

EME 6646

Final Project Part II

Rachel Thurson

"Create a second narrative about this character that includes all five story elements. This can be a 2-3 minute video or a second text file that runs about 6-8 pages. In this story you combine your knowledge of the character's history and include a turning point in which a judgment is made by the main character and results in some transformation that occurs that which changed this person's life."

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter: Never Back Down

In the heart of Houston, under the clear Texan night sky, a young girl named Beyoncé Knowles stood on her family's porch, her eyes alight with dreams as big as the stars above. Beyoncé always knew she was different than other girls her age. Sure, she had plenty of friends, but while other girls went to sports and clubs after school, she went to rehearsal. She had gigs on the weekends when her classmates had sleepovers and play dates. Still, while she was practicing her songs for Girl's Tyme, everything seemed to pass in slow motion as she imagined herself on stage, commanding the attention of millions with her voice and presence. Although her training could be grueling at times, especially for a girl of only eight years old, each passing day brought her closer to her aspirations, with hours spent honing her craft and perfecting her skills.

However, as Beyoncé grew older, the harsh realities of life began to cast shadows over her dreams. Her family faced financial hardships, and the road to success seemed longer and more daunting than ever. But Beyoncé refused to let adversity dim her inner light. Instead, she turned to her music as a source of solace and strength, pouring her heart and soul into every note and lyric. And she never, not for one single moment, backed down.

In 1997, Beyoncé's father took control of Girl's Tyme and formed what is now known as Destiny's Child. Beyoncé felt sorry for her former Girl's Tyme bandmates. Still, she understood why he needed to cut the band down to three members—together with Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams, Destiny's Child stormed onto the music scene with their powerhouse vocals and undeniable charisma. Despite criticism and skepticism, Beyoncé remained undeterred, channeling her passion and perseverance into every performance. This perseverance would help her career flourish, especially later in life.

Despite her talent and determination, Beyoncé faced numerous setbacks on her journey to stardom. Record labels rejected her time and time again, casting doubt on her abilities and potential. But with each rejection, Beyoncé's resolve only grew stronger. She refused to be defined by the judgments of others, choosing instead to carve out her path to success. This resolve is what launched her career to superstardom.

As Destiny's Child soared to international fame, Beyoncé continued to push herself to new heights. She embarked on a solo career, releasing hit after hit and solidifying her status as a musical icon. She starred in movies and recorded soundtracks; she used her voice to lift others out of oppression and raised funds for marginalized groups. In 2016, after her

award-winning studio album *Lemonade* was released, Beyoncé was on top of the world. That same year, she was invited to perform with the Chicks (formerly known as the Dixie Chicks) at the 50th Annual Country Music Awards. Later in life, Beyoncé would reflect on this moment and realize it was a turning point. Not for her career specifically but for her future efforts to become the genre-bending artist that we know today.

The CMAs were hosted in Nashville, the birthplace of country music. Being from Houston, Beyoncé knows a thing or two about country music herself. She was a surprise guest and performed "Daddy Lessons" before the awards presentation. She never thought she would receive so much hate and backlash from an industry she loved. However, the music industry is fickle and has shined its light on Beyoncé, but not this time. She received hate messages and was accused of being racist and destroying country music.

The CMAs took the promotional video of Beyoncé and The Chick's performance down due to the backlash they received. During this time, Beyoncé was confused. She gave a powerful performance; the live audience was enthusiastic. But soon after, her confusion turned into resolve. Like many people of color before her, she was rejected by the country music industry. And she was not about to let that be the last they heard of her.

Beyoncé continued performing and, in 2018 headlined Coachella. She starred in more movies and embraced motherhood, welcoming daughter Blue Ivy and twins Rumi and Sir into the world with her husband Jay-Z. She continued to defy expectations with her groundbreaking performances and boundary-pushing artistry until the 2020 pandemic. During quarantine, Beyoncé spent time with her young family and, as many artists did,

used the opportunity to create new music. This three-part project focuses on her genre-bending abilities. Beyoncé would later describe this chapter of her life as her most creative period.

In 2022, she released *Act I: Renaissance*, an electronic-pop album that shined a light on the LGBTQ community and their ballroom culture. Beyoncé chose to release this album first because, after the pandemic, she felt that the world needed to dance. And dance we did! This album received critical acclaim, winning four Grammys, including Album of the Year. This album also launched the Renaissance Tour, which is still the highest-grossing tour performed by a black woman to date. But she wasn't done yet.

On March 29th, 2024, she released *Act II: Cowboy Carter*. Having initially planned to release this album in 2022, she recorded it over five years before its release. Partnering with country stars like Dolly Parton, Miley Cyrus, and Willie Nelson and showcasing lesser-known country stars such as Shaboozey, this album has become an instant hit. Rolling Stone gave it a perfect score of 100 and labeled *Cowboy Carter* an "instant classic." This album, in many ways, has breathed new life into country music and has encouraged many fans to explore country music in ways that they haven't before.

When asked about her inspiration for this album, Beyoncé, classy as always, simply replied that it was born out of an experience she had several years prior where she did not feel welcome and others made it clear that she was not welcome. Although Beyoncé never explicitly stated this, many believe she is referencing her experience at the CMAs.

Her song "Texas Hold' Em" reached number one on Billboard's Country Music chart, the first time a song by a black woman has ever received that recognition. And still, Beyoncé and her fans face adversity. A country radio station based in Oklahoma refused to play her music when a fan called in and requested "Texas Hold'Em." The station manager stated in an email, "We (KYKC) do not play Beyoncé at KYKC as we are a country music station ." This decision caused quite an upset and showed light on how country music, although rooted in music made by African Americans, is continuing to exclude them. However, the Beyhive, like their Queen, would not take no for an answer. A calling and emailing campaign began, and KYKC played Beyoncé's song. Not once, not twice, but three times in one set.

With each obstacle she encountered, Beyoncé emerged stronger and more resilient than before. Through her music and activism, Beyoncé has become a superstar and a symbol of empowerment and resilience for millions worldwide. She inspires others never to give up and has shown her fans that their culture, experiences, and history matter.

I like to think that as Beyoncé stands on stage, bathed in the glow of adoring fans, she reflects on the journey that brought her to this moment. From Houston, Texas, to the global stage, she has faced adversity with grace and determination, never allowing setbacks to dim her light. Beyoncé's story is one of triumph over adversity, a testament to the power of resilience and the unwavering belief in oneself.

Through her journey of triumph, Beyoncé has become the most-awarded female artist of all time, with an incredible 32 Grammy Awards. Her journey is far from over. With each challenge she overcomes, she becomes stronger, and more unstoppable. For Beyoncé,

giving up was never an option. And every time she goes on stage and takes her final bow, she knows that the best is yet to come.

If you would like to listen to Beyoncé's most recent album, you can scan below and play it on Spotify:



References:

1. Greene, A. (2024, March 27). Beyoncé's 'Cowboy Carter' Started With This CMAs Performance. Rolling Stone. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/beyonce-the-chicks-cmas-performance-cowboy-carter-1234995125/>
2. Beyoncé. Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyonc%C3%A9>
3. Schmall, E. (2024, Feb. 2021). Beyoncé Fan's Radio Request Reignites Country Music Debate. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/14/arts/music/beyonce-oklahoma-radio-station.html>