

5.1. Ideological Transmission

One of the most salient functions of multimodal metaphors in Beyoncé's MVs lies in the transmission and negotiation of ideology. Through the interplay of visual imagery, music, choreography, and linguistic expression, Beyoncé constructs metaphorical representations that articulate resistance, empowerment, and transformation. Her use of multimodal metaphors transforms abstract sociopolitical concerns—such as racial equality, gender liberation, and collective solidarity—into tangible and emotionally resonant experiences. For example, metaphors such as FREEDOM IS MOTION, embodied through dynamic choreography and rhythmic propulsion, or RESISTANCE IS ASCENT, realized through upward camera movements and spatial elevation, visually and sonically encode liberation as a lived, kinetic experience. The intermodal synchronization of lyrics like "I'ma keep running 'cause a winner don't quit on themselves" with imagery of bodily release and open landscapes turns personal perseverance into collective ideology.

Contextual and integrated metaphors are particularly instrumental in ideological transmission. Contextual metaphors draw upon recognizable historical and cultural scenarios—such as Southern Gothic imagery, church rituals, or protest marches—to situate ideological meanings within familiar socio-cultural contexts. Integrated

metaphors, by contrast, weave ideology into the audiovisual texture itself, making it inseparable from rhythm, light, and motion. Through this embodied form of signification, Beyoncé's MVs transform ideology from a discursive statement into a multi-sensory experience, allowing viewers not just to understand but to feel empowerment. Consequently, multimodal metaphors serve as a vehicle for counter-narratives that challenge dominant cultural paradigms while reaffirming marginalized identities and collective resilience.

5.2. Emotional Evocation

Beyond ideological expression, multimodal metaphors in Beyoncé's works play a crucial role in emotional evocation, enabling affective engagement that transcends linguistic comprehension. Music videos, as a hybrid medium, rely heavily on affective resonance—the alignment of sound, movement, and color—to elicit emotional responses. In this regard, metaphors such as PAIN IS WEIGHT, HOPE IS LIGHT, or LOVE IS CIRCULATION often emerge from cross-modal correspondences among melody, hue, and bodily gesture. Slow tempos, low-frequency instrumentation, and subdued color palettes materialize sorrow and oppression, while sudden harmonic shifts, radiant lighting, and expansive movement sequences enact catharsis and emotional liberation.

Hybrid and verbo-pictorial metaphors are most effective in this domain. The hybrid metaphor fuses emotional states with physical environments or bodily gestures, allowing viewers to perceive feeling as form—for instance, grief visualized as immersion in water, or joy rendered as collective movement toward brightness. Verbo-pictorial metaphors reinforce emotional cues by coupling key lyrical expressions with imagery that amplifies their affective valence. When lyrics speak of struggle, the visual mode may emphasize confinement or burden; when they express triumph, visuals expand spatially, and the sound intensifies in texture and rhythm. The affective synchronization across modes creates a multimodal empathy, drawing audiences into the performer's experiential space.

In Beyoncé's corpus, emotional evocation is not merely aesthetic but political: emotion becomes a pathway to empathy and understanding. By allowing the audience to feel the metaphoric mappings physically and viscerally, multimodal metaphors transform private emotion into collective affect, aligning individual experience with communal identity and resistance. This emotive dimension is central to the persuasive power of Beyoncé's visual-musical rhetoric, where the body, the beat, and the image converge to produce meaning that is simultaneously sensual and ideological.

5.3. Cultural Identity Construction

A third and equally significant function of multimodal metaphors in Beyoncé's MVs is the construction and affirmation of cultural identity. Her visual language consistently intertwines African diasporic aesthetics, Black feminist discourse, and reli-

gious iconography to articulate a multifaceted sense of self that is both personal and collective. Through multimodal metaphors, Beyoncé negotiates between historical memory and contemporary representation, situating Black womanhood within a global yet culturally rooted framework.

Contextual and hybrid metaphors are most instrumental in this process. Contextual metaphors draw from culturally specific settings—such as Creole architecture, African-inspired costume design, and ritualized choreography—to frame identity as historically continuous and community-based. The metaphor *HERITAGE IS FOUNDATION* is thus enacted through architectural imagery and grounded dance movements, while *BLOODLINE IS RIVER* symbolizes the persistence and fluidity of ancestry. Hybrid metaphors, on the other hand, visually merge the performer's body with symbolic artifacts—such as crowns, beads, or natural elements—producing a gestalt in which *WOMAN IS EARTH*, or *BODY IS ARCHIVE*. Such imagery collapses the divide between individual and culture, turning the performer into a living embodiment of collective history.

Integrated metaphors further extend this function by aligning sonic motifs, visual textures, and choreographic formations to represent identity as process rather than possession. Repetitive rhythmic cycles and call-and-response patterns evoke African oral traditions, while circular group formations metaphorically encode *COMMUNITY AS CONTINUITY*. The intermodal synergy constructs an identity that is at once diasporic, spiritual, and modern, highlighting the coexistence of rootedness and hybridity. Ultimately, multimodal metaphors allow Beyoncé to craft a self-representation that transcends conventional boundaries of race, gender, and genre. Her MVs thus become multimodal narratives of cultural affirmation, transforming visual performance into a site of identity production and collective remembrance.

Through these three major functional domains—ideological transmission, emotional evocation, and cultural identity construction—Beyoncé's multimodal metaphors demonstrate the power of cross-modal meaning-making in contemporary popular culture. Each metaphorical type contributes distinctively: contextual metaphors anchor ideology in lived experience, hybrid metaphors visualize empowerment through embodiment, verbo-pictorial metaphors mediate emotion through linguistic-visual synergy, and integrated metaphors orchestrate all modes into transformative, ritualized experience. Together, they reveal how multimodal discourse not only reflects but also actively shapes cultural consciousness in the digital age.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined Beyoncé's representative music videos through the lens of multimodal metaphor theory, integrating insights from conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive linguistics, and multimodal discourse analysis. The analysis demonstrates that Beyoncé's MVs function as complex semiotic systems in which linguistic, visual,

auditory, and kinetic modes collaboratively construct meaning. Far from serving as mere entertainment, her music videos operate as richly layered cultural texts that employ metaphor to express ideology, evoke emotion, and affirm identity. By identifying and interpreting different types of multimodal metaphors—contextual, hybrid, verbo-pictorial, and integrated—the research reveals how metaphorical structures shape both aesthetic experience and socio-political discourse in popular music media.

The findings indicate that contextual metaphors in Beyoncé's works rely heavily on historical, spatial, and cultural references to situate meanings within recognizable social contexts, thereby facilitating ideological transmission. Hybrid metaphors fuse visual and bodily elements into unified gestalts that embody power, resistance, and sovereignty, transforming abstract concepts into corporeal and visual forms. Verbo-pictorial metaphors align lyrical expression with imagery to guide interpretation and amplify emotional resonance, while integrated metaphors synchronize sound, movement, and visual rhythm to enact meaning as a lived, dynamic process. Collectively, these forms of multimodal metaphor enable Beyoncé to weave together personal narrative and collective consciousness, turning individual performance into a medium for social commentary and cultural dialogue.

Three major communicative functions emerge from the analysis. First, multimodal metaphors serve as powerful tools of ideological transmission, transforming feminist and anti-racist discourses into embodied and emotionally accessible experiences. Through metaphoric mappings such as FREEDOM IS MOTION or RESISTANCE IS ASCENT, Beyoncé translates abstract political ideals into sensorial realities that invite empathy and identification. Second, they perform emotional evocation, synchronizing musical, visual, and gestural cues to provoke affective participation. Emotion becomes not only an expressive mode but also a persuasive strategy through which viewers are drawn into shared experiential spaces. Third, multimodal metaphors facilitate cultural identity construction, articulating an Afro-diasporic aesthetic that connects ancestral memory with contemporary expression. By blending traditional symbolism with modern performance, Beyoncé constructs a collective identity that is intersectional, global, and deeply rooted in Black cultural experience.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the expansion of multimodal metaphor theory by applying it to dynamic audiovisual media, demonstrating that metaphoric meaning in MVs is not static but processual—emerging through temporal and cross-modal coordination. It also illustrates how multimodal discourse analysis can bridge cognitive linguistics with cultural studies, highlighting the embodied and ideological dimensions of metaphor in contemporary popular culture. Practically, the study underscores the potential of multimodal analysis as a framework for understanding how artists, through visual and sonic design, participate in broader socio-political conversations. It shows that metaphors are not confined to words or

images but are enacted through motion, rhythm, and performance, shaping audience perception and collective emotion.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. The analysis focuses on a limited selection of Beyoncé's music videos, which, although representative, cannot fully capture the diversity of multimodal metaphorical practices in global music video production. Future research could extend the corpus to include other artists, genres, and cultural contexts, allowing for comparative analysis across languages, media forms, and ideological frameworks. Additionally, incorporating empirical reception studies—such as audience response analysis or eye-tracking experiments—could further illuminate how viewers cognitively and emotionally engage with multimodal metaphors in real time.

In conclusion, the study affirms that Beyoncé's music videos exemplify the power of multimodal metaphor as a mode of cultural expression and cognitive representation. Through the convergence of sound, image, language, and movement, her works transform personal experience into collective meaning, bridging art and activism, emotion and ideology. By revealing how metaphors function as the connective tissue between aesthetic form and social consciousness, this research not only enriches the theoretical landscape of multimodal studies but also deepens our understanding of how popular media participates in shaping cultural identity and human empathy in the twenty-first century.

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