

*Stop this Train: A Metaphorical Analysis of John Mayer's Album Continuum*

by

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## ABSTRACT

John Mayer's album *Continuum* is his third studio album and includes some of his best work. This analysis used a five-step metaphorical approach, as referenced to Ivie (1987), to understand the rhetorical invention of Mayer's album *Continuum* and to interpret the metaphorical concepts employed by Mayer. This analysis discovered six tenors: Peace, Spirit, Darkness, Hope, Violence, and Cruelty and their accompanying vehicles. Rhetorical techniques in Mayer's lyrics can be associated to references to nature, contrasting abstract with concrete terms, and the use of opposites (God/Devil terms). *Continuum* is an album that incorporates the trials and tribulations of romantic relationships using a combination of blues, soul, and contemporary pop music to underscore the lyrics.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

John Mayer burst onto the scene in the early 2000's, but it wasn't until his album *Continuum* that I had grown respect for his music. This was during a time when I was trying to find out who I was as a person and found a comparison to myself and John Mayer's song *Stop this Train*.

Weeks went on, and the more I listened to Mayer's music, specifically the album *Continuum*, I found that I loved his use of metaphor within his lyrics and enjoyed deciphering the true meaning of what message he was trying to convey. I wanted to understand why I loved the music so much and to understand truly how talented John Mayer is as a singer-songwriter. "Slow Dancing in a Burning Room," and "Stop this Train" are some of the most iconic song titles from *Continuum* and still to this day is John Mayer's most successful album. Trying to understand the meaning of the album and looking for a meaning behind the album's name is what this research aims to uncover. I also consider the ways that the songs included in this album contain their individual and independent meanings as well as how they segue with other songs on the album.

"Waiting on the World to Change" becomes the greatest hit from the album and advocates a subtle, yet powerful undertone for the youth of the world. Digging deeper into each song and finding more significant meanings than what was just stated allowed me to have a greater understanding of the use of rhetoric within music and the ways in



which John Mayer allows himself to be influential within his music and lyrics. In an interview in 2006, John Mayer explained how he loves to be able to leave a song up for interpretation rather than give the whole meaning away. (JohnMayerEnEspaniol, 2010). He says that this allows for listeners to do what they want with the song and interpret whatever message that their hearts desires to hear. It is an interesting concept that he gives on the whole idea of making music. Leaving the song up for interpretation is a great freedom that Mayer allows his listeners to have, but John Mayer assures that, “the song goes on to explain the title in lyrics. “Waiting on the World to Change” is just a feeling. It’s not meant to be a political diatribe. I will let any political diatribe about the song take place by people who are really good at having political discourse.” (JohnMayerEnEspaniol, 2010) He does not want to place such political meaning on a song, but writes on behalf of what he feels that the world is trying to say and what he is hearing from everyday people.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to analyze John Mayer’s album *Continuum* and to understand how this album has had an impact on the rhetoric of music and has influenced the music world. This research used a rhetorical lens aiming to understand the metaphors used by John Mayer in the songs contained in *Continuum*; promote rhetorical significance of the album, and understand the influence of this album on the context of contemporary music. Guided through the framework created by Ivie (1987), the five steps explained by him in his work titled, “Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War ‘Idealists.’” (pp. 318) The five steps helped explain the metaphors used in *Continuum*, and where in the field that this research may fill in the blanks or support previously published research.

The album contains so many different moods in the titles of the songs. From “The Heart of Life,” to, “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room,” listeners find themselves drowning in metaphors and learning how to swim within them. My research adds to the rhetoric of music with an artifact that has not been analyzed.

### **Description of the Artifact**

With winning best pop-vocal album in the 49<sup>th</sup> Grammy Awards, John Mayer’s third studio album, *Continuum*, has taken his music into a more blues style of music and allowed for more soulful music to be played. In previous albums, he had produced albums that were more of the pop variation rather than the blues that he portrayed within *Continuum*. The album, in its first year landed in the number two spot on the U.S. *Billboard 200* chart and had sold 300,186 in the first week, while also reaching into the top ten in other countries while also selling over 3 million copies worldwide. John Mayer’s album *Continuum* has been, “a maturity,” of his work compared to previous work, and is an obvious showing of the fandom around the world that is expressed through the sales of this album worldwide (DeCurtis, 2006).

According to John Mayer on behalf of his album *Continuum*, he states,

Continuum is a result of everything I have made up until now. That incorporates a blues feel, that incorporates a soul feel, and *Continuum* is because of Steve Jordan and Pino Palladino. It is because of the ride into the studio every day when I was writing and listening to great classic, timeless soul music and R&B music and Blues music (Mayer, Interview, 2006).

This album is a progression into what makes John Mayer who he is as an artist and for what he is most known. This album also contained five singles that he had

released independent of the album including “Waiting on the World to Change,” “Belief,” “Gravity,” “Dreaming with a Broken Heart,” and “Say.” The album was released in September 12, 2006 by John Mayer, and distributed by Colombia Records, but had also been recorded in multiple places throughout the country.

It is known that John Mayer is the lead singer in his band, but the band is known to be a trio that included John Mayer at lead guitar and singer, Steve Jordan on drums, and Pino Palladino on bass guitar. They were known as the John Mayer trio, but much more credit has been given to John Mayer for being the writer of the majority of the songs that are included on this album and the other members really just being supporting members/cast for the band (Kahn, 2016). According to DeCurtis of *Rolling Stone Magazine* (2006),

With this album, the twenty-eight-year-old Mayer displays a new command of all his musical sources. The Memphis-soul touches that seemed like a genre exercise on *Heavier Things*’ “Come Back to Bed,” from 2003, achieve full flower here. The role of blue-eyed-soul-singer suits Mayer... his falsetto choruses on “Vultures” are sexy and assured. His breathy vocals are firmly at the album’s center, and the R&B tradition he’s mining lends weight to his pop flourishes. As for the vulnerability and openheartedness soul music encourages, well, that’s the part of what all those young female fans loved about Mayer in the first place. (DeCurtis, p.1)

Mayer brings to life the ways he can capitalize on the influences that he had growing up by using the blues and soul sound that he adds into his own music and gives it its own style and sound.

The album includes twelve songs and an additional song on the vinyl form of the album which is known as “Say.” Five of these songs are independently released as singles at a later or prior time. The names of the songs that are listed within the album in order are “Waiting on the World to Change,” “I Don’t Trust Myself (With Loving You),” “Belief,” “Gravity,” “The Heart of Life,” “Vultures,” “Stop This Train,” “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room,” “Bold as Love,” “Dreaming with a Broken Heart,” “In Repair,” and “I’m Gonna Find Another You.” Critics have claimed that the album *Continuum*, “proves that his recent outings were a tonic rather than a diversion. It features Mr. Jordan and Mr. Palladino throughout, but it’s also a return to form, and to the modest lyricism of blues-pop alchemists like Eric Clapton” (Chinen, 2006).

### **Literature Review**

#### **Rhetoric of Metaphors and Archetypes**

The use of archetypes is very common within the realm of rhetorical criticism. Osborn (1967) stated: “Archetypal metaphors are especially popular in rhetorical discourse. Within the almost limitless range of possibility for figurative association, such metaphors will be selected more frequently than non-archetypal approximations” (p. 306). This allows for the researcher to be able to assess a meaning of a relationship between the metaphors in a speech or song, to enhance the significance of the use of the metaphors.) Archetypes found in metaphors “popularity appears immune to changes wrought by time, so that the pattern of preferential selection recurs without remarkable change from one generation to another” (Osborn, 1967, p. 306).

Some researchers believe that metaphors are the base of the rhetorical argument. Ivie (1987) explained: “the premise that metaphor is at the base of rhetorical invention.

Elaborating a primary image into a well-formed argument produces a motive, or interpretation of reality, with which the intended audience is invited to identify” (p. 318). This provides another perspective into what metaphor is understood to mean. Ivie identifies five steps that he believes are the correct way to analyze a text for the metaphors:

First, familiarizing oneself with the speaker’s text and context is essential to interpreting any selection of his or her discourse... Second, representative texts are selected for a series of close readings undertaken to identify and mark vehicles employed by the speaker... The third step is to arrange the complete set of marked vehicles into subgroups by clustering those with similar ‘entailments.’... Fourth, a separate file of vehicles and their immediate contexts is compiled for each cluster of terms, i.e., one file for every metaphorical concept... Finally, the “concept” files compiled in step four are analyzed one-by-one for patterns of usage within and between clusters, thereby revealing the speaker’s system of metaphorical concepts. (Ivie, 1987, pp. 319-320)

According to Bjursell (2016), “exploring empirical metaphors provides a rich illustration of coinciding meanings” (p.1). She explained within her research over the adult-educational system the ways metaphors come into play when analyzing the way leaders talk in the educational system. This is a different style of an artifact, but still can show the ways metaphors can describe events and objects and provide illustrations.

Another way of understanding metaphors and their use in argument for rhetoric is discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). They discuss the ways metaphor is used in speech to bring meaning and perspective to a subject. They explain,

The metaphorical concepts TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A RESOURCE, and TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY form a single system based on sub-categorization, since in our society money is a limited resource and limited resources are valuable commodities. These sub categorization relationships characterize entailment relationships between the metaphors: TIME IS MONEY entails that TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, which entails that TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. (p. 1)

In the case of using metaphorical criticism of music, the critic takes the lyrics of the song and analyzes the ways in which metaphors are being used, by identifying the “tenors” (principal subject) and “vehicles” (secondary subject). Once the tenor is identified, then it is possible to go deeper and explain what the vehicle is that is moving the tenor or tenors towards a single ideological perspective.

When there is rhetoric there is persuasion and when there is metaphor, there is a message. Barten (1998), tells us, “the use of metaphor does more than simply relay information. It serves a clear rhetorical purpose by influencing and persuading students through capturing their attention and imagination, enabling them to get beyond the notes and thus making the experience memorable” (p. 1). She emphasizes the idea of how metaphor serves a purpose even in the educational realm where there is a need to persuade students to learn something a certain way.

RQ1: What are the tenor and vehicles used in the album *Continuum*?

RQ2: What are the major underlying meanings found in the lyrics on *Continuum*?

### **Methodology**

Music of any kind has a message that it is trying to convey. In some forms of music, there are lyrics and metaphors within those lyrics that convey the message the song seeks to communicate. According to Ivie (1987), “five basic steps provide a rudimentary procedure for identifying key metaphors” (p. 319). The first step is, “familiarizing oneself with the speaker’s text and context is essential to interpreting any particular selection of his or her discourse...critics attempt to create a sense of the complete experience before attending to its particulars” (Ivie, 1987, p. 319). Understanding the entirety of what might be surrounding the artifact and what other underlying texts may have influenced the artifact at hand. An explanation of the social/historical context in which the artifact took place is also important.

The second step of identifying key metaphors is, “representative texts are selected for a series of close readings undertaken to identify and mark vehicles employed by the speaker” (Ivie, 1987, p. 319). A tenor is a way of describing the general meaning of something through word usage. A vehicle is something that gives direction for the tenor and fulfills the meaning of the words that coincide with each other. Finding the tenor and vehicles of metaphors can give a greater perspective on the true meaning of a sentence or phrase, or in this case a set of lyrics. “The result is to reduce the original text to an abridged version that comprises only marked vehicle and their immediate contexts” (Ivie, 1987, p. 319). As the researcher, I used the printed lyrics of the song, in addition to studying the musical interpretation that accompanies the lyric.

The third step in identifying key metaphors according to Ivie (1987) is: To arrange the complete set of marked vehicles into subgroups by clustering those with similar “entailments.” Each cluster, it can be tentatively assumed, represents one of the

“metaphorical concepts” featured in the speaker’s discourse, and the clusters together indicate the speaker’s “system of metaphorical concepts” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1981, pp. 289-292; Ivie, 1987, p. 320). This allowed me to effectively decipher through the vehicles that have been presented of what John Mayer is communicating in each song on the album *Continuum*. These clusters can be characterized by anything including love, hate, war, and strife. The clusters that I found helped understand the perspective that John Mayer has taken with his album *Continuum*.

The fourth step is to get more specific with the clusters and vehicles that are a part of each cluster and to understand that all occurrences of the cluster have been found and that all vehicles that are associated with that cluster have been correctly represented (Ivie, 1987). This process is the way you make a “file.” A file is a representation of the metaphorical concept and all that are associated with it in an organized fashion. According to Ivie (1987), “these ‘concept’ files, however they are compiled, display the speaker’s various applications of vehicles within a given cluster, as well as concurrences with vehicles from other clusters” (p. 320). This allowed me to understand the underlying tones and feelings expressed within the lyrics and to find how they relate to each other within their own clusters and what John Mayer is trying to communicate from each song and possibly the entire album.

The fifth step of finding key metaphors and understanding the perspective the rhetor has taken in assessing the rhetorical invention and underlying meaning, as explained by Ivie (1987),

The “concept” files compiled in step four are analyzed one-by-one for patterns of usage within and between clusters, thereby revealing the speaker’s system of



metaphorical concepts. Attention is focused on prevailing patterns, assuming that the critic may have inaccurately assigned a few of the vehicles in isolated instances to meet special purposes. (p. 320)

By analyzing *Continuum* by John Mayer for the metaphorical concepts that it contains, the analysis revealed and effectively argued why this album has had a significant impact on the genre of popular music.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced the artifact, the rationale for the significance of why I should be researching this artifact, and explains the theoretical framework I used for my metaphorical analysis.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature, especially considering the areas of the Rhetoric of Music and the analysis of metaphors in rhetoric. Chapter 3 discusses the metaphorical approach I have selected.

Chapter 4 includes the analysis of the artifact. Chapter 5 includes the conclusion and discussion of possibilities for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once wrote: “Music is the universal language of mankind” (Longfellow, n.d.) In Chapter Two, I discuss the rhetoric of music and the way in which music has been analyzed through rhetorical analysis which demonstrates the universality of the power of music referred to by Longfellow. I also discuss the ways John Mayer as an artist had a significant impact in the music industry and why his album *Continuum* is worthy of analysis.

#### **Rhetoric of Music**

Music has been around for as long as there has been civilization, and the rhetorical power that it possesses whether that be in lyrics or with the instruments alone. According to Eschman (1921), “the four elements of musical style: rhythm, melody, harmony, and form have occupied at one time or another, positions of varying importance in the development of music” (p. 157). He also went on to say,

The critical theorist cannot at once agree with so simple an explanation, for he finds it difficult to conceive of any musical thought without its embodiment in material form. The theorist must also consider the other elements so interdependent as to justify the belief that melody lies inherent in what appears to be the simplest rhythmic combination, and that harmony is implied in any melodic succession whatever. (p. 157)

Rhetoric of music was studied as well by Toumpoulidis (2005) who had focused on the seventeenth and eighteenth century to discover the meaning of the songs and compositions that were played in that time. He explains:

The alternation of passion and reason between the affective (exordium and peroratio) and objective (narratio and confirmatio) sections of the classical dispositio is demonstrated in specific pedaliter praeludia by D. Buxtehude, whose free organ works point to an advanced rhetorical plan hidden behind each composition. (p.1)

Understanding the rhetorical power of music transforms a musical score into a persuasive message.

Bringing passion and emotion into the ears and minds of the listener is what the artist is trying to do. For artists to create music without rhetoric would be to create a song without a meaning. According to Dew (1999), “late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century musical theorists frequently equated music with rhetoric, primarily because the two arts were seen to share the same goal — to move the passions of their listeners” (p. 2). The point of an artist is to paint a picture for the audience to see or feel. In this case, it is about the ways John Mayer reaches his audience through the rhetoric of music. What meanings and messages is John Mayer communicating through his music? This question can be answered through a rhetorical analysis.

What makes the rhetoric of music so powerful is what is put into making it happen. According to Dewberry and Millen (2014),

The meaning of music is created by numerous agents: the performer(s), the writer(s), the audience(s), the record company, as well as factors including but not

limited to historical, social, cultural, and political contexts. The meaning of music, like all other forms of symbolic communication, is in the hands of many and thus is open to numerous interpretations, not all of which are necessarily consistent. (p. 83)

This opens the door for interpretation to the audience and even the researcher. There are so many different opinions about creating one song and so many different interpretations that could possibly be the meaning and message a song was trying to communicate. A more simplistic way of understanding the rhetoric of music is to understand the three appeals that LeCoat (1976) talks about in his essay over *Music and the Three Appeals of Classical Rhetoric* (p. 157). He emphasizes the idea of music always being equated with logos, ethos, and pathos. Those three appeals are at the basis of every argument that a person would make. There are many ways in which music may communicate a message (Theodore, 2000). Considering John Mayer's music in *Continuum* allows me to explore the rhetorical meaning of his work.

### **Music as the Artifact**

Soulful, smooth, artistic, and influential. Each generation of people has had its own twist on what music sounds like to them. Whether it is the cultural differences, a celebration, or a depressing atmosphere, people have been able to make and associate music with certain events. According to Rybacki and Rybacki (1991), "music, whether it is a single song or a long score, is a rhetorical act when it is used to influence opinion or behavior" (p. 276). People have also been using music to influence the people around them. This allows them to convey messages and how they feel to the people around them.

Every type of music has its own variations of influence and rhetoric, even house music has been researched as rhetoric. According to Hawkins (2003),

House tracks musically encode the dynamics of club culture where the blend of identities create the impulse for expressing a wealth of shared sentiments. Feeling the beat is thus linked to a sensibility towards cultural context as much as style; if the chemistry of the groove is right, it will succeed in arousing pleasures and passions that ritualize reality. (p. 101)

The point of rhetoric is to have an influence on the audience to which the message is directed, and with house music we find ourselves being influenced one way or another. Whether it is the music alone that is having the effect, or it is the lyrics that-accompany the music that influence us, music is rhetorically powerful. According to Matula (2000) “by explicitly attending to the rhetorical context, critics are more likely to warrant critical judgments within social and cultural discourses, reconceptualize musical texts in intertextual terms, and actively reflect on critical performance” (p. 1). This is a helpful explanation of the way a critic is able to look at music as type of musical text without having his/her bias effect the judgement as much. Matula (2000) has taken a closer look at the effect the rock band the Pixies and their song “Rock Music.” He states that the song, “can be found at a nexus of rhetorical contexts, including punk taste culture, surrealist art, musical argument, post punk alternative rock, and anthem rock,” (p.1). This included a feel of the culture that had surrounded the music and had also included a combination of the musical architecture that designed the type of emotions to flow out of the music.

According to Root (1986) “underlying most of the research about popular music has been the supposition that, somehow, it affects its listeners in subtle and significant ways and therefore ought to be studied and analyzed,” (p.1). This is the foundation upon which there is a purpose for the researcher to consider the ways music, especially popular/contemporary music, can be analyzed and criticized for the influence that it is having on its audience.

Music has also been understood as a way for political campaigns to enhance their influence for a candidate. According to Dewberry and Millen (2014),

The choice of campaign music can have important consequences for a political candidate's image. Reagan, Bush, and Clinton each used rock songs to enhance their campaigns. However, those same songs, when examined closely, also reflect negative aspects of the candidates. (p. 1)

According to Halbritter (2006), “scholarly attention to visual rhetoric has helped composition teachers and theorists envision new possibilities for composing in new media. Careful consideration of musical rhetoric may enable us to hear new possibilities for integrated-media composition as well” (p. 317). He explains the importance of musical rhetoric in another area of study where the visual is just as important as the hearing medium.

Looking deeper into the ways music affects our being, Zbikowski (2002) explains in his book *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* the ways music affects humans on a grander scale. “But the notes themselves have vanished before these sensations have developed sufficiently to escape submersion under those which the succeeding or even simultaneous notes have already begun to awaken in us,” (p. 2).

How those notes are affecting the person or audience is what this analysis aims to uncover as well.

According to Chuang and Hart (2008), “music can be seen as an effective tool for expressing the suburban punk experience due to its ability to convey both linguistic and emotional content,” (p. 1). They concluded that Green Day’s “Jesus of Suburbia,” has an effect as a rhetorical artifact. They also considered the ways Green Day was an advocate for the suburban American punk culture.

According to Burgess (2010), “The rhetor is a musician with connections to multiple cultural sites and the song has conceptual messages that deal with identity, affording the opportunity to explore identity and identification in one song,” (p. 1). This gives insight in the ways “song” can be effective in giving a message in the lyrics that communicates to the identity of the audience and how they identify with the world around them.

### **John Mayer’s Music**

John Mayer is effective in communicating messages through his music according to Trust (2015), John Mayer has sold over 16 million albums in the United States to date. John Mayer is one of the most successful contemporary artists to have performed. In his career, he has seven studio albums and seven live albums. *Continuum* being one of his most successful albums has peaked inside the top twenty-five in ten different countries’ billboards. In the United States and Canada, *Continuum* has peaked inside the top three. Mayer is a seven-time Grammy award winner, including winning best pop-vocal album in 2006 when *Continuum* was released.

For John Mayer, *Continuum* was the introduction of the more-mature John Mayer into the recording scene as compared to his previous albums, *Room for Squares* (2001) and *Heavier Things* (2003). Even though *Continuum* had won a Grammy for best pop-vocal album, it was considered, by critics, to be his step into a more bluesy sound that differed from his previous albums (DeCurtis, 2006). Songs like “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room” and “Gravity” are examples of this sound that he had gained along his career as a musician and contemporary artist.

Currently Mayer has recorded over eight albums since 2006 and has been featured in many other artists’ music as well as his own. The bluesy sound is his biggest influence, including, but not limited to influence by Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Bruce Springsteen, and many more. Since *Continuum* has been the sound that John Mayer made that truly moved his career forward in time, I analyze the album for metaphorical power. To truly understand the message of John Mayer, I must analyze the album for its sounds, lyrics and song titles. This allows me to understand the true message and influence that is being communicated.

### **Summary**

The second chapter discussed the ways other researchers have used music as an artifact. The research explains how lyrics, word usage, and instrument choice can make for a powerful message that spoken communication cannot reach. John Mayer’s musical success was discussed and the rationale of why his music is worthy of analysis was presented. In Chapter Three, I discuss the step-by-step process as explained by Robert Ivie (1987), from his research about the Cold War to find key metaphors in an artifact.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 3, I discuss metaphorical criticism, providing an overview of the power of metaphor, as well as specific information about the procedure to following when applying metaphorical criticism.

According to Ivie (1987), “five basic steps provide a rudimentary procedure for identifying key metaphors” (p. 319). Lakoff and Johnson (1981) note:

Since metaphorical expressions in our language are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way, we can use metaphorical linguistic expressions to study the nature of metaphorical concepts and to gain an understanding of the metaphorical nature of our activities. (p. 290)

According to Foss (2009), “metaphors are nonliteral comparisons in which a word or phrase from one domain of experience is applied to another domain,” (p. 267). Metaphor can be linked back as far as Aristotle’s time where he defined metaphor in his book *Poetics* (335 BCE), reprinted in English by Cooper (1913), as, “the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus,” (p. xv). Therefore, giving explanation of an action of a noun that would characteristically be of another noun.

Over time, more definitions of the word metaphor have come around and more perceptions as well. According to Black (1955), “when we speak of a relatively simple metaphor, we are referring to a sentence or another expression, in which some words are used metaphorically...” and then goes on to explain an example of a metaphorical instance:

The chairman ploughed through the discussion". An obvious point to begin with is the contrast between the word " ploughed " and the remaining words by which it is accompanied. This would be commonly expressed by saying that "ploughed" has here a metaphorical sense, while the other words have literal senses. (pp. 274-275)

Black’s definition is a variation of older philosophers including Aristotle and Cicero, but Whately defines metaphor as, “a word substituted for another on account of the Resemblance or Analogy between their significations,” (1861, p. 280).

Variations of metaphor has driven the literature of metaphor forward and allowed for deeper considerations of metaphorical usage through time. From the beginnings of metaphor where Aristotle understood metaphor in a traditional approach as, “the use of metaphor is to delight in learning,” where Cicero, “traces delight in metaphor to the enjoyment of the author’s ingenuity in overpassing the immediate, or in the vivid presentation of the principal subject,” (Cope, 1867, Ch. II). Knowing this gives better understanding about what to identify when considering the ways key metaphors can be spotted in text. Ivie has separated the process of identifying key metaphors into five steps that has allowed me to be precise and consistent with my criticism. He begins by explaining that, “familiarizing oneself with the speaker’s text and context is essential to

interpreting any particular selection of his or her discourse... critics attempt to create a sense of the complete experience before attending to its particulars” (Ivie, 1987, p. 319).

Foss (2009) states:

In contrast to the view of metaphor as decoration, metaphor now is seen as a major means for constituting reality. We do not perceive reality and then interpret or give it meaning. Rather we experience reality through the language by which we describe it. (p. 268)

This is a varying look from the beginning of metaphor from Aristotle and Cicero, all the way to Foss in present day where in the past it was, “decoration” while the present day, “description is the reality we experience” (Foss, 2009, p. 268).

To fully familiarize myself with the artifact, I listened to all the tracks on *Continuum*. This allowed me to conceptualize what John Mayer was trying to communicate in both the title of the album and, the lyrics in the songs.

For Ivie (1987), the context meant taking in everything that the Cold War had to offer from the surface and how it may have affected the world. One thing that helps explain the context of the Cold War, according to Ivie, is the appeal to “the fear of the nuclear holocaust . . .that the two sides must learn to cooperate in the abolition of nuclear weapons or risk extinction” (pp. 317-325).

With Mayer’s *Continuum*, I considered the ways this album had affected the music industry so far as sales were concerned. I also considered the ways critics had spoken about the album as a piece of work, and what influences may have been effecting the album’s creation. This brought a better understanding of the context the album has

created and gave better insight into the ways the album may have been effected internally.

To situate the album within its social/economic context, as well as the context provided by other critics allows me to understand the critical reviews considering my own interpretation. Ivie (1987) explains:

[rhetorical critics] attempt to create a sense of the complete experience before attending to its particulars. They gather information from sources contemporaneous with the speaking event- reviewing a broad sample of speeches, counter-speeches, audience reactions, etc. – and supplement their primary materials by consulting relevant scholarship -e.g., histories, theories, and previous works of criticism. (p. 319)

Ivie (1987) explains the second step of the procedure as the process of a “series of close readings”: “Typically, each reading yields previously overlooked vehicles as the critic becomes more sensitized to figurative terms disguised initially by their seemingly literal usage” (p. 319).

Vehicles and tenors are terms used to identify the parts of a metaphor. Richards (1936) explains: “metaphor as having two parts: the tenor and vehicle. The tenor is the subject to which attributes are ascribed. The vehicles are the object whose attributes are borrowed” (pp. 1-144).

The tenor is the subject being described by the vehicle. In Mayer’s *Continuum*, I searched for every instance of vehicles being used in the lyrics of the songs to find the ways he was employing the tenor. This included any time an emotion was being described through a metaphor to convey a certain message.

By identifying vehicles that occurred up in the lyrics of the songs, I was able to then take the marked vehicles and see how those images and words described the tenor. As is explained in Chapter 4, these vehicles had in common sadness and soulfulness.

After identifying the vehicles in the artifact according to Lakoff and Johnson (1981), the next step is clustering those vehicles:

The third step is to arrange the complete set of marked vehicles into subgroups by clustering those with similar ‘entailments.’ Each cluster, it can be tentatively assumed, represents one of the, ‘metaphorical concepts’ featured in the speaker’s discourse, and the clusters together indicate the speaker’s system of metaphorical concepts. (pp. 289-292)

When completing this step, I made sure to keep in mind the context of the lyrics to be more precise when clustering them with the appropriate subgroup. Once I had all the clusters formed, I could understand John Mayer’s system of metaphorical concepts for his album *Continuum*. It was also helpful for me to look into the way the music supported the verbal message of the lyrics.

The fourth step of identifying key metaphors according to Ivie (1987) is:

A separate file of vehicles and their immediate contexts is compiled for each cluster of terms, i.e., one file for every metaphorical concept. The most extreme procedure is to search the abridged text until all occurrences of the vehicles in a given cluster have been identified and placed in a single file. (p. 320)

With having an album, such as *Continuum*, searching the entire text for the occurrences of vehicles was easy to accomplish. I looked through the lines of the lyrics for repetitive word use that would then be specified as vehicles. Then I organized all their appearances

into separate files according to their metaphorical concepts. Understanding this part allowed me to have a deeper connection between the lyrics of the song and the metaphorical concept created.

Finally, in the fifth step of Ivie's (1987) process for identifying key metaphors, he explains,

The "concept" files compiled in step four are analyzed one-by-one for patterns of usage within and between clusters, thereby revealing the speaker's system of metaphorical concepts... With this fifth step completed, the critic is in a position to assess both the limits and untapped potential of the metaphorical system guiding the speaker's rhetorical invention. (p. 320)

The goal of metaphorical criticism is to discover how the rhetor has created meaning.

When metaphor is viewed as a "screen" through which we see the world created by the rhetor, then that leads to greater understanding of the rhetor's worldview.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 examined the step-by-step process as outlined by Robert Ivie (1987) for conducting a metaphorical criticism, and also discussed the definitions of certain terms used. I also included an expanded definition of metaphor and literature of metaphor before delving into the methodology used in this research. The analysis of the album and artifact *Continuum* is in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

In Chapter Four, I discuss the album in its entirety while being guided by the steps established by Robert Ivie (1987). In the first subsection, I discuss the context that surrounds the genesis of Mayer's *Continuum* and describing the album from the outside in. This includes any literature that may have referenced the album specifically and any artists that may have had an influence on John Mayer, and more specifically *Continuum*. This also includes the names of the songs that may reflect an emotion of the album and the album title as well.

In the second subsection, I discuss the songs and identifying vehicles used by Mayer. I then create files for each vehicle that are marked with a corresponding context. In the third subsection, I use the marked vehicles and their attached contexts and clustering them according to the metaphorical concepts that Mayer employs in his discourse. (Ivie, 1987)

In the fourth subsection, I use the clusters created and find where vehicles from separate clusters have a relation between each other in their respective songs. This allows for the connection or concurrence of clusters. Finally, in the fifth subsection, I organize the metaphorical concepts that have been created into files and analyze how they correspond to each other therefore, revealing Mayer's system of metaphorical concepts.

### **Familiarizing *Continuum*: The Critics Opinion**

As successful as the album *Continuum* is, critical reviews reveal differences in how the album was evaluated. This includes an entry from DeCurtis (2006) who describes *Continuum* as, “a smart, breezy album that deftly fuses his love for old-school blues and R&B with his natural gift for sharp melodies and well-constructed songs” (p. 1). DeCurtis goes on also to explain how Mayer, “displays a new command,” in his musical abilities and shows how his blues and soul influences are coming to life in *Continuum*. Prior to *Continuum*, Mayer had produced two albums, *Room for Squares* (2001), and *Heavier Things* (2003), where he had gained the fame and identity that people thought he would have as an artist. This was an example of John Mayer freeing himself from the pop-idoldom locks and chains that held him down and to develop his true blues sound that defined him. To some critics, this was not the case in how they felt about the album. According to *Slant Magazine* (2006), Jonathan Keefe wrote Mayer’s album *Continuum* is depicted, “with no edge to the songwriting and with such spit-polished, tasteful production, *Continuum* just does not convince as a heady, soulful rock album or as Mayer’s creative quantum leap forward” (p. 1). Keefe (2006) also goes on to say how he is displeased with the production of the album and for what it contains commenting, “if nothing else, what *Continuum* confirms is that Mayer, as an awfully good guitarist and a considerably less-good singer-songwriter, hasn’t yet figured out how he can build upon the legacies of the men he cites as influences” (p. 1).

This does not ring consistent with all critics as others have found the album to be delightful and pleasing. According to Chinen (2006), “Mr. Mayer has been writing songs again, good ones, with all the leanness and directness that distinguish his strongest work,”



(p. 1). Chinen also explains how Mayer is unique in his efforts of writing this album, that he uses “helplessness” as a winning strategy rather than other artists writing in the same genre taking a different angle at song writing. Collar (n.d.) explains “*Continuum*, produced solely by Mayer and Jordan, the album is devastatingly accomplished, fully realized effort that in every way exceeds expectations and positions Mayer as one of the most relevant artists of his generation” (p.1). He also explains how “*Continuum* is a gorgeously produced, brilliantly stripped-to-basics album that incorporates blues, soft funk, R&B, folk, and pop in a sound that is totally owned by Mayer,” (Collar, n.d., p. 1). Based on my research, it appears that the positive reviews for *Continuum* outnumbered the negative reviews.

Blender (2006) states: “Where his [Mayer’s] earlier music was a parade of bright primary colors, these plaintive melodies come in delicious shades of gray” (p. 138). The color usage in this review reflects the music in the album which brings out more relevance to the power of *Continuum*’s rhetoric. Another critical review who was indifferent about *Continuum* was found in *Billboard*: “it’s still hard to tell if he’s a bluesman in a soft-rocker’s body or vice versa, and *Continuum* is the sound of him trying to figure it out too,” (2006, p. 1).

### **The Songs and their Vehicles**

In the first song of the album, “Waiting on the World to Change”, I identified 3 vehicles. (Mayer, 2006, Track 1) (Please note that the complete lyrics for each of the 12 tracks can be found in Appendix A to K):

1. Change
2. Bend

### 3. Fight

The vehicle, “**Change**,” is used throughout the song when describing how the people and Mayer, have already given up hope of trying to fight it and to just wait for the world to change on its own. This vehicle provides also in the title of the song, which is the context for the song. “**Bend**” is the next vehicle used in this song, and it describes a situation where the government is exaggerating information. This is illustrated in the line, “Cause when they own the information, oh, they can **bend** it all they want” (Mayer, 2006). This is an effective use of metaphor to describe and even illustrate in words the ways information can be abused and used conveniently for people.

The last example of a vehicle used in this song is “**fight**.” This vehicle is used to describe the ways that the audience is being depicted having a struggle with the government and describing the entire situation of it being a “**fight**,” of civilization being fair for everyone or being fair for no one. Mayer used it in the line: “It’s not that we don’t care, we just know that they **fight** ain’t fair” (Mayer, 2006, Track 1).

In the second song of the album, “I Don’t Trust Myself (With Loving You),” I identified four examples of vehicles used in the song (Mayer, 2006, Track 2):

1. Inside
2. Garden
3. Rains

With the example of “**inside**,” being used as a vehicle, this describes the subject of being trustworthy. In the line, “You should be warned before I let you **inside**,” I believe that Mayer is describing how he does not trust himself with loving anyone, and that he is

warning the audience which links to inner issues of self-respect and love in the lyrics (Mayer, 2006, Track 2).

The next vehicle, “**garden**,” is describing a situation where he is describing the object of his affection. A “**garden**” can be describing an embodiment of growth and beauty. Full of life, joy, and spirit, this song exemplifies a very deep use of a vehicle in a powerful metaphor. Mayer uses it in the line: “I will beg my way into your **garden**” (2006, Track 2).

The next vehicle is “**rains**” where Mayer is using rain to describe violence or struggle within a relationship. He uses the line, “I will break my way out when it **rains**,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 2). He is describing the angst and escape that he would have to make out of the garden of his lover if the relationship ever faltered for the worst.

“Belief” (Mayer, 2006, Track 3) contains five vehicles, all linked to the concept of war:

1. Breaking
2. Armor
3. Sword
4. Weapon
5. War

The first vehicle, “**breaking**,” describes the ways Mayer asks the audience if they have ever broken the rules with the line, “Is there anyone who really recalls ever **breaking** rank at all,” and left the group of people that they have been following for a while (Mayer, 2006, Track 3). He also asks the audience if they have ever been swayed one way or another, because of someone saying how they feel out loud.

The second vehicle is, “**armor**,” where he is describing belief as a beautiful piece of protection, but can also be your greatest weakness all at the same time. He writes the line, “Belief is a beautiful **armor**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 3). This line is followed by the next vehicle used in the song, “but makes for the heaviest **sword**,” where it completes the message being sent to the audience of how belief can make you blinded to the real truths that lie within. The two vehicles, “**armor**” and “**sword**” are examples of concurrent vehicles that are used together in one statement.

The next vehicle, “**weapon**,” is used in the song to describe the ways belief can be the reasons for our dissonance and for our naïve natures when dealing with hard situations that contain disillusion. It is described in the line, “it’s the chemical **weapon** for the war that’s raging on inside” (Mayer, 2006, Track 3).

The last vehicle used in this song is, “**war**,” which is described in the line, “we’re never going to win the world, we’re never gonna stop the **war**. We’re never gonna beat this is belief is what we’re fighting for” (Mayer, 2006, Track 3). This vehicle is used to describe the war that is going on in someone’s head when belief is riding over everything else in their mind.

In the song, “Gravity” (Mayer, 2006, Track 4), there are three vehicles:

1. Gravity
2. Heart
3. Light

“**Gravity**,” is the title of the song and is also used in the lyrics during the chorus. “**Gravity** is working against me, and **gravity** wants to bring me down,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 4). I believe that when he uses the word “**gravity**,” he is referring to the power of

the world. It is about a heartbreak that he has suffered or possibly a low time in his life where he feels like it is him against the world.

The next vehicle is “**heart**,” “Oh I’ll never know what makes this man; with all the love that his **heart** can stand,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 4). I believe that the word “**heart**” is describing his soul and what embodies himself as a man. Trying to find out what his body can stand and take by describing himself with the word, “**heart**,” as an embodiment of everything.

The final vehicle of the song is, “**light**,” “Just keep me where the light is” (Mayer, 2006, Track 4). I believe when he uses the word, “**light**” that he is using it to explain life and hope for the future to be better. The word, “**light**” is also described as an archetype for being the opposite of dark. Even though dark is not used in the literal lyrics of the song, I do believe that the song conveys a dark undertone of the feelings and emotions being brought about in the song.

“The Heart of Life” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5) contains five vehicles:

1. Pain
2. Love
3. Heart
4. Silver Lining
5. Friend

The first vehicle, “**pain**,” is found in the line, “**Pain** throws your heart to the ground,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5). I believe that when Mayer uses the word **pain**, he is referring to the feeling of sadness or a depressed undertone, but juxtaposes that concept with “love.” “**Love** turns the whole thing around,” he is referring to hope for the future. The music

being played by the guitar has a soft and soothing sound. It is as if John Mayer is giving advice to someone near and dear. He also sings the song with a soft and breathy feel that feels positive and bright.

The third vehicle that is used in the song is found in the line, “But I know the **heart** of life is good,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5). When Mayer wrote this song, and titled it the way he did, I believe he was referring to the hope that life is good and that there is no need to be negative. He reassures: “but I know the **heart** of life is good,” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5).

Mayer uses the vehicle “**silver lining**,” in the line, “then, the circle of your friends, will defend the **silver lining**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5). **Silver lining** is usually referenced from Milton (1634) where he writes about the ways clouds in the night sky are giving hope into their lives by using the phrase **silver lining**.

The last vehicle that is employed by Mayer is “**friend**.” In the line, “fear is a **friend** who’s misunderstood” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5). By using the word “**friend**,” Mayer personifies fear as having human characteristics rather than as an emotion. He is also implying that it is not always bad for someone to fear something. Fear can sometimes be something that we can embrace.

“Vultures” contains six vehicles (Mayer, 2006, Track 6).

1. Disappear
2. Water
3. Fire
4. Higher
5. Vultures

## 6. Kill

In the line, “Some of us, we’re hardly ever here. The rest of us, we’re born to **disappear**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 6) the word “disappear” serves as a vehicle. I believe that John Mayer is referring to the person or persons conscious being and unconscious being from the word “**disappear.**”

The next set of concurrent vehicles includes “**water**”, “**fire**”, and “**higher.**” In this section of the chorus, Mayer employs quite a few vehicles all stringing together for one meaning, the growth of the mind and character in someone, “down to the wire, I wanted **water**, but I’ll walk through the **fire**. If this is what it takes to take me even **higher**. Then I’ll come through, like I do, when the world keeps testing” (Mayer, 2006, Track 6). By contrasting “fire” and “water,” Mayer describes how relationships face challenges.

The next vehicle used is the title of the song, “**Vultures.**” I believe that it symbolizes the connection of people being too critical of others and not looking out for one another. Just having jealousy and angst towards another in which the line he wrote says, “all of these **vultures** hiding right outside my door... they’ve never gone this long without a **kill** before” (Mayer, 2006, Track 6). Perhaps, Mayer is also using “vultures” to refer to his critics, as well as individuals who seem to take joy in the despair of others.

“Stop this Train” (Mayer, 2006, Track 7). includes three vehicles

1. Train
2. Home
3. Dark

The first vehicle is used in the line, “Stop this **train**, I wanna get off and go **home** again” (Mayer, 2006, Track 7). This is used in the chorus. I believe Mayer is using

“**train**” to describe life as an object that is unstoppable and unpreventable, and that going “**home**” is describing him wanting to make that train go backwards in time to allow him to go back to an easier time in life. These vehicles may reflect the insecurity Mayer was feeling about his career.

The last vehicle I found in the song was, “**dark**.” In the line, “til’ you cry when you’re driving away in the **dark**,” I feel that Mayer is depicting a situation where one is literally driving away and the darkness is describing the uncomfortable unknown (Mayer, 2006, Track 7).

“Slow Dancing in a Burning Room” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8) has six vehicles:

1. Storm
2. Calm
3. Breath
4. Burning
5. Light
6. Dirty

The first appearances of vehicles in the song is with a concurrence of vehicles used together. The section is, “it’s not the **storm** before the **calm**. This is the deep and dying **breath** of, this love we’ve been working on” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8). In this line, I believe that Mayer was using “**storm**” and “**calm**” to describe a violent time before the peace that comes later. Saying that it is not one of those situations and explains to the girl how the “**breath**” resembles the life that is left in the relationship that he had with her.

Later in the song, the title of the song, which also contains a vehicle, “My dear, we’re slow dancing in a **burning** room (Mayer, 2006, Track 8). I believe that when he



describes the room the couple is dancing in is “**burning**,” I think he is referring to how tough it is to keep the relationship and bond that they have from being a volatile relationship. Describing such a peaceful act of “slow dancing,” while the room is “**burning**,” is great imagery for the audience and suggests that some romantic relationships are doomed to fail.

The final vehicle is used in the line, “you try to hit me just to hurt me so you leave me feeling **dirty**, because you can’t understand” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8). The use of “**dirty**” in this sentence is a good way for Mayer to describe how he feels he has been abused in his relationship and feeling unclean or “**dirty**” makes one want to better his/her position.

“Dreaming With a Broken Heart” (Mayer, 2006, Track 10). contains four vehicles:

1. Dreaming
2. Waking
3. Bed
4. Crying Eyes

The first instance where I found a vehicle being used was in the opening lyrics of the song, “When you’re **dreaming** with a broken heart, the **waking** up is the hardest part. You roll outta **bed** and down on your knees. And for a moment you can hardly breathe” (Mayer, 2006, Track 10). In this section, I find that it sounds like he is talking about sleeping and the matter of waking up in the morning like a normal day with the everyday struggles of life. But, what I believe he is talking about is when he says “**dreaming**,” he is talking about being in denial about having a broken heart and when he talks about

**waking** up that he is talking about reality coming into play and that the pain is real in a heartbreak. Then, when he discusses rolling out of **bed**, I think that he is talking about coming out of an unconscious state and coming back to reality where the realization of his heartbreak is hitting him.

The next vehicle that was being used in the lyrics is in the line, “She takes you in with her **crying eyes**, then all at once you have to say goodbye” (Mayer, 2006, Track 10). I believe he is talking about the girl lying to him, but describing it through the metaphor of her having **crying eyes** or convincing eyes that led him on, and that they symbolize her lies.

“In Repair” (Mayer, 2006, Track 11) employed seven vehicles:

1. Shadows
2. Midnight
3. Corners
4. Wind
5. Park
6. Birds
7. Green

The first appearance of a vehicle came early in the song. In the line, “Too many **shadows** in my room; too many hours in this **midnight**. Too many **corners** in my mind. So much to do to set my heart right,” I found that he was referencing **shadows** to represent thoughts in his head that are making his thought process murky. Then when he says **midnight**, he is describing the darkness that has become his life and talking about how there has been too much time during this darkness in his life. The last vehicle used is

**corners** where I believe that he is talking about the hesitation that he has in his decision-making and that he has a lot of obstacles to get around to get back to the way it all used to be.

The next use of a vehicle by John Mayer is when he sings, “Stood on the corner for a while, to wait for the **wind** to blow down on me” (Mayer, 2006, Track 11). I believe that he was using the word “wind” as a metaphor to describe that he is trying to relax his mind and to quit trying to take control of everything.

The next use of metaphor and vehicles in the song is in the line, “And now I’m walking in a **park**. All of the **birds** they dance below me. Maybe when things turn **green** again, it will be good to say you know me” (Mayer, 2006, Appendix Track 11). When John Mayer uses the metaphor “**park**,” he is expressing hope. Using “**birds**” suggests a sense of freedom, as well as a sense of a peaceful setting. When he speaks about things turning green again, he is depicting a time of renewal in his soul, and the heartbreak is all gone, but in the time, he is still dealing with it, but with a better mindset.

The last song on the album is “I’m Gonna Find Another You” (Mayer, 2006, Track 12). Mayer’s customary use of vehicles and vivid images appear to be absent in this song. In these lyrics, Mayer mentions loneliness: “But when my loneliness is through/I’m gonna find another you” (Mayer, 2006, Track 12). These lyrics, unlike those of the other tracks, seems to be a statement about transitioning from a failed relationship to one that is more satisfactory, and while his lover may “make your little getaway,” the speaker of the lyrics is determined to “dress myself for two, once for me, and once for someone new.”

## Clustering the Vehicles

After in-depth analysis of *Continuum*, I have identified five clusters that appear throughout Mayer's discourse. The first cluster is "PEACE," which includes five vehicles including "**garden**," "**home**," "**calm**," "**park**," and "**birds**" as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

### *Clusters in Continuum*

Peace	Spirit	Darkness	Hope	Violence	Cruelty
Garden	Disappear	Bed	Waking/breath	Fight/Change	Wind/Rain
Home	Inside	Midnight	Water	Breaking	Bend
Calm	Heart	Shadows	Higher/light	Waters/storm	Burning
Park	Train	Gravity	Dreamers/love	Weapon/Sword	Dirty
Birds	Corners	Dark	Silver Lining	Vultures	Pain
			Friend	Kill/War	Fire

Throughout the album, whenever peaceful scenery is captured or described in the lyrics, as in the line, "And now I'm walking in a **park**. All of the **birds** they dance below me," I believe that he is referring to a peaceful time in his life or in his heart or mind that is peaceful (Mayer, 2006, Track 11). This is a good use of imagery for the listener, or audience, when hearing the lyrics of this song. When he uses "**garden**" as a vehicle, I believe that he is describing her love and whether she should let him in. So, in this sequence, Mayer describes her heart as a peaceful place by giving it a beautiful metaphor. "I will beg my way into your **garden**. I will break my out when it rains" (Mayer, 2006, Track 2). When he describes that he will break (way) out when it rains," really brings out the idea of the contrast between the peaceful setting and the cruel setting created when the metaphor changes.

When Mayer describes using “**home**” in the song “Stop This Train,” he is describing somewhere that is more peaceful than where he is currently (Mayer, 2006, Track 7). The potential nostalgia is felt when describing home versus the lines around it describing how he, “can’t take the speed it’s moving in,” when referring to the “train” which is life. The next vehicle that is a part of the PEACE cluster is “**calm**,” where he uses the line, “it’s not the storm before the **calm**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8). I believe that in that line, he is depicting the idea of war before peace. With using “**calm**” as the vehicle, it gives off the connotation of a mellow and peaceful setting.

When he uses the vehicles “**park**,” and “**birds**,” that calls to mind a peaceful setting with the idea of a **park** where, “**birds** dance below me” (Mayer, 2006, Track 11). Also, in this area of the text, I find that he uses other words that may not be vehicles, but help in setting up a peaceful situation with **dance** and **green** to give light to the life of the plants and a soothing atmosphere.

The second cluster, being SPIRIT, includes five vehicles: “**Here**,” “**disappear**,” “**inside**,” “**heart**,” “**train**,” and “**corners**.” Mayer uses “**disappear**,” to describe a situation where the soul is either conscious of the present events or that is unconscious to the world around us. He sings in the line, “Some of us, we’re hardly ever here. The rest of us, we’re born to **disappear**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 6). I understand this to be a line that is depicting how “**here**” and “**disappear**” are words to describe our souls in life and how we are allowing ourselves to attend to something with our spiritual selves rather than just our physical selves.

When he uses the term, “**inside**” he is describing his soul as a dwelling or a place of safety and trust. The word “**inside**,” almost becomes a proper noun when used in the

sense that he uses it in. Much importance has been placed on “**inside**” when he uses the line, “if my past is any sign of your future, you should be warned before I let you **inside**” (Mayer, 2006, Track 2). This is an area where Mayer’s spirit is emphasized as it is throughout this album.

“**Heart**” describes a situation where the soul or spirit is the heart, and the things that effect it are depicted as physical, but are spiritual. In the line, “with all the love that his **heart** can stand” (Mayer, 2006, Track 4). **Heart** is a very broad term when describing situations that can be understood as emotional or even physical situations where pain or love can be felt. “**Train**” is also a powerful vehicle when describing SPIRIT. In this case, Mayer uses ‘**train**’ as the spiritual embodiment of life as a living and breathing entity. In the line, “Stop this **train**, I wanna get off and go home again. I can’t take the speed it’s moving in,” the idea of a train is always moving and unstoppable, and he is wanting someone to stop it and slow it down (Mayer, 2006, Track 7). Mayer is not ready for the destination.

“**Corners**” is the last vehicle that is found in this cluster. It is imagined to be the areas of our mind that come into play when making a big decision and all our doubts come to mind. This creates obstacles for our brain to create a clear and conclusive response to the actions at hand. In the line, “too many **corners** in my mind,” he is talking about the troubles that he is having from the recent relationship that he was a part of and how hard it is to move past that event. The **corners** referring to the recurring thoughts of past relationships that fuel his fear for future relationships. The concept “corners of the mind” is a common phrase used in popular music that usually is used to associate thoughts in the mind with a physical obstacle.

The third cluster, DARKNESS, includes five vehicles, “**bed**,” “**midnight**,” “**shadows**,” “**gravity**,” and “**dark**.” DARKNESS is more than just lack of light, it is the lack of feeling and emotions. It is the lack of life and energy in a vessel. Throughout *Continuum*, John Mayer, despite the more positive melodies and lighter tones in some songs, has a very dark and describes dark in different ways. The song titles, “I Don’t Trust Myself (With Loving You)” and “Gravity” are songs that describe a very dark moment for him without even hearing the lyrics. With the term gravity, he talks about how one can be brought down by the world. In “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room,” I find the melodies and chords being played in the music to start the song could be characterized as a sad and lonely tone that resonates with darker thoughts. The chords on the piano at the beginning of “Dreaming with a Broken Heart” also give off a minor key while the title holds that feeling as well.

The fourth cluster is best represented as HOPE. With nine vehicles, “**waking**,” “**water**,” “**higher**,” “**dreaming**,” “**light**,” “**love**,” “**friend**,” “**silver lining**,” and “**breath**,” HOPE is found in *Continuum* in different ways. Hope is described as a feeling of better things to come based on the actions of the present. All the vehicles found in this cluster have a positive connotation and describe things in the lyrics that are considered hopeful and carry optimism. Even though *Continuum* has a very negative and sad tone to the names of the songs, it also carries a hopeful tone to combat that negative tone. In the songs “In Repair,” “Waiting on the World to Change,” “I’m Gonna Find Another You,” and “Belief,” there is a very hopeful message in the lyrics, and have a hopeful title as well (Mayer, 2006). In the song, “In Repair,” the lyrics suggest a negative tone at the beginning, but the music being played with the lyrics says otherwise (Mayer, 2006, Track

11). The idea of being in repair is a temporary feeling of sadness and a heavy potential for being better in due time. The undertone in “Waiting on the World to Change,” is very positive and hopeful that the world will change for the better, even with the combative feelings that, “the fight ain’t fair,” the audience is given a strong and hopeful tone (Mayer, 2006, Track 1). The title of “Belief” is about the only part of the song that can be taken as hopeful though. The lyrics display an area of negativity and bias against having faith in what one believes in as Mayer describes it being the truth to your demise (Mayer, 2006, Track 3).

“I’m Gonna Find Another You” displays a hopeful message in the title while also describing strength and courage through a breakup, and how he believes that things are going to be better in the future. He sings, “I’m gonna sing my way away from blue. I’m gonna find another you” (Mayer, 2006, Track 12). In those lyrics, Mayer indicates he has a plan. This displays hope in a fight against darkness.

The fifth cluster is featured as VIOLENCE. In this cluster, there are nine vehicles. “**Fight**,” “**change**,” “**breaking**,” “**Vultures**,” “**storm**,” “**weapon**,” “**armor**,” “**sword**,” and “**kill**,” all represent VIOLENCE in one shape or form. VIOLENCE is understood to be actions that result in physical pain. Being that the main message throughout the album is from spiritual pain, he employs physical pain in the vehicles he uses. In “Vultures,” the “vultures” being described in the song are trying to “kill” Mayer and, seemingly, take the life out of his music (Mayer, 2006, Track 6). *Continuum* contains many references in which he describes pain and violence using metaphors describing spiritual pain. In the line, “It’s the chemical **weapon**, for the war that’s raging on inside,” Mayer describes inner pain being inflicted by a physical object.



In “Belief,” there is a good representation of VIOLENCE being used in the line, “Belief is a beautiful **armor**, but makes for the heaviest **sword**. Like punching under water, you can never hit who you’re trying for” (Mayer, 2006, Track 3). Mayer talks about physically trying to hit something that is not physical at all, suggesting his own inner warfare.

The final cluster CRUELTY, includes seven vehicles; “**Wind**,” “**bend**,” “**rains**,” “**burning**,” “**dirty**,” “**pain**,” and “**fire**.” In *Continuum*, CRUELTY is a recurring concept in songs such as “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room,” “Belief,” “Gravity,” “The Heart of Life,” and “Vultures” (Mayer, 2006).

The first instance where CRUELTY is apparent is in “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room,” in the line, “I’ll make the most of all the sadness, you’ll be a bitch because you can. You try to hit me, just to hurt me, so you leave me feeling **dirty**, because you can’t understand” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8). Mayer is trying to be as positive as possible, despite the situation at hand, while his lover is trying to bring him down further into the depths of sadness. By use of verbal abuse, as described in the song, this displays the best possible example of CRUELTY in the album. “Slow Dancing in a Burning Room” also emits a feeling of a back and forth dissonance between two lovers. While one wants the relationship more and the latter wants it less. Mayer finds himself with a “burning” relationship that he though was once a “slow dance” (Mayer, 2006, Track 8).

In “The Heart of Life,” Mayer describes how, “pain throws your heart to the ground,” where it can be assumed that a spiritual pain can become a physical-inducing pain (Mayer, 2006, Track 5). The CRUELTY of life that is described in this song can also be compared to the CRUELTY between people. In “Dreaming with a Broken Heart,”

Mayer sings, “When you’re dreaming with a broken heart, the giving up is the hardest part. She takes you in with her **crying eyes**, then all at once, you have to say goodbye” (Mayer, 2006, Track 10). The CRUELTY that is displayed in the lyrics here is described through the way Mayer was lured in by, “her crying eyes,” and then his lover leaving in an instant with no remorse (Mayer, 2006, Track 10).

### **The Relationships of the Clusters**

The metaphors found in *Continuum* (PEACE, SPIRIT, DARKNESS, HOPE, VIOLENCE, and CRUELTY) provide a vivid description of the highs and lows in romantic relationships. There is a “yin and yang” effect based on the opposites created between PEACE and VIOLENCE, DARKNESS and HOPE, and SPIRIT and CRUELTY. One cannot exist without the other in the album while also building upon each other for a stronger effect. This juxtaposition of opposite emotions explains the popularity of Mayer’s music.

In “I Don’t Trust Myself (With Loving You),” the line, “I will beg my way into your **garden**, and I will break my way out when it **rains**,” the two vehicles, “**garden**” and “**rains**,” have differing meaning when it comes to immediate context (Mayer, 2006, Track 2). “**Garden**” having a PEACE context while “**rains**” has a CRUELTY connotation. Together they allow for Mayer to describe a situation where he expresses his passion for her love while he also exclaims how he will break away if it ever shows dissonance. The two vehicles create a harmony from disharmony. Therefore, connecting the clusters of PEACE and CRUELTY.

Another example of this happening is in “The Heart of Life,” where, “**pain** throws your heart to the ground. Love turns the whole thing around” (Mayer, 2006, Track 5).

“**Pain**” is expressing the CRUELTY of how love can be just as harmful as it is PEACEFUL, but then “**love**” has the HOPE and power to bring the passion back to life. The two vehicles have a partnership in being opposites. This creates a concurrence between the two clusters, HOPE and CRUELTY.

In the song “Vultures,” the chorus sings, “Down to the wire, I wanted **water**, but I’ll walk through the **fire**. If this is what it takes to take me even higher, then I’ll come through” (Mayer, 2006, Track 6). The contrasting vehicles, “**water**” and “**fire**,” depict how in life we may want to have PEACE, but then end up getting CRUELTY. In Mayer’s case, this song may reflect his own journey in his musical career.

Between the DARK and HOPE clusters, a relationship is revealed in the vehicles “**light**” and “**dark**.” In the album, “**light**” is used to describe the life or energy that is present in romantic relationships, while “**dark**” has a negative connotation with defining the unknown or death of a relationship. Light and dark are considered archetypes as identified in the work of Osborn (1967).

### **The Metaphorical Concepts of *Continuum***

Even though there are so many differences in the immediate contexts of the vehicles of *Continuum*, they seemingly build upon each other and make the rhetorical invention of *Continuum* more influential as a rhetorical artifact. Mayer speaks using opposites and how they battle in the passion of the soul, and with the “**calm**” before the “**storm**,” and “**friends**” and “**Vultures**.”

The word continuum is defined by *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as, “a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees” (Webster, 2017). John Mayer has effectively defined

*Continuum* in his collection of songs by emphasizing the importance of understanding love against pain, SPIRIT versus CRUELTY, and PEACE and VIOLENCE. The album starts with “Waiting on the World to Change” by showing the audience the importance of how to trust the change that world may be taking, but to not stand by without taking notice (Mayer, 2006, Track 1). The album then moves into how it is hard to trust ourselves with “I Don’t Trust Myself (With Loving You)” in our own decision making with the ways the world may be moving around us (Mayer, 2006, Track 2). The people that are in our lives who have proved untrustworthy which makes it hard to trust ourselves.

“Belief” and “Gravity” both have a negative and saddening feeling where “Belief” talks about the struggles of how our very own values, may be our greatest weakness, while “Gravity” talks about feeling as if the world is against him and using “**gravity**” as a vehicle to describe the world (Mayer, 2006, Tracks 3 & 4). Both songs have a strong connotation of negative outcomes when dealing with life. “The Heart of Life” and “Vultures” focus on the distinction of the world being a very powerful entity and the pain it brings, but that there is room for optimism and that, in some cases, “love turns the whole thing around” (Mayer, 2006, Tracks 5 & 6).

*Continuum* continues with having themes of love and defeat and the struggles of growing older and the responsibilities of life, while also showing the real experiences that can be gained by taking the risks of failing and either succeeding or learning for future reference in the process. At the very end of the album, the song “I’m Gonna Find Another You,” displays the strength and the lessons that he has summed up from past experiences

and that he has gained the confidence to leave the love he never thought he could lose to get ready for the next love (Mayer, 2006, Track 12).

### **Summary**

John Mayer provides a template for other musical artists to follow, one that uses metaphors that link concepts about romantic relationships in a way that builds on each track with a message of empowerment. My analysis identified 6 clusters: Peace, Spirit, Darkness, Hope, Violence, and Cruelty. His use of opposite terms, similar to what Burke identified as “agon analysis,” makes his lyrics memorable and persuasive. “**Love**” can be filled with PEACE and “**love**” can be considered CRUEL, but above all, “**love**” is eternal in its own continuum of archetypes. In Chapter 5 I discuss the answers to my research questions.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The focus of this study was to identify the tenor and vehicles used in John Mayer's album *Continuum*, and to indicate the major underlying meanings found in the lyrics of the tracks on the album. The analysis used Ivie's (1987) five step process for applying metaphorical criticism. I identified the vehicles that were used in the lyrics of each song, and then grouped them into clusters according to their contexts. I also looked at the ways these clusters related to one another and then developed an overview of how each cluster related to the other clusters. In this chapter, I summarize my findings and recommend areas for future studies regarding *Continuum* and music as an artifact. I also discuss the ways metaphors can be identified to better understand the underlying messages communicated in music

#### **Summary of Metaphorical Concepts Discovered**

This research analyzing the album *Continuum* for its use of metaphors to create underlying meanings discovered that Mayer uses opposing images to strengthen his message. In *Continuum*, John Mayer uses themes such as peace, spirit, darkness, hope, violence, and cruelty, to employ vehicles and create a message that reaches the audience from within. John Mayer has created more than a pop-vocal album in *Continuum*, he has combined the use of metaphor with breathy vocals and passionate melodies to put together an album that has extended the genre of contemporary pop music, adding some

elements of the blues and soul music. The research questions that I presented in Chapter One were:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: What are the tenor and vehicles used in the album *Continuum*?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: What are the major underlying meanings found in the lyrics on *Continuum*?

**RQ<sub>1</sub>: What are the tenor and vehicles used in the album *Continuum*?**

Based on my analysis, I discovered six tenors: peace, spirit, darkness, hope, violence, and cruelty. In the album *Continuum*, John Mayer portrays several aspects that help produce meaning within the lyrics. These include, natural phenomenon, concrete terms, abstract terms, and opposites.

***Natural Phenomena***

John Mayer employs vehicles that create a picture for the audience that are natural phenomena. Terms like *wind*, *rain*, or *storm* can be considered natural phenomena. In music, artists use natural phenomena to describe major changes or effects that may or may not be going on within the song or in their personal lives. Mayer includes terms throughout *Continuum* to express certain feelings about romantic turmoil that he feels people may experience or Mayer may have experienced. This allows the artist to connect to the audience with a term that they can understand from their own experiences, thus reaching the audience on a deeper level. In my analysis, I found that these natural phenomenon terms were closely associated with actions or events that describe the harshness or cruelty of a situation dealing with inner emotions.

***Concrete Terms***

In *Continuum*, Mayer uses concrete terms to connect to the audience to objects or things that they can or have experienced visually or tangibly. Examples of some of the

concrete terms used in *Continuum* are *train, home, birds, park, bed, friend, fire, and water*. Even though these have their own definitions, they are used in the album to give better description of the surroundings being described in the lyrics or using what these concrete terms can do to describe spiritual or passionate complications or happiness.

### ***Abstract Terms***

*Continuum* uses abstract terms to contrast with a concrete term. Some of the abstract terms used in the album include *gravity, silver lining, and heart*. Even though *heart* has a physical definition, throughout the album, it is described with an abstract definition that is not tangible. The passion of the heart and loving a romantic partner is the focus in Mayer's lyrics. Artists use abstract terms to expand the concrete terms being used. This contrast between abstract and concrete images allows for some interpretation by the audience, a trend used throughout *Continuum*.

### ***Opposites***

Opposites played a huge role in *Continuum*. Between the clusters/tenors that were discovered, opposites allow for a song or even a line within a song to be on a continuum. Some of the clusters resemble a light and dark relationship that is described by Osborn (1967). He states, "The combination of light-dark metaphors is ideally suited to symbolize... conceptions of the past as dark and present as light...which the speaker can bring forth according to his purpose" (p. 308). The light and dark relationship in *Continuum* resembles a violent to peaceful relationship according to Mayer.

I also discovered a right to wrong relationship in *Continuum*. The way to distinguish between the right and wrong and the use of devil and God terms is a concept developed by Burke (1950): "The negative allows for the establishment of commands or



admonitions that govern the actions of individuals... The ability to distinguish between right and wrong thus is a consequence of the concept of the negative” (p. 203). In *Continuum*, Mayer has used dark and light and wrong and right relationships to create a continuum for each song.

## **RQ2: What are the major underlying meanings found in the lyrics on *Continuum*?**

*Continuum* emphasizes the underlying theme of success and failure in romantic relationships. Although some of the musical scores that are played with the lyrics have a dark tone, while the lyrics depict otherwise. “In Repair” has a lighter tone in the musical score while the lyrics have a darker and dimmer feeling. “Stop this Train” also has a lighter melody in the musical score, while the lyrics are anxious indicating a more negative feeling.

*Continuum* has a pop sound with a movement towards blues and soul-music. This is found throughout the album, DeCurtis (2006) interprets the album as, “smart and breezy...that deftly fuses his love for old-school blues and R&B with his natural gift for sharp melodies and well-constructed songs” (p. 1). “Waiting on the World to Change” combines Mayer’s pop sound and his blues sound by having a lighter melody being played but the message is darker (Mayer, 2006, Track 1).

## **Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

Limitations of this research include that *Continuum* is an album that was produced in 2006, while the reflections being made are from a 2017 perspective. The music that Mayer has produced since *Continuum* is also a reflection of his music transcending into new heights and may not reflect an older album like *Continuum*. To compare the album to some of his newer work is an area where this research could be extended. While my

analysis used a metaphorical focus, other studies of Mayer's music could employ other methodological approaches, such as cluster criticism or Fantasy Theme criticism.

The emotions that Mayer expressed in *Continuum* may not represent how Mayer feels about romantic relationships today. Future research could also capitalize on using focus groups to determine the ways participants may feel about *Continuum* or on any of his other albums. Further research could also include personal interviews with Mayer about the meaning of his song lyrics. Since the album was recorded in three different areas of the United States, it would be interesting for future research to find out if there was an effect on the music based on where it was being recorded.

### **Conclusion**

This rhetorical study focused on the album *Continuum* by John Mayer, excluding the ninth track of the album since it was a cover of a song by another artist. My analysis identified six tenors: peace, spirit, darkness, hope, violence, and cruelty, and their accompanying vehicles. Recurring rhetorical techniques found in Mayer's lyrics include the use of references to nature, contrasting abstract with concrete terms, and the use of opposites (God/devil terms) to create a continuum about love in romantic relationships. *Continuum* is an album filled with the successes and failures of romantic love in relationships and the war that takes place in the mind and spirit. As Mayer's lyrics suggest: "I'm in repair, I'm not together but I'm getting there" (Mayer, 2006, Track 11), the joy and despair found in romantic relationships is a never-ending continuum with highs and lows expressed convincingly through a combination of contemporary pop, blues, and soul music.

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## Appendix A: *Waiting on the World to Change*

One, two, one, two, three  
Me and all my friends  
We're all misunderstood  
They say we stand for nothing and  
There's no way we ever could  
Now we see everything that's going  
wrong  
With the world and those who lead it  
We just feel like we don't have the  
means  
To rise above and beat it  
So we keep waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
We keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
It's hard to beat the system  
When we're standing at a distance  
So we keep waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
Now if we had the power  
To bring our neighbors home from war  
They would have never missed a  
Christmas  
No more ribbons on their door  
And when you trust your television  
What you get is what you got  
Cause when they own the information,  
oh

They can bend it all they want  
That's why we're waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
We keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
It's not that we don't care  
We just know that the fight ain't fair  
So we keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
And we're still waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
We keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
One day our generation  
Is gonna rule the population  
So we keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
No we keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
We keep on waiting (waiting)  
Waiting on the world to change  
Waiting on the world to change  
Waiting on the world to change  
Waiting on the world to change.

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)



## Appendix B: *I Don't Trust Myself (With Loving You)*

No, I'm not the man I used to be lately  
See, you met me at an interesting time  
And if my past is any sign of your future  
You should be warned before I let you  
    inside  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
    Hold on to whatever will get you  
        through  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I will beg my way into your garden  
Then I'll break my way out when it rains  
    Just to get back to the place where I  
        started  
So I can want you back all over again  
    (I don't really understand)  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
    Hold on to whatever will get you  
        through  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
    Who do you love?

Girl, I see through, through your love  
    Who do you love?  
    Me or the thought of me?  
    Me or the thought of me?  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
    Hold on to whatever will get you  
        through  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
    Hold on to whatever will get you  
        through  
Hold on to whatever you find, baby  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you  
I don't trust myself with lovin' you.

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

## Appendix C: *Belief*

Is there anyone who ever remembers  
Changing their mind from the paint on a  
sign?

Is there anyone who really recalls  
Ever breaking record off  
For something someone yelled real loud  
one time?

Oh, everyone believes  
In how they think it ought to be  
Oh, everyone believes  
And they're not going easily  
Belief is a beautiful armor  
But makes for the heaviest sword  
Like punching underwater  
You never can hit who you're trying for  
Some need the exhibition  
And some have to know they tried  
It's the chemical weapon  
For the war that's raging on inside  
Oh, everyone believes  
From emptiness to everything  
Oh, everyone believes  
And no one's going quietly  
We're never gonna win the world  
We're never gonna stop the war

We're never gonna beat this  
If belief is what we're fighting for  
We're never gonna win the world  
We're never gonna stop the war  
We're never gonna beat this  
If belief is what we're fighting for  
Is there anyone you can remember  
Ever surrender with their life on the  
line?  
We're never gonna win the world  
We're never gonna stop the war  
We're never gonna beat this  
If belief is what we're fighting for  
We're never gonna win the world  
We're never gonna stop the war  
We're never gonna beat this  
If belief is what we're fighting for  
What puts a hundred thousand children  
in the sand?  
Belief can, belief can  
What puts a folded flag inside his  
mother's hand?  
Belief can, belief can.

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

## **Appendix D: *Gravity***

Gravity is working against me  
And gravity wants to bring me down  
Oh I'll never know what makes this man  
With all the love that his heart can stand  
Dream of ways to throw it all away  
Oh, gravity is working against me  
And gravity wants to bring me down  
Oh twice as much ain't twice as good  
And can't sustain like one half could  
It's wanting more  
That's gonna send me to my knees  
Oh gravity, stay the hell away from me  
Oh gravity has taken better men than me (how can that be?)  
Just keep me where the light is  
Just keep me where the light is  
Just keep me where the light is  
C'mon keep me where the light is  
C'mon keep me where the light is  
C'mon keep me where keep me where the light is (oh, oh)

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

### **Appendix E: *The Heart of Life***

I hate to see you cry  
Laying there in that position  
There's things you need to hear  
So turn off your tears and listen  
Pain throws your heart to the ground  
Love turns the whole thing around  
No, it won't all go the way, it should  
But I know the heart of life is good  
You know it's nothing new  
Bad news never had good timing  
But then the circle of your friends  
Will defend the silver lining  
Pain throws your heart to the ground  
Love turns the whole thing around  
No, it won't all go the way, it should  
But I know the heart of life is good  
Pain throws your heart to the ground  
Love turns the whole thing around  
Fear is a friend who's misunderstood  
But I know the heart of life is good  
I know it's good

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

## Appendix F: *Vultures*

Some of us, we're hardly ever here  
The rest of us, we're born to disappear  
How do I stop myself from being just a  
    number  
How will I hold my head to keep from  
    going under  
    Down to the wire  
    I wanted water  
    But I'll walk through the fire  
If this is what it takes to take me even  
    higher  
    Then I'll come through  
    Like I do  
When the world keeps testing me,  
    testing me, testing me  
    How did they find me here?  
    What do they want from me?  
All of these vultures hiding right outside  
    my door  
    I hear them whispering  
    They're trying to ride it out  
They've never gone this long without a  
    kill before  
    Down to the wire  
    I wanted water  
    But I'll walk through the fire  
If this is what it takes to take me even  
    higher  
    Then I'll come through  
    Like I do  
When the world keeps testing me,  
    testing me, testing me  
    Wheels up  
    I got to leave this evening  
I can't seem to shake these vultures off  
    of my trail  
Power is made by power being taken  
    So I keep on running to protect my  
    situation

Down to the wire  
    I wanted water  
    But I'll walk through the fire  
If this is what it takes to take me even  
    higher  
    Then I'll come through  
    Like I do  
When the world keeps testing me,  
    testing me  
    Oh  
    What you gonna do about it?  
    Don't give up, give up  
Don't give up, give up, give up  
    Don't give up, give up  
Don't give up, give up, give up

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

## Appendix G: *Stop this Train*

No, I'm not color blind  
I know the world is black and white  
Try to keep an open mind  
but I just can't sleep on this tonight  
Stop this train  
I wanna get off and go home again  
I can't take the speed it's moving in  
I know I can't  
But, honestly, won't someone stop this  
train?  
Don't know how else to say it,  
Don't want to see my parents go  
One generation's length away  
From fighting life out on my own  
Stop this train  
I wanna get off and go home again  
I can't take the speed it's moving in  
I know I can't  
but, honestly, won't someone stop this  
train?  
So scared of getting older  
I'm only good at being young  
So I play the numbers game to find a  
way to say that life has just begun  
Had a talk with my old man

Said, "Help me understand."  
He said, "Turn 68,  
you'll renegotiate  
Don't stop this train  
Don't for a minute change the place  
you're in  
Don't think I couldn't ever understand  
I tried my hand  
John, honestly, we'll never stop this  
train."  
Once in a while when it's good  
It'll feel like it should  
And they're all still around  
And you're still safe and sound  
And you don't miss a thing  
'Til you cry when you're driving away in  
the dark.  
Singing, "Stop this train  
I wanna get off and go home again  
I can't take this speed it's moving in  
I know I can't  
'Cause now I see I'll never stop this  
train."

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

## Appendix H: *Slow Dancing in a Burning Room*

It's not a silly little moment  
It's not the storm before the calm  
This is the deep and dyin' breath of  
This love we've been workin' on  
Can't seem to hold you like I want to  
So I can feel you in my arms  
Nobody's gonna come and save you  
We pulled too many false alarms  
We're goin' down  
And you can see it too  
We're goin' down  
And you know that we're doomed  
My dear  
We're slow dancing in a burnin' room  
I was the one you always dreamed of  
You were the one I tried to draw  
How dare you say it's nothing to me  
Baby, you're the only light I ever saw  
I'll make the most of all the sadness  
You'll be a bitch because you can  
You try to hit me, just hurt me  
So you leave me feeling dirty  
'Cause you can't understand

We're goin' down  
And you can see it too  
We're goin' down  
And you know that we're doomed  
My dear  
We're slow dancing in a burnin' room  
Go cry about it, why don't you  
Go cry about it, why don't you  
Go cry about it, why don't you  
My dear, we're slow dancin' in a burnin'  
room  
Burnin' room, burnin' room  
Don't you think we outta know by now?  
Don't you think we shoulda learned  
somehow?  
Don't you think we outta know by now?  
Don't you think we shoulda learned  
somehow?  
Don't you think we outta know by now?  
Don't you think we shoulda learned  
somehow?

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

### **Appendix I: *Dreaming With a Broken Heart***

When you're dreaming with a broken heart,  
The waking up is the hardest part  
You roll out of bed and down on your knees  
And for a moment you can hardly breathe  
Wondering was she really here  
Is she standing in my room?  
No, she's not  
'Cause she's gone, gone, gone, gone, gone  
When you're dreaming with a broken heart,  
The giving up is the hardest part  
She takes you in with her crying eyes  
Then all at once you, have to say goodbye  
Wondering, could you stay, my love?  
Will you wake up by my side?  
No, she can't  
'Cause she's gone, gone, gone, gone, gone  
Now do I have to fall asleep with roses in my hand?  
Do I have to fall asleep with roses in my hand?  
Do I have to fall asleep with roses in my hand?  
Do I have to fall asleep with roses in my, roses in my hands?  
Would you get them if I did?  
No, you won't  
'Cause you're gone, gone, gone, gone, gone  
When you're dreaming with a broken heart,  
The waking up is the hardest part.

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)



## Appendix J: *In Repair*

Too many shadows in my room  
Too many hours in this midnight  
Too many corners in my mind  
So much to do to set my heart right  
    Oh, it's taken so long  
I could be wrong, I could be ready  
Oh, but if I take my heart's advice  
I should assume it's still unsteady  
    I am in repair  
    I am in repair  
    Stood on the corner for a while  
To wait for the wind to blow down on  
    me  
Hoping it takes with it my old ways  
And brings some brand new luck upon  
    me  
    Oh, it's taken so long  
I could be wrong, I could be ready  
Oh, but if I take my heart's advice  
I should assume it's still unsteady  
    I am in repair  
    I am in repair  
And now I'm walking in the park  
And all of the birds, they dance below

me  
Maybe when things turn green again  
It will be good to say you know me  
    Oh, it's taken so long  
I could be wrong, I could be ready  
Oh, but if I take my heart's advice  
I should assume it's still unsteady  
Oh yeah, I'm never really ready, yeah  
Oh yeah, I'm never really ready, yeah  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there  
    I'm in repair  
I'm not together, but I'm getting there

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)

**Appendix K: *I'm Gonna Find Another You***

It's really over  
You made your stand  
You got me crying  
As was your plan  
But when my loneliness is through  
I'm gonna find another you  
You take your sweaters  
You take your time  
You might have your reasons  
But you will never have my rhyme  
I'm gonna sing my way away from blue  
I'm gonna find another you  
When I was your lover  
No one else would do  
If I'm forced to find another  
I hope she looks like you  
Yeah, and she's nicer too  
So go on, baby  
Make your little getaway  
My pride will keep me company  
And you just gave yours all away  
Oh, now I'm gonna dress myself for two  
Once for me, and once for someone new  
I'm gonna do some things you wouldn't let me do  
I'm gonna find another you

(Mayer, 2006, *Continuum*)