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**“Beneath the load of women’s cares:” Women’s  
voices in country music**

**Bakalářská práce**

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### **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

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## **1 Introduction**

The aim of this work is to show how women were perceived in American society through country music culture, specifically through the country music of female artists. The quote from the title of my work “Beneath the load of women’s cares” is the final line from the song “Are You Tired of Me My Darling” by The Carter Family, one of the analyzed country music artists. The introduction is followed by an overview of the country music general background information and the picture of women’s lives in the Appalachian Mountains area, where the music originated, to provide a further theoretical information for the subsequent part of the work.

The second part then contains an analysis of selected song lyrics of the time period from 1920s to 1980s. The purpose of the analysis is to provide a clearer view on how the women’s role in society evolved. The choice of artists and songs aims to provide a sample of women artists who reflected aspects of women’s lives, such as marriage, relationships, home life or work, in their music during different decades and who played an important role in paving the way for other female country musicians in a male dominated genre of music.

For the purpose of my thesis, I have chosen one band and three country singers who I will focus on in detail: The Carter Family, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton. Each of them represented a different time period, each period having an essential milestone affecting women’s lives. The birth of country music and its first women performers, World War II or the Women’s movement shaped the artists’ styles and themes and my goal is to show how these women perceived the situation of women from the women’s perspective. The choice of artists is based on the popularity and the importance they played not only for the following female musicians but also for the women in the audience, speaking through their music for others from their own experience. All of them experienced various hardships and restrictions caused by the male domination inside and outside of the country music business, but they managed to receive recognition. The songs chosen for my work capture the changes in the

attitude of the women towards the society and society towards women. While Carter family describes the still quite patriarchal, sexist society of the between wars period, over time more feminist topics appear. The following artists include open statements concerning divorce, birth control, sexual liberation, working women and double standard in their music.

## 2 Country music background

### 2.1 Origins of Country Music

This chapter will provide an overview of the history of country music. I draw extensively here from the writings by established country music scholars and writers Bill Malone, Don Cusic and Kip Lornell and also from a folklore specialist Norm Cohen.

The importance of music for any culture is explained well by a simple statement by the renowned neuroscientist musician author Daniel Levitin that occurred in his popular book *This Is Your Brain on Music*: “Whenever humans come together for any reason, music is there: weddings, funerals, graduation from college, men marching off to war, stadium sporting events, a night on the town, prayer, a romantic dinner, mothers rocking their infants to sleep ... music is a part of the fabric of everyday life.”<sup>1</sup> The quotation suggests that music has a significant role in people’s life, music is a part of every ceremony and event of everyday life as well. Music has always been one of the possible means of communication. People use it to express opinion, narrate a story, describe a situation or evoke feelings, moods. A major part of American culture can be discovered through the words of the country music artists, even though as Bill Malone states in his classic work on country music, “Country music scholars still have far to go in demonstrating the cultural relevance of their subject.”<sup>2</sup> The opinions that country music should not be taken seriously as a source of cultural knowledge still persist even though country music courses are taught in many universities.

Country music is no longer only a part of American culture, its influence has spread around the world. Despite its importance, it lacks a

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Penguin random house LLC, 2016), 45, kindle.

<sup>2</sup> Bill C. Malone, *Country music, U.S.A.* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1993), xi.

precise definition. It can be perceived as an energetic form of music that is always changing and adding new features. The southern part of the United States is where country music first became popular and where its center still remains.<sup>3</sup> Country music could also be defined by its origins. It originated in the South of the United States and consisted of a mixture of cultures and their folksongs, ballads and dances brought to America by its immigrants.

From the musical point of view, country music developed from the British ballads brought to America by the early settlers. Country music has two major sources. First, folk tunes, mostly fiddle ones, without authorship, passed from one musician to another, always adding something new to the lyrics or to the melody. Second, songs written for the stage. Although the definition of country music is arguable, one of the ways of defining it is through its audience that decides if the music is country or not.<sup>4</sup> If the audience can identify with a song and consider it being country, then the song most likely becomes categorized as country.

Country music is a style of folk music as it evolved from and continues to be influenced by traditional folk music. The term folk music is connected to common people, it is often referred to as traditional music and it can be defined as the music that survives without complete dependence on commercial media.<sup>5</sup>

Early American folk music emerged with the first Europeans bringing fiddles and pianos along with their traditions into the new world as well as with the first Africans and their banjolike instruments.<sup>6</sup>

Folk music of the first decades of nineteenth century was connected to working people who lived in isolation in the rural areas where the major

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<sup>3</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Don Cusic, *Discovering Country Music* (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Norm Cohen, *Folk Music : A Regional Exploration* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005), xxiii.

<sup>6</sup> Kip Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music : Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 6.



means of communication was face to face. Music then served as an important way of entertainment at people's homes and churches. The physical isolation ensured the regional diversity of the music.<sup>7</sup>

From the definition of country music and the specification of its origins I will now move on to focus on the importance of the region, its people and characteristics of the home of country music, the South.

## **2.2 The South, Folk Music and Society**

For this part of my work I will depend on the writing from Malone who is specialized in the historical exploration of country music with providing a general definition of folk music from Kip Lornell.

British folk culture shaped the hillbilly music (later country music), folk-derived commercial genre of the Southeastern part of America. Hillbilly music evolved from the musical sources brought to America by Anglo-Celtic immigrants and when combined with musical features from Afro-American society, the music became powerful enough to succeed. However, only in the southern United States the music became most well-known genre of music. The south as a socially conservative environment wanted to keep the old values and was unwilling to change. Agriculture and isolation was a characteristic feature for South. Isolation was supported not only by the rural life and the lack of opportunities, but also by the racial hierarchy. Southern people were separated from the cities in the North on geographical, economical, religious and political levels. Southerners migrated North for better job opportunities, leaving the South also for its competition of slavery. To simplify the country's situation, big cities evolved in the north, and the south relied on agriculture and traditions.<sup>8</sup>

The similarities in the traditions among southerners ensured the similarities in the songs and styles. Innovations to the music appeared

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<sup>7</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 1-2.

slowly because of the conservative culture but South's isolation was never complete and no area has ever been totally isolated from the world. British immigrants brought with them the core of the white folk music of the South. Nevertheless, rural southerners did not rely exclusively on the British tunes. As soon as they arrived to America, colonists began to create songs based upon their new experiences and borrowed songs from any other culture they crossed. Of all the southern ethnic groups, the migrants from Africa contributed to the seemingly white musical form the most. Southern folk music was never purely white or "Anglo", rural or only noncommercial. Despite its isolation, the South was not completely immune to the technological and social change, the music even absorbed some of the musical trends coming from the cities.<sup>9</sup>

The definition of the musical form is problematic, but one can recognize folk music according to its characteristics. Kip Lornell in his work on folk music argues there are six main ones of folk music: "First, folk music varies greatly over space but relatively little over time. Second, it emanates from a specific, identifiable community, such as coal miners, Louisiana Cajuns, or Native Americans. Third, the authorship or origins of folk songs and tunes are generally unknown. Fourth, folk songs are usually disseminated by word-of-mouth, aurally, or through informal apprenticeships within a community. Fifth, folk music is most often performed by nonprofessionals. And last, short forms and predictable patterns are fundamental for folk music."<sup>10</sup> The music sang in Britain would not sound exactly the same as in Georgia for example, but it would sound similar and, because of the tendency to keep the music familiar, it would vary little over time. The music would also be hard to assign to a specific author but the specialists in the musical field should be able to identify the region or community of origin.

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<sup>9</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 3-6.

<sup>10</sup> Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music*, 13-14.

### 2.3 Early Recordings

Beginnings of country music on records date back to the early 1920s after World War I. The very first recordings of country music took place in 1922 when Uncle Eck Robertson and Henry Gilliland went to New York and made recordings for Victor Records. However, none of these recordings received commercial success. The first successful recording of what became known as country music was in 1923 by Fiddlin' John Carson made in Atlanta for Okeh Records. Fiddlin' John Carson recorded two songs, both serving as interesting examples of the roots of country music. "Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Gonna Crow" is an old fiddle tune, handed down from fiddler to fiddler and the original tune does not have a certain author or origin. The second song, "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" was written for a commercial stage production by a definite author.<sup>11</sup>

Fiddlers were perceived as the lead instrumentalists in a string band, accompanied mostly by the banjo throughout the nineteenth century and by the guitar in the early twentieth century. It is interesting that most of old time fiddlers were proud of being unable to read music and played only by ear.<sup>12</sup> The first recordings of country music were made by fiddlers by small record companies; therefore, the success of Fiddlin' John Carson was unexpected. His recordings ensured the demand for hillbilly music and possibly set off the commercial interest for country music.

In the early twentieth century, American music was concentrated in the cities. Rural population was overlooked by the record companies and all the interest was oriented to the urban America because of the easy accessibility and population density. Rural market was not completely ignored but it received the same music material as the one directed to the cities and was not adapted to the rural taste. Folk and rural songs were recorded and even performed on the stage but by urban artists. The rural performers were disregarded for sounding odd and primitive to commercial people in charge

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<sup>11</sup> Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 7-8.

of the urban music industry. What changed the music industry's negative attitude towards genuine rural music was most likely the discovery of southern grassroots music. It changed, along with the invention of the radio and the automobile, the isolation between the cities and rural areas. The invention of radio changed the market strategies and phonograph industry was repressed because people preferred to listen to the radio for free instead.<sup>13</sup> Even though authentic rural country music was not perceived as an option for the music industry in the beginning of the twentieth century, it soon found its way to a wide audience through the radio. The leading figures of the music business were forced to reconsider its importance after southern grassroots music was discovered and eventually changed the music industry's antirural attitude.

Another reason of growing interest for country music was the need of the record companies to broaden their repertoire because they nearly exhausted their initial markets.<sup>14</sup>

## **2.4 Appalachian women**

The essential of my thesis are women, more specifically possibly the most influential country music artists that shaped the male dominated genre of music. The ones I will focus on in this work, Sara and Maybelle Carter from The Carter Family, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton had in common their origins. They all came from the Appalachian Mountains region. I will provide the background information on what the lives of women from that region used to look like in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. For this chapter I will draw from Bufwack and Oermann's work on women in country music and from the article found in the Smoky Mountain Living online magazine.

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<sup>13</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 31-32.

<sup>14</sup> Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 16.

The lives of the poor women living in the Appalachian Mountains were accompanied by many hardships. Women usually aged prematurely due to repeated pregnancies. Mountain people's lack of information about sexuality caused that incest, premarital sex or unwanted pregnancies were not exceptional within the community. It also led to the average of seven and more children per woman. Once married, often at very young age, women started to have children one after another, initially one every two years. Babies were delivered under the supervision of so called "grannies", the older women in the community were considered the authorities on childbirth. Doctors were few, usually far between and unaffordable. Childbirths took place at homes with little sanitation with the use of boiling water. Birthing complications went untreated, sometimes simple plants were used as remedies. At the turn of the century, one in every thirty women died during childbirths or of afterbirth complications. Besides delivering babies, women had to do their chores and had rarely more than a week to recover from childbirth to take them up.<sup>15</sup>

Back then most of the families lived in log cabins. The houses were very plain, with minimum decorations and only essentials for furniture. Women started to do the housework very early in the morning and it was usually done by late evening. The most time-consuming chore was cooking and the hardest one was washing. Everything was made from scratch and there was no running water nor electricity. Women had to draw water, grow and pick their own vegetables, they cared for the livestock, milked cows, churned butter and they also canned food for future consumption. Most of the clothing was sewn at home. The cleaning included scrubbing floors and sweeping. Washing was a weekly necessity due to the scarcity of clothes and it usually took the whole day.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann, *Finding Her Voice: The Illustrated History of Women in Country Music* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 8-9.

<sup>16</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 11-12.

Apart from house work, women sometimes helped in the field. To earn a little income, they would go and trade or sell the surplus of what they cultivated or made. Otherwise, women tended to stay at home since their main duty was to tend to the children. There were limited job opportunities for them.<sup>17</sup>

Majority of women were very active in religious life. Often church served as a way of socialization and many women found there their spouse.<sup>18</sup> Country and bluegrass stars usually started their singing careers in church. Singing was a crucial part of worship and women would often sing the hymns learned in church at home, spreading the music onto their children.

Very few women obtained any education at all, if any, it would only be the primary. The schools often had only one room for all children and all grades. It was not uncommon if only about five to ten students attended the whole school.

With little to look forward to and almost no time for entertainment, the needs to express themselves and relieve the daily grind of life grew stronger for the Appalachian women. One of the most easily accessible means to do so were their voices. Mountain women were singers and collectors of the traditional songs. Some of them excellent ones but it was difficult for women to enter public life and almost impossible to enter showbusiness. The belief that women belonged at home was strong and in addition public entertainment was associated with prostitution. For that reason, so many women in the early entertainment performed in family groups as did The Carter Family, the first women in country music which I will focus on in the next chapter.

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<sup>17</sup> Sarah Smith Nester, *Women in the Appalachian Home*, Smoky Mountain Living, accessed April 20, 2018, <http://www.smliv.com/features/women-in-the-appalachian-home/>.

<sup>18</sup> Smith Nester, *Women in the Appalachian Home*.

### 3 The 1920s

By the 1920s, the phonograph became a standard household item which caused that the business potential of country music was taken seriously. The significant moment came in August 1927 when Ralph Peer recorded songs by the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers in Bristol, Tennessee. That moment is referred to as the “Big Bang” of country music . The 1920s also brought the migration of rural Southerners to the cities. This migration strengthened the success of country music.<sup>19</sup> The most significant and influencing female artists from this first generation of country musicians were Sarah Carter and Maybelle Carter.

#### 3.1 The Carter Family

The birth of country music recording came with the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers during one hot day in Bristol, Tennessee. In August 1927 a Victor Records talent scout was there to find rural musicians to make hit country sounds. A.P. Carter, lured by an article in Bristol paper about the visiting New Yorker, took his wife Sara Carter and his sister-in-law Maybelle Carter to audition. Sara and Maybelle thought of it as a trip. It was twenty-six miles away from Maces Spring where they lived, on the bad roads, during an extremely hot summer day and Maybelle being eight months pregnant. The recording took place in an old warehouse and the trio recorded everything on one microphone. The scout Ralph Peer recalled years later that when he heard Sara’s voice, he knew that it was going to be wonderful.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bruce S. Feiler, *Dreaming Out Loud: Garth Brooks, Wynonna Judd, Wade Hayes, and the Changing Face of Nashville* (New York: Avon Books, 1998), 88-89.

<sup>20</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 50-52.

Sara Carter's resonant alto is as deep and dark as a cool underground mountain spring. It has broken hearted shards of repressed emotion, trouble, regret and pain. There's a chilly pang of loneliness in it. There is fervor and yearning. In its lower throatier moments, it takes on an almost masculine tone. At other times it has mournful, bluesy quality. That remarkable voice, A.P.'s vivid song constructions, and Maybelle's treble harmonies and instrumental ability were the act's tickets to immortality.<sup>21</sup>

Sara Carter contributed with her great voice, Maybelle Carter with her distinctive guitar playing and A.P. Carter with the texts. A.P. Carter would often travel throughout the country with his musical African-American friend Leslie Riddle. It was very exceptional to befriend and journey with a black man taking into consideration the Jim Crow laws. On their way they collected and blended the songs mostly from Appalachian musicians. He, being a man, also made it possible for the two women to perform in the first place. It was not common for women to perform solo in the 1920s, the only way was when accompanied by their families. The women's tremendous talents and the man's organization skills, work and help brought the Carter Family fame and recognition.

Sara Dougherty Carter (1898-1979) grew up musical. When her mother died while she was still a baby, her Aunt Melinda and Uncle Milburn Nichols took care of her. They raised Carter in Copper Creek situated right across Clinch Mountain from A.P. Carter's family home in Maces Spring. Madge and Maybelle Addington, Sara Carter's cousins, lived a quarter of mile away from her. Sara Carter and Madge Addington entertained themselves playing music and singing lonesome mountain tunes. A.P. Carter came to Copper Creek in 1914, heard Sara Carter sing and fell in love. The two got married in 1915, a month before Sara Carter turned seventeen. Sara Carter's cousin was six when she was dancing at their

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<sup>21</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 52.



wedding. Maybelle Addington Carter (1909-1978) was one of ten children. She has loved music all her life partly because she was born into the musical mountain clan. When Maybelle Carter was little, her sister played the banjo, her mother played the banjo and she would try to play autoharp and banjo too. When she was about twelve or thirteen she got a guitar from one of her older brothers and learned to play it all by herself. Maybelle Carter's mother Margaret Addington was the leader of the Women's Chorus of the Fair Oak Methodist Church, so little Maybelle Addington learned gospel songs, family traditional ballads and community square dance melodies. A.P., Sara and Maybelle Carter played at various dances, family gatherings, schoolhouses and church events. At the occasion of one of the shows, Ezra Carter, A.P. Carter's brother fell in love with Maybelle Addington. Sixteen years old Maybelle Addington got married in 1926. A.P. Carter and Ezra Carter were brothers, Maybelle and Sarah Carter were cousins and that is how the trio became the Carter Family. A year after Maybelle and Ezra Carter's wedding, the Carter family launched their career.<sup>22</sup>

In November 1927 the first two songs were released and Peer soon realized Carter music was catching on. It did not take long and The Carter Family's records were outselling the others recorded at the Bristol sessions, including those of Jimmie Rodgers. More sessions followed, in New Jersey the band cut twelve more songs, including "Little Darling Pal of Mine", "Keep on the Sunny Side", "Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone" and a simple one "Wildwood Flower". In the last mentioned piece, Maybelle Carter picked the melody on the lower strings of her guitar while strumming the chords on the higher strings. The technique became known as "the Carter lick" and is the most influential guitar style in country music. The song also ended any doubts about the band's popularity. It was the best-selling of all the Carter records. Despite their record success, the Carters were not able to profit from it. They still had shows in remote coal towns,

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<sup>22</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 53-54.

A.P. Carter nailing homemade posters to trees and barns announcing Carter Family concerts and asserting, “The program is morally good.”<sup>23</sup>

The image of a family, present in the band’s name was not truthful for most of their professional career. Sara Carter separated from A.P. Carter in 1933 and lived apart from him for the rest of the trio’s existence and got a divorce in 1939, she left behind her children for some time and eventually remarried. It was the first separation, divorce, abandonment of children and remarriage that ever appeared in the valley and it was all very scandalous at that time. The executive Ralph Peer asked Sara Carter to not to reveal personal matters for the act’s sake. He feared that the sales would lower if people knew the reality of Carter Family not being the actual family anymore. Therefore, the image stayed maintained. Carters image was home, heart, family and religion and stayed that way through the Jazz Age, economic chaos and the beginning of World War II. It happened rarely that Carter Family commented on contemporary times. Their songs were mostly traditional, love or religious songs passed from generation to generation, collected and remade by A.P. with help of Leslie Riddle. When making songs, A.P. relied heavily on the musical tradition of poor valley. He would sometimes change the gender of traditional song so the women’s interpretation would fit. Songs were about the dark side of the society, about home, family and everyday life. Their world consisted of old-fashioned female ideals and male domination. There were only about five percent of country’s earliest recordings featuring female performers.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout their fourteen years long career – from the day in Bristol until the eve of World War II in 1941 – the Carter Family achieved to work for every major label and to make 270 records. Some of the records became

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<sup>23</sup> Charles K. Wolfe, *Classic Country: Legends of Country Music* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 56-59.

the most influential in country music history. The music industry rewarded the trio by voting them into the Hall of Fame in 1970.<sup>25</sup>

What started as a family band continued as a family tradition. The second generation of Carter family consisted of “The Carter Sisters” and other relatives such as A.P. and Sara Carter’s children Janette and Joe Carter. “The Carter Sisters” were formed by Maybelle Carter and her daughters Anita, June and Helen Carter. June Carter married Johnny Cash, one of the best-selling music artist of all times.

Even though most of the Carter’s family songs were traditional, they recorded few that were challenging the tradition. The songs I will study in the next part of my work are not the classic examples of their repertoire but they are special for speaking for women and about women’s role in society. One of them “Single Girl, Married Girl” is even considered the breakthrough song in their career.

### **3.2 Single Girl, Married Girl**

One of the songs that became a hit from the 1927 Bristol sessions was “Single girl, Married girl.” The song was sang by Sara Carter playing autoharp, accompanied by Maybelle Carter playing lead guitar. A.P. Carter does not feature the song. The song perfectly suits the purposes of the thesis due to its challenging of the women’s role in the 1920s so it will serve for further examination.

The term used for the song is “a girl” instead of “a woman”, possibly this being a reference to the youth of the girls when they married. They were still “girls” and very young even after such mature move as marriage.

The song is built on a contrast between two women, one that is single and one that is married. The first layer of contrasts consists of comparison of both women’s three important aspects of life, appearance,

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<sup>25</sup>. Wolfe, *Classic Country*, 4.

time for oneself and freedom, respectively. In the first situation the single girl, “She’s going dressed so fine”<sup>26</sup> while the married girl, “She wears just any kind.”<sup>27</sup> To look beautiful and to take care of one’s appearance is an important part of femininity. The single girl is aware of this importance and is interested in dressing up. While for the married girl her appearance becomes secondary, her role as a woman is not to take care of herself anymore. The second situation focuses on what the two women do in their spare time. The single girl she likes to buy things, she has the time and energy to think of and reward herself.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, the married girl, “She rocks the cradle and cries”.<sup>29</sup> She does not have any time for herself, she is now a full-time mother, wife and housewife. She does not live a life for herself anymore. The last situation deals with a theme of freedom. Single girl is free and “She’s going where she please,”<sup>30</sup> the feeling of freedom is reinforced by usage of the verb “go” in every stanza featuring the single girl. Single girl is always in motion, always goes somewhere because she can and she wants to. Married girl is tied up by “A baby on her knees.”<sup>31</sup> The absence of a verb in the last lines of the last stanza brings out the feeling of passivity. Suggesting that nothing else or nothing more than home life is awaiting in the married woman’s life. The continuous repetition evokes a feeling of being trapped. The married woman seems trapped in her own life, by the stereotype, by her duties, by her children and her husband.

Throughout the song it is always the single girl that is sang about first. Indicating that in the single girl’s life it is her who always comes first, her needs are the most important. Married girl comes second after the single girl as she comes second in life after the children and her husband.

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<sup>26</sup> Sara Carter and Maybelle Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl* (Victor Records, 1927), [https://www.aldielyrics.com/lyrics/the\\_carter\\_family/single\\_girl\\_married\\_girl.html](https://www.aldielyrics.com/lyrics/the_carter_family/single_girl_married_girl.html).

<sup>27</sup> Carter and Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl*.

<sup>28</sup> Carter and Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl*.

<sup>29</sup> Carter and Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl*.

<sup>30</sup> Carter and Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl*.

<sup>31</sup> Carter and Carter, *Single Girl, Married Girl*.

The contrast between the happiness and abundance in a single girl's life and unhappiness and shortage of a married girl's life leads to the pessimistic feeling about marriage for a woman in 1920s.

Sara admitted that "Single girl, married girl" was the one song she did not want to sing. She wondered why this song brought them the first royalty check and sold the most. Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann remarked in their work on women in country music *Finding her voice* that: "The song bemoans the lot of the married girl with a baby on her knees and shabby clothes. And Sara Carter had traveled to fame that August with a screaming baby in tow and auditioned in plain country clothes rather than city finery."<sup>32</sup> She possibly did not want to record this song for its content of reality behind marriage instead of idealization of it. Nevertheless, the audience identified with it and the song became an influential hit and possibly the first feminist country song.

### 3.3 Lulu Walls

Another song I picked for further exploration from Carter Family repertoire is "Lulu Walls". The song was released under Victor Records in 1929 and is special for breaking the stereotypes of the women's role in society.

The song is a story sang by the Carter sisters from a man's perspective. The man meets a woman in the park sitting alone in the dark. The woman, Lulu Walls, invites the man at her house after a short chat.<sup>33</sup> From that moment on, it is Lulu who is taking control over their romantic relationship. Lulu seems like she wants to enjoy relationship with a man without commitment. She might even play with the man's feelings while seemingly emotionally not involved at all.

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<sup>32</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 56.

<sup>33</sup> Sara Carter and Maybelle Carter, *Lulu Walls* (Victor Records, 1929), <https://genius.com/The-carter-family-lulu-walls-lyrics>.

The man appears to be charmed by Lulu's beauty and at the same time, annoyed by her independence and lack of interest towards him. His torn apart attitude is demonstrated on the last line of the refrain where he refers to Lulu as "That aggravating beauty."<sup>34</sup>

In the second stanza the situation becomes disturbing. The line "If she was only mine, I would build a house so fine,"<sup>35</sup> seems innocent even though the listener might feel the meaning of "my property" behind the possessive "mine." The hidden meaning becomes more obvious after hearing the rest of the stanza, "And around it so many fences tall/ It would make me jealous free that no one else but me/ Could gaze upon that beauty Lulu Walls."<sup>36</sup> Here the song openly expresses the man's intention he has with a woman if entering marriage. To lock the woman at home where she would stay for the rest of her life, raising children and looking after the household so the man can do what he wishes to do without having to worry about what the woman does or where she goes. As if marriage for a woman was equal to loss of freedom and becoming the man's property he needs to keep behind fence.

The second stanza also points out the man's lack of self-confidence. He expects Lulu to leave him before even proposing to her and plans to build tall fences around the house which would eventually stop her from doing so. His jealousy only strengthens my point of view.

The third stanza closes with the man finally expressing himself in the random and very casual way. "One evening getting late I met her at the gate/ I asked her if she'd wed me in the fall,"<sup>37</sup> She reacted by turning away from him and saying nothing as if the answer was not worth her words.<sup>38</sup> As if she knew what her life would look like married to this man. Lulu is

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<sup>34</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

<sup>35</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

<sup>36</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

<sup>37</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

<sup>38</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

portrayed as someone breaking the stereotypes by playing with the man's feelings, being the one in control and eventually turning down the man's proposal as if the proposal was a joke.

The lines, repeating in the chorus after each stanza "If she'd only be my wife/ I'd live happy all my life"<sup>39</sup> and the use of personal pronoun "I" instead of "we" makes it clear that it is only the man's happiness and needs that are important in the relationship.

The Carter Family is one of the very first country music families and arguably the most influential of the genre. The dynasty kept changing the course of the music history even after the original trio disbanded when Maybelle and her daughters continued with the family's music tradition. Union of June Carter and Johnny Cash even deepened their musical legacy. Their songs such as "Keep on the Sunny Side", "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" or "Wildwood Flower" became legendary and has been covered by artists all over the world including Joan Baez, Emmylou Harris, Sheryl Crow and many others. Maybelle distinctive guitar style "the Carter scratch" inspired with her playing the following generation of musicians. Every documentary about country music includes the Carter Family and documentaries that studied but their lives were made, among them the most recent film "The Winding Stream." The band's recognition was acknowledged by the election to the Country music Hall of Fame in 1970 and in 2005 they received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

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<sup>39</sup> Carter and Carter, *Lulu Walls*.

## 4 The post-war era

After World War II the social situation in America changed completely. During the war country boys faced the ugliness of it and country girls entered defense factories, felt social independence and became economically self-sufficient. Immediately after the war ended, the divorce rate increased drastically. Female sexuality became more open than ever before and men found that change both exciting and threatening. Popular magazines wrote of women's frustration, restlessness and discontent. That discontent was stoked by the government's sanction of discrimination against women. Also, with millions of men coming home, women were encouraged or forced to leave their jobs that the majority of them wanted to keep. Another reason for the decrease of women in workplace was the after war "baby-boom." When looking for the explanation for divorce, runaway children and illegitimate births, the blame fell on women. The women were criticized for neglecting their motherly duties by being away from home at work, being overprotective, being too permissive or raising delinquents. The sub-urban living became an ideal that isolated women and families and fueled women's depression. Between 1948-1958 eleven million suburban homes were built. Men were supposed to commute to work and women were to take care of the household. The evening entertainment provided the television. Between 1950-1951, television ownership grew from one million to fifteen sets. The automobile ownership became a necessity instead of the demonstration of luxury.<sup>40</sup>

Big part of prewar country music themes expressed innocent romance, sentiments of home, family and religion and idealization of rural life. World War changed that. The taboo subjects as infidelity, alcohol and divorce became common for country songs in the late 1940s and dominant in the 1950s.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 164-167.

<sup>41</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 167-168.



In the afterwar era, honky-tonk provided the musical entertainment for the tired workers in the honky tonk bars. The music was raw and devoid of sophistication. Straightforward sound of guitar and steel guitar with love and life lyrics suited the needs of the people.<sup>42</sup> This unrespectable style of music eventually overwhelmed country's other styles but the honesty of the songs did not change the fact that women were still a distinct minority in the field of country music.

In the following decade after Sara Carter's retirement the most popular country music singers were men until the arrival of Kitty Wells who became country music's first great female star.<sup>43</sup>

#### **4.1 Kitty Wells**

During the honky-tonk era, the thirty-three-years old southern mother and wife Kitty Wells became known as the Queen of country music. She brought with her the old-time country culture and shaped her style into the new world's postwar one. Her songs were about guilt and remorse, forbidden romance, sin, betrayal and broken illusions. However, in real life she was a polite woman, mother of three children and a shy, dutiful housewife who never sought the career of a country superstar.

Ellen Muriel Deason was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1919. When she was sixteen, she was working at a shirt company and thinking about becoming a singer. That was when she met Johnny Wright. He was a delivery man then but became a country musician and was a part of famous duo Johnny and Jack. They married in 1937 and it was her husband who came up with Muriel Deason's stage name, Kitty Wells. They supposedly had a great marriage. The songs she sang about lonely women who marry a

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<sup>42</sup> Stephanie Shonekan, *Soul, Country, and the USA: Race and Identity in American Music Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 29.

<sup>43</sup> Nicholas Dawidoff, *In the Country of Country: People and Places in American Music* (New York: Random House, 1997), 63.

sexless man who do not love them, women who are worried about ending up as spinsters or women who end up with a man that eventually leaves them for someone younger, have nothing to do with her life. Kitty Wells was a woman who felt for other women that had been done wrong and wanted to speak from a feminine perspective in a man's world. She sang from her heart. Even though she did not write her songs they became hers and for sixteen years she was the number one woman in country music.<sup>44</sup> Her songs were picked by her husband to fit her image, written by men from a women's perspective. At that time there were not many songs written for women because nobody in the music industry believed a woman could make a hit. Kitty Wells proved them wrong when "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" became a number one song in the charts. The breakthrough song changed the situation and people started to write texts for women. This first hit was written by Joseph D. Miller and became the first big record by a woman singer.

#### **4.2 It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels**

At thirty-three, with three children, Kitty Wells was ready to retire from showbusiness, nevertheless she was persuaded to record once more for Decca Records. Until then she toured with her husband's band as the "girl singer" singing gospel songs and folk ballads. The \$125 fee was her motivation to record the answer song to Hank Thomson's hit "The Wild Side of Life." His song is a message from a man to a woman – a honky tonk angel; which is a reference to women who went to honky tonks, drank alcohol, smoked cigarettes and lived a life of "the wild side." In his song the man blames the woman for leaving him even though he was "the only one who ever loved her".<sup>45</sup> The man is seemingly convinced that there is no

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<sup>44</sup> Dawidoff, *In the Country of Country*, 65-70.

<sup>45</sup> Hank Thompson, *The Wild Side of Life* (Capitol Records, 1952), <https://genius.com/Hank-thompson-the-wild-side-of-life-lyrics>.

other man who could possibly love her again “And forget the truest love you’ll ever know”<sup>46</sup> and even marry her “you’d never make a wife.”<sup>47</sup>

In Kitty Wells’ answer song “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels,” the woman addressed in Hank Thomson’s song reacts to the situation from her perspective. The song serves as a defense of womankind.

From the first line “As I sit here tonight, the jukebox playin’,”<sup>48</sup> one can assume the woman is sitting in a bar most likely in a honky tonk because jukeboxes were frequently associated with such bars. She is listening to Tom Hank’s message and starts to recall her past, she refers to her past self as “a trustin’ wife.”<sup>49</sup> She replies to Hank Thomson’s words “I didn’t know God made honky tonk angels”<sup>50</sup> with “It wasn’t God who made honky tonk angels”<sup>51</sup> and suggests the man’s betrayal is responsible for her becoming such angel when singing: “Too many times married man think they’re still single/ That has caused many a good girl to go wrong.”<sup>52</sup> She indirectly refers to herself here as “a good girl”<sup>53</sup> implying she was innocent and naïve before the man spoiled her. The part “to go wrong”<sup>54</sup> may indicate she is not all right with what she has become but also makes me think of the situation for men. There is nothing wrong with men either taken or single hanging at honky tonks, drinking alcohol and buying girls drinks. These men’s behavior is never questioned. But for women this “wild side of life” is wrong and one can sense inequity in gender roles. Chronologically

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<sup>46</sup> Thompson, *The Wild Side of Life*.

<sup>47</sup> Thompson, *The Wild Side of Life*.

<sup>48</sup> Kitty Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels* (Decca Records, 1952), <http://www.metrolyrics.com/it-wasnt-god-who-made-honky-tonk-angels-lyrics-kitty-wells.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>50</sup> Thompson, *The Wild Side of Life*.

<sup>51</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>52</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>53</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>54</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

throughout her life, the woman from the song is first “a good girl,” then “a trustin’ wife” and eventually frees herself by growing wings becoming an angel, specifically “honky tonk angel” loosing all the illusions she had about men.

The second half of the song brings into focus the universal belief that the woman is always responsible for the break up and proves that belief wrong. The lines “It’s a shame that all the blame is on us women/ It’s not true that only you men feel the same”<sup>55</sup> are a call for attention that there are always two sides of the story. Women have always been here to put the blame on, but one should not forget about the men’s part of responsibility. The last lines “From the start most every heart that’s ever broken/ Was because there always was a man to blame”<sup>56</sup> balance Hank Thomson’s song and return him back his blame. This song finally represented women’s say in the postwar era when women’s role of a housewife started to change and the blame for the rising divorcing rate, delinquency, drinking and smoking fell upon them.

The song was recorded on May 3, 1952 and became a phenomenon by the end of the year. The climate of the early 1950s was still conservative and the song was banned on the NBC radio network and Wells was not allowed to sing it on the Grand Ole Opry either. Nevertheless, the audiences adored her and her songs of love told from woman’s point of view. Kitty Wells received the best woman singer award from 1952 to 1965 in a row.<sup>57</sup>

“It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels” is considered a turning point for woman’s liberation in country music. However, it took another ten years or so before women would really begin to stand alone as performers.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>56</sup> Wells, *It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*.

<sup>57</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 178-179.

<sup>58</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 224.

### 4.3 Cheatin's a Sin

After the war, the divorce rate increased drastically, and women were blamed for this social problem. This song is possibly a reaction to that situation from woman's point of view. The text was made by a country musician Billy Wallace and was released in 1953.

The theme of immorality of adultery resonates throughout the song, the title "Cheatin's a Sin" is repeated in the text four times at the end of each stanza. This repetition evokes a feeling of anger. It sounds as a reproach supported by the religious commandment that one should not commit adultery.

The woman in the song speaks to her husband "You're in the arms of another where you've no right to be/ We've made vows together your love isn't free"<sup>59</sup> and stands up for herself by saying that it is not all right for her husband to cheat on her. She strengthens her point by stating that their love is over. Only decades back, men's adultery would not be taken as a reason to leave the husband or to get a divorce.

She continues in the second stanza with admitting her love towards her husband but also knowledge that his love towards her has faded.<sup>60</sup> By "You're cheating I'm losing but cheating's a sin/ Why don't you change dear for cheater's can't win"<sup>61</sup> she points out that his behavior will have a negative impact on both of them.

At the end, the woman challenges her husband to reveal his true feelings. She seems certain about her affection and her decision of ending the relationship. Her last words in the song "You're cheating on me dear and cheating's a sin"<sup>62</sup> emphasize her husband's blame, highlights the root of the problem in their marriage and provides a reason for ending it.

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<sup>59</sup> Kitty Wells, *Cheatin's a Sin* (Decca Records, 1953), <http://www.metrolyrics.com/cheatins-a-sin-lyrics-kitty-wells.html>.

<sup>60</sup> Wells, *Cheatin's a Sin*.

<sup>61</sup> Wells, *Cheatin's a Sin*.

<sup>62</sup> Wells, *Cheatin's a Sin*.

Kitty Wells' songs resonated with the female audience in the postwar era, she was shocking the country music scene when singing about the cheating husbands and became the country music's first female superstar. She paved a way for other country legends such as Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, and Tammy Wynette. Wells was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1976 and was the first female country singer to receive a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

## **5 The Women's movement of the 1960s – 1980s**

Unlike the first-wave feminism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that focused on women's legal rights, the second movement peaking in the 1960s and 1970s comprised all the aspects of women's lives, such as family, sexuality and work.<sup>63</sup> The 1960s women's primary occupation were their domestic and household duties in the 1960s and caused a sense of lack of fulfillment among women. Inspired by the situation, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, an important book for the women's movement about the dissatisfaction of women as housewives-mothers, was released in 1963. Those women who worked were limited to jobs such as teachers or secretaries and were, compared to men's salaries, underpaid. To change the work opportunities for women, among other issues, the National Organization of Women, an American feminist organization, was formed in 1966. An image of a working woman as new role model was formed in the 1970s.

### **5.1 Loretta Lynn**

Loretta Lynn was born Loretta Webb on April 14 1935 in a coal miner's town Butcher Holler in Kentucky. She was one of the real Appalachian women I wrote about in the chapter "Appalachian women." She was born into poverty to the coal miner Ted Webb and Clara Webb and raised in a mountain cabin with seven brothers and sisters. Her origins shaped her musical style and Lynn remained proud of her origins throughout her career.

When only nearly fourteen-years-old, Loretta Webb married a twenty-one-year-old war veteran Oliver Mooney Lynn who she referred to as "Doo". Doo Lynn with his inclination to violence and alcohol became her second father and moved the innocent mountain girl across the United States

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<sup>63</sup> Elinor Burkett, *Women's movement*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/womens-movement>.

to Custer, Washington. She bore four children by the age of eighteen. Homesick, isolated from her culture and tied to hard domestic work, she turned to the musical talent inherited from her mother.<sup>64</sup>

It was her husband who first recognized her gift of music. Lynn always sang around the house, so Doo Lynn bought her a guitar for her eighteenth birthday. Mooney Lynn also pushed her to enter Tacoma contest where she won the first prize. That talent show was broadcasted in Canada where it caught the attention of a wealthy businessman, Norm Burley, who offered to finance a recording trip to Los Angeles and put out Lynn's song "Honky Tonk Girl" on his newly formed Zero Records. The song hit the Billboard national charts and ensured her a recording contract with Wilburn brothers who took her under their wings.<sup>65</sup>

The "Honky Tonk Girl" single hints on the influence of Kitty Wells at the beginning of Lynn's career. The song also brought Lynn to Nashville in 1960 and the Country City brought the singer together with the city's rising country music star Patsy Cline. Cline, touched by Lynn's dedication of the song "I Fall to Pieces" to her after Cline's car accident, invited Lynn to her bedside in the hospital where she was recovering. Cline was not only another inspiration for Lynn after Kitty Wells, but she also became her friend. It was after her death that Lynn began her cooperation with the Wilburn brothers.<sup>66</sup>

As soon as Lynn gained confidence and adopted her own style, Teddy and Doyle Wilburn helped her to shape her songwriting and encouraged Decca Records producer Owen Bradley to sign her. From then on Loretta Lynn's career fell into place. The National Organization of Women was formed in 1966 when Lynn's major-label hits with her daring statements were making it to the top of the charts. Most of the singer's

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<sup>64</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 307.

<sup>65</sup> Ralph Emery, *The View from Nashville*. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1998), 38-40.

<sup>66</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 307-308.



songs are aimed at women from their point of view. At that time, women country fans were assumed to buy labels and show tickets to listen to the attractive country men singers, nevertheless, Lynn's appeal to women was more than successful.<sup>67</sup>

The most distinct trait of Lynn's personality was her straightforwardness and honesty, her ability to speak her mind became legendary. She never forgot about the source of her art, her experience of being a poor Appalachian woman brought inspiration for songs like "Coal Miner's daughter" or "You're looking at country." She had an assertive woman stance, often adding humor to her songs. In her songs she developed her own country-feminist point of view as in "Pregnant Again." She wrote the truth about her life in her songs and she sang them in the Kentucky hills' people accent therefore many fans recognized their own lives in her words and identified with her struggles.<sup>68</sup>

## 5.2 The Pill

Some of Loretta Lynn's songs were perceived as feminist and "The Pill," reflecting on such controversial issue as birth control, was considered one of them. Ralph Emery states in his book *The View from Nashville* that: "It's possible that only Loretta could have recorded a song like "The Pill" in 1975 and got away with it, and she almost didn't."<sup>69</sup> Even though, the song was banned all over the States, it made it to the top five hits in the country music charts and was one of her five singles that made it to the pop-charts as well.

Lynn sings as a woman who has had enough of having a baby once a year while her husband was still out playing around and therefore wants to take her life into her own hands through birth control. She starts by a memory of what she was promised by her husband before she married him

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<sup>67</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 308-309.

<sup>68</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 311.

<sup>69</sup> Emery, *The View from Nashville*, 41.

and started to deliver babies, “Promised if I’d be your wife/ You’d show me the world,”<sup>70</sup> and contrasts it with reality “But all I’ve seen of this old world/ Is a bed and doctor bill.”<sup>71</sup> Throughout the song Loretta compares herself to the hen who lays eggs just like she delivers babies and now she decides: “I’m tearing down your brooder house/ Cause now I’ve got the pill.”<sup>72</sup> She does not feel like a woman, rather like some baby machine or “brooder house”<sup>73</sup> but she is about to change that.

In the second stanza, Lynn expresses her dissatisfaction with the current state of the household where she had to stay at home and deliver one baby after another, while her husband was out there having fun.<sup>74</sup> The statement, “There’s gonna be some changes made,”<sup>75</sup> can be perceived in a broader sense as a call for a change in the situation of women in society. Loretta Lynn once proclaimed: “I’m for women, but I’m not the kind that marches in the streets and burns my bra and carries on. But I do think that if a woman does a man’s job, then pay her equal.”<sup>76</sup> The stanza ends with another funny reference of her as a hen, “You’ve set this chicken your last time/ ‘Cause now I’ve got the pill,”<sup>77</sup> stating she refuses to bear any more children because she finally has the means to prevent repeated pregnancies.

The third stanza is about compensation for all those child bearing years, she throws away her old maternity clothes and replaces them with “Miniskirts, hot pants and a few little fancy frills.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Loretta Lynn, *The Pill* (MCA Records, 1975), <https://genius.com/Loretta-lynn-the-pill-lyrics>.

<sup>71</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>72</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>73</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>74</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>75</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>76</sup> Emery, *The View from Nashville*, 42.

<sup>77</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>78</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

In the fourth, she addresses her husband, “I’m tired of all your crowin’/ How you and your hens play,”<sup>79</sup> and lets him know she has had enough of his infidelity while she was bearing children and taking care of them. The line “While holdin’ a couple in my arms/ Another’s on the way”<sup>80</sup> possibly holds a message of the insanity of having so many children when a woman does not have the capacity to take care of them or even enough arms to hold them. Another hen metaphor comes with the line: “This chicken’s done tore up her nest,”<sup>81</sup> repeating again that the woman refuses to continue her life the way it was until now, proclaiming the man has no right to make decisions for her from now on. At the end of the stanza the woman definitively liberates herself from the man making decisions for her and tells him there is nothing he can do about it because she has the pill, “And I’m ready to make a deal/ And ya can’t afford to turn it down.”<sup>82</sup>

“This incubator is overused/ Because you’ve kept it filled”<sup>83</sup> introduces the last stanza and expresses woman’s exhaustion on one hand and happiness of having a choice now on the other hand, “The feelin’ good comes easy now/ Since I’ve got the pill.”<sup>84</sup> Throughout the song the analogy appears between a chicken and a woman which is a source of humor but also a sad reference at to how a woman in such a situation could feel. Before the marriage the woman was referred to as “girl” then “wife”, after the marriage she was “brooder house”, “chicken” or “incubator” but in the last part of the song comes a shift from the chicken to a human being again. The woman becomes “Mama” after the decision of taking a pill. The song suggests Lynn’s personal life. She did have an experience of bearing children year after year. She had six children and multiple miscarriages.

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<sup>79</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>80</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>81</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>82</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>83</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

<sup>84</sup> Lynn, *The Pill*.

### 5.3 Hey Loretta

This song about a runaway housewife leaving behind hard domestic work and her husband, “Hey Loretta,” was released in 1973. It was written by Shel Silverstein who was a popular children’s books author but also a songwriter who besides his cooperation with Lynn, penned a song “Boy Named Sue,” a country hit that topped the charts for Johnny Cash.

Introducing the song by saying goodbye to hard domestic work such as doing laundry “tub and clothes line,”<sup>85</sup> cooking “pots and pans,”<sup>86</sup> washing windows, scrubbing floors and taking care of the livestock “feed the chickens,”<sup>87</sup> “milk the cow,”<sup>88</sup> Loretta, feeling more like a maid than wife, takes the Greyhound bus to get as far away from home as possible. She confidently proclaims in the chorus what her husband will do when he realizes that she’s gone.

He will say “I love you more than my Irish setter,”<sup>89</sup> implying the woman got less attention and affection from her husband than his dog. He will swear that he will treat Loretta better and that he “will buy her a brand new overall if she’ll only come back home,”<sup>90</sup> which contrasts with her plan presented in the last stanza about her “dressing up like a movie star and prettying up her hair,”<sup>91</sup> suggesting that new overalls are not a reason enough for her to stay at home.

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<sup>85</sup> Loretta Lynn, *Hey Loretta* (Decca Records, 1973), <https://genius.com/Loretta-lynn-hey-loretta-lyrics>.

<sup>86</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>87</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>88</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>89</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>90</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>91</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

The second stanza reveals what her pay for “working her fingers to the bone is”<sup>92</sup> – “a little kiss about once a week.”<sup>93</sup> Adding the information of the lack of communication with her husband “And we don’t hardly speak,”<sup>94</sup> the woman creates a picture of her unhappy marriage. She concludes that he can do all the housework himself because she is leaving while proclaiming “This woman’s liberation, honey, is a-gonna start right now.”<sup>95</sup> The lines may feel as a strong statement and possibly a reference to the “women’s liberation movement” that was linked to the radical feminism in 1970s. Loretta Lynn once declared: “I’m not a big fan of Women’s Liberation, but maybe it will help women stand up for the respect they’re due... The men have enough things going for ‘em in this life. We women have got to stick together.”<sup>96</sup> Knowing Lynn’s attitude, the song’s lyrics might point out that it is very important that women are treated equal.

In the last stanza Lynn wants to make up for a lack of freedom throughout her marriage and do whatever she wants to without anyone judging her, “And no one here is a-gonna know/ What I’ll be doing there”<sup>97</sup> Lynn exaggerates when saying “I’ll be swinging from a chandelier/ And bouncing off the walls,”<sup>98</sup> and strengthens in this way her sudden excitement and feeling of freedom. She concludes with a shocking statement “Instead of loving just one man/ I’m gonna love them all,”<sup>99</sup> ensuring her husband she intends to find herself another man, possibly multiple men.

Lynn’s story of a poor mountain girl who became a country music legend was captured in the best-selling autobiography “Coal Miner’s Daughter” in 1976 and the Oscar-winning movie of the same name in 1980

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<sup>92</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>93</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>94</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>95</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>96</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 309-310.

<sup>97</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>98</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

<sup>99</sup> Lynn, *Hey Loretta*.

with a sequel “Still Woman Enough,” in 2002. She had seventy-five hit records between 1960 and 1988 and her revolutionary approach to songwriting influenced the country music scene with music composers following up with her country feminist style.<sup>100</sup> Lynn was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1988. She influenced other country stars like Dolly Parton or the popular country band Dixie Chicks.

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<sup>100</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 310.

#### 5.4 Dolly Parton

Dolly Rebecca Parton was born in January 1946 near Sevierville, Tennessee, to a poor mountain couple. Even though she is the most recent artist included in my work, it seems that little has changed in the mountains for the poor people since the times of Sara Carter. Dolly Parton was born in a one room cabin where she lived with her parents and eleven siblings, her dad had no money to pay the doctor for attending to her birth and the family did not have electricity, running water, telephone or indoor plumbing. What advantage Dolly did inherit from both sides of her family was her musicality. Her mother was a singer of ballads and old-time songs and Dolly sang at her grandfather's local church as a very small child. By the age of ten, Dolly was appearing on the Cus Walker television show in Knoxville.<sup>101</sup>

When Dolly Parton became the first member of the family to graduate from high school in 1964, she left for Nashville the day after her graduation to seek career of a country musician. On the first day in Nashville she met Carl Dean who she married two years later and has remained married to until the present day. Within the first months in Nashville, Parton managed to secure a recording contract with Fred Foster at Monument Records. Monument tried to market Parton as the pop-rock singer but then finally let her record a country song "Dumb Blonde" in 1967. That same year she joined Porter Wagoner and his show, first as a "girl singer" but soon she became a featured performer for her talent and striking personality. Wagoner helped Parton launch her career when recording the award-winning duet with her and thanks to his influence she moved to RCA label.<sup>102</sup>

Parton's solo recordings on RCA in the late 1960s and early 1970s established her as a sensitive singer and songwriter. Her single "Just

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<sup>101</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 310.

<sup>102</sup> Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 310-311.

Because I'm a Woman" became her breakthrough song. Parton's women's songs spoke of many issues, such as women's inequalities in relationships, man's abandonment of women after getting sex from them or the financial struggles of working girls.<sup>103</sup> Equally well as Parton covered women's issues, she managed to reflect on her own rural heritage, especially in 1971's song "Coat of Many Colors" and similar to Loretta Lynn' "Coal Miner's Daughter" brought a sense of rural working people dignity to the song.<sup>104</sup> Her compositions touch on all major themes in country music, from dark topics such as drugs, insanity, suicide to tender love songs.

Parton completely split from Wagoner as her record producer in 1977 and continued recording on her own. Although she was an established country music figure by then, even bringing country music new respectability as an art form, she was not earning much money. Parton, being as much of an artist as a businesswoman, found a key to big sales by making crossover records. Her single "Here You Come Again" topped both country and pop charts. Apart from producing more of the crossovers, Parton started to appear on the pages of well-known magazines. She finally won a Grammy Award and was named Entertainer of the Year by the CMA in 1978.<sup>105</sup>

What might be considered a huge success for the majority of artists, was only the beginning for Dolly Parton. Parton began her acting career in 1980 in a successful working women movie "9 to 5"; her title song for the movie became a pop and country hit. This acting success brought Parton a decade of minor and major film roles. Parton joined forces with her longtime friends Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris and together with them created album called "Trio" in 1987. Parton also opened her own theme park, Dollywood in Sevier County, Tennessee, where she came from,

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<sup>103</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 367.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Carling, *American Popular Music: Country* (New York: Infobase Publishing 2006), 158.

<sup>105</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 369-370.



to celebrate Tennessee mountain culture. Parton cooperated again with two major musicians in 1993, this time with Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette for the “Honky Tonk Angels” album. Parton continued to produce mainstream country music recordings without big success throughout the later 1990s. She started to focus on bluegrass music by 1999, setting another new course for her career.<sup>106</sup>

## 5.5 Jolene

One of the songs that earned Dolly Parton respect for songwriting was “Jolene”. It was released in 1974 and became one of the first Parton’s hits. Ever since its release, the single was covered by over thirty singers. The story of the beautiful redhead woman trying to steal away another woman’s man was even translated into several other languages.

The title, an unusual euphonic woman’s name “Jolene”, is repeated thirty times in the text, suggesting Parton’s desperation and deepening the appeal to Jolene not to steal her man “I’m begging of you please don’t take my man.”<sup>107</sup> In the chorus, Parton also pleads with the other woman to not to take him away just for vanity reasons, “Please don’t take him just because you can.”<sup>108</sup>

The first stanza is a celebration of Jolene’s beauty on one hand and Parton’s confession of being at a disadvantage, on the other. The description of Jolene is very poetic, “With flaming locks of auburn hair/ With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green,”<sup>109</sup> even using similes, “Your smile is like a breath of spring/ Your voice is soft like summer rain,”<sup>110</sup> to underline her ethereal appearance. Jolene is so beautiful that not even Parton can compete

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<sup>106</sup> Carling, *American Popular Music*, 158.

<sup>107</sup> Dolly Parton, *Jolene* (RCA Records, 1974), <https://genius.com/Dolly-parton-jolene-lyrics>.

<sup>108</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>109</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>110</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

with her.<sup>111</sup> Parton then sings about her despair and sadness when her man talks about Jolene in his sleep,<sup>112</sup> suggesting the man has a full head of her. Parton consequently acknowledges how easy it would be for Jolene to steal him from her<sup>113</sup> and tries to make Jolene understand how precious Parton's man is to her, "But you don't know what he means to me/ Jolene."<sup>114</sup>

In the second part of the song, Parton tries to convince Jolene that it would be easy for Jolene to find another man, "You could have your choice of men,"<sup>115</sup> but for Parton, her man is her fated partner, "He's the only one for me/ Jolene",<sup>116</sup> and in this way strengthening the man's importance in her life and suggesting the ephemerality of the importance of the man for Jolene.

Now, that Parton explained Jolene the situation from her perspective she leaves the decision of her destiny on Jolene, "And whatever you decide to do/ Jolene,"<sup>117</sup> while not trying to hide her vulnerability from the rival.

None of the women seem to act appropriate, Jolene tries to steal other woman's man and Parton is desperate to get her man back even though he is cheating on her. The song ends with the chorus containing slight but fundamental difference when replacing "just because" from the previous two refrains with "even though" in "Please don't take him even though you can,"<sup>118</sup> Parton appeals here for woman's solidarity. This conclusion might broaden the meaning of the song by serving as a message about the importance of respect among women for each other. The song is also interesting in the openness about adultery and that Parton is openly discussing infidelity.

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<sup>111</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>112</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>113</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>114</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>115</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>116</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>117</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

<sup>118</sup> Parton, *Jolene*.

The artist claims lyrics were inspired by the real situation. Parton was first inspired by a little redheaded girl with beautiful green eyes and fair skin named Jolene who once came to her for an autograph. Nevertheless, the story was inspired by another red-haired woman, a bank teller who was giving her husband more attention than was convenient. The husband loved going to the bank and Parton was teasing him about it.<sup>119</sup> Eventually, a hit single came out of this innocent incident.

## 5.6 Working Girl

Dolly Parton has always been proud of her success and the fact that she never had to depend on a man for it.<sup>120</sup> After her first screen debut in “9 to 5”, where Parton along with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin portrayed a trio of working women who battle women discrimination at workplace, Parton released an album called “9 to 5 and Odd Jobs” containing working people’s songs. Besides its centerpiece, the single “9 to 5,” the album contained a song about the proud “Working Girl” that Parton penned herself. The single was released in 1980.

The song is about what a “Working Girl” is like, how she is perceived by others, how she feels and about what her life looks like. The first two lines of the first verse describe how the girl’s appearance is perceived by men, “Some men find her sexy/ Some men disagree.”<sup>121</sup> These lines seem to be emphasized because they are situated at the very beginning but then when hearing the rest of the stanza, one discovers that whether the girl is perceived sexy by men is not as important for her as how she perceives herself and she does put effort into looking attractive and sexy.

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<sup>119</sup> Tom Vitale, *Dolly Parton's 'Jolene' Still Haunts Singers*, National Public Radio, Accessed April 24, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2008/10/09/95520570/dolly-partons-jolene-still-haunts-singers>.

<sup>120</sup> Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice*, 368.

<sup>121</sup> Dolly Parton, *Working Girl* (RCA Records, 1980), <https://genius.com/Dolly-parton-working-girl-lyrics>.

Parton uses the senses, sight, smell and sound, to make the listener imagine the whole picture of the “Working Girl” she is describing, “She wears a push-up bra from Frederick’s/ Five inch high heel shoes/ Maybelline and Rubinstein/ And Avon’s best perfume,”<sup>122</sup> while involving swift tempo and strong beat of the music to stress the image of sexy and confident woman.

The chorus presents the variety of personalities a working woman possesses, “She’s single and free,”<sup>123</sup> adding she’s also a mother, wife and proud of being a working woman.<sup>124</sup>

The first line of the second verse, “Some find her too aggressive,”<sup>125</sup> might imply that the prejudice against women that work still persisted in 1980. Nevertheless, the woman once again does not care what others think and even if she did, “She don’t know how to stop.”<sup>126</sup> She is very determined to succeed and to get to the top.<sup>127</sup> Now, the working girl is “elegant and stylish,”<sup>128</sup> and wears even more expensive perfume, accessories and clothes, “French perfume and fur/ Designer clothes by Halston and Diane Von Furstenberg.”<sup>129</sup>

Verse three finally reveals the woman’s fragile and emotional side implying that to be successful at work for a woman is hard and that she is not always strong, even when at the top.

In the last verse, the working girl is wearing a standard uniform to be comfortable at her current task.<sup>130</sup> The following lines, “She has so many faces/ She wears so many names,”<sup>131</sup> indicates the song could have two

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<sup>122</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>123</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>124</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>125</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>126</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>127</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>128</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>129</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>130</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

<sup>131</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

interpretations. One possible interpretation is that the song is about only one working girl with the alternation of her faces and names, such as a wife, a mother, single, free, sexy, aggressive, elegant, weak or strong. Another possibility is that the song is about all the working girls out there. The single can be perceived as a celebration of working women who “go so many places and do so many things,”<sup>132</sup> and take their lives into their own hands and feel the freedom by being economically independent.

Dolly Parton appeared on the Billboard Country charts over hundred times by the end of 1997. The artist was elected into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1999. Her genius for song composition is reflected in artists like Linda Ronstadt, Maria Muldaur or Emmylou Harris, among many others, recording her songs. Dolly’s song “I Will Always Love You” reached number one on Billboard chart twice and when Whitney Houston recorded her version of the song it became one of the best-selling singles of all time. Dolly’s successful crossover from country to pop had major influence on new artists. Miley Cyrus, Carrie Underwood and Taylor Swift crossed over from country to pop just like Parton who paved the way for them.

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<sup>132</sup> Parton, *Working Girl*.

## 6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to find women artists within the country music industry who reflected the women's situation during 1920s to 1980s and to discover how these artists challenged the traditional women's roles in their music. I accomplished my goal by analyzing some of their songs. The artists who are the subject of my thesis, Sara and Maybelle Carter, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton came from the Appalachian Mountains region where the music served as an important way of expression for women and where the music had a deeply rooted tradition. Their personal experiences of being a poor mountain woman, with the exception of Kitty Wells, shaped their music, and I was able to find the themes relevant to this thesis by looking closely at their work. Marriage, relationships, domestic duties, work, freedom (or the lack of it) and general view on women's role in society are the recurrent themes the artists were approaching.

The Carter Family were among the first country musicians who achieved recognition. Even though most of their songs were traditional religious and love songs, collected mostly from the musical people of the Appalachia, their breakthrough song "Single Girl Married Girl" touched on the themes such as marriage and the lack of freedom in it, as well as another studied single, "Lulu Walls." These songs provide quite pessimistic view on marriage for a woman rather than its idealization, which was very uncommon at that time. Back in the 1920s, once a woman married, she was expected to be tied to hard domestic work and to care for the children she bore often one after another. The Carter Family was one of few country bands where women were the main performers; Sara Carter was even breaking the stereotypes herself by divorcing her first husband. After Sara Carter retired from the country music scene, the most popular country music singers were men until the arrival of Kitty Wells.

The afterwar difficulties caused the new subgenre of country music, honky-tonk, to flourish. The taboo subjects such as infidelity, alcohol and divorce became common for country songs. Women were blamed by men

for the newly-emerged problems. Kitty Wells responded with her songs as a representative of womankind and returned the blame back to men in “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels” and stood up for women when singing that it is not alright for men to cheat on women in “Cheatin’s a Sin.” The songs recorded by The Carter Family pointed out women’s hardships, those by Kitty Wells developed a defensive stance. Neither The Carter Family, nor Kitty Wells wrote their songs, nevertheless they became theirs and finally after Wells’ success as a female country musician, the lyrics writers started to produce songs for women artists as well.

In Loretta Lynn’s “The Pill” and “Hey Loretta” women take their lives into their own hands, escaping their stereotypical roles by the birth control and by leaving the unappreciative husband. These songs go hand in hand with the Women’s movement pursuing a gender equality in all aspects of women’s lives. By spreading the birth-control awareness in “The Pill,” Lynn was criticized by the still conservative society unwilling to change. Nevertheless, some changes did happen and an image of a working woman as a new role model was formed. Lynn, similarly to Wells, owed certain amount of her recognition to her husband who contributed extensively in the promotion of her music, especially at the beginning of her career. That was not the case of the last artist included in this work.

Dolly Parton as a songwriter, singer, performer, actress, businesswoman and philanthropist represents a powerful image of female achievement, a modern woman. She touches on the theme of women’s respect for each other and openly discusses infidelity in “Jolene” and provides a picture of a modern working woman in “Working Girl.” Parton being as much musician as a businesswoman, she developed an innovative way to achieve big sales by making crossover records that reached a much wider audience.

Women’s lives have changed greatly since the country music origins, women artists are no longer dependent on men to win recognition. They have entered all areas of American life and them going to work has become a natural state instead of a rarity. Although the male domination

within the genre persists, women have made themselves heard in great numbers, expressing their beliefs and revealing their identities. Canadian country artist k. d. lang came out to the world with her homosexual orientation and the American country band The Dixie Chicks expressed their beliefs by making critical statements about President George Bush.

These country female artists came a long way from the stereotype of a traditional obedient housewife, lang being openly gay, The Dixie Chicks speaking out on politics even though it angered the conservative fan base. Canadian country-pop artist Shania Twain is shaping the genre with her sassy statements, encouraging women to express their sexuality and embrace their imperfections. Inspired by Dolly Parton and Shania Twain, one of the best-selling music artist of all times, Taylor Swift, shapes the newest generation of pop-country artists by her image of a powerful woman and her assertive woman stance to song-writing. Another representative of modern pop-country culture, Miley Cyrus evolved her image from a wholesome country girl to a highly-sexual woman, shocking even the now less conservative pop-country scene.



## 7 České resumé

Předložená bakalářská práce se zabývá způsobem, jakým byly ženy vnímány napříč americkou kulturou country hudby, přesněji řečeno, přes hudbu předních country umělkyň v období od dvacátých do osmdesátých let dvacátého století. Zkoumá, jak country hudba odrážela a zároveň zpochybňovala úlohu žen ve společnosti. Práce nabízí obecný stručný přehled prostředí a vývoje country hudby a zároveň poskytuje informace o způsobu života žen žijících v oblasti Appalačského pohoří, kde hudba vznikala. Tento základní historický podklad poskytuje nejdůležitější údaje, které by měly být nápomocné k lepší interpretaci vybraných textů zahrnutých v následné části práce.

Druhá část práce obsahuje stručné seznámení s vybranými osobnostmi country hudby, které přes hudbu komentovaly situaci žen ve společnosti a analýzy vybraných textů jejich písní. Umělkyněmi, na které je práce zaměřena, jsou Sara a Maybelle Carter, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn a Dolly Parton. Všechny, s výjimkou Kitty Wells, vyrůstaly v oblasti Appalačského pohoří, kde má hudba hluboce zakořeněnou tradici. Velmi chudé prostředí významně ovlivňovalo jejich práci a hudba pro ně byla důležitým vyjadřovacím prostředkem. Každá z umělkyň reprezentovala určité období hrající významnou roli při vývoji a změnách životů žen. Počátky country hudby, druhá světová válka nebo ženské osvobozené hnutí ovlivňovaly styly tvorby a témata umělkyň. Cílem zkoumání životních zkušeností zpěvaček bylo shrnout témata zabývající se relevantní problematikou a poukázat na jejich vývoj. Opakovaně se vyskytovala témata manželství, vztahů, domácích povinností, práce a svobody (především její nedostatek). Zatímco The Carter Family popisuje vcelku patriarchální a sexistickou společnost meziválečného období, v průběhu let se začínají v hudbě objevovat více feministická témata zabývající se rozvodem, antikoncepcí, sexuálním osvobozením, pracující ženou a dualistickým přístupem k ženám.

The Carter Family byli jedni z prvních country umělců, kterým se podařilo dosáhnout uznání. Přestože většinu jejich repertoáru tvořily tradiční náboženské písně a písně o lásce, průlom v jejich kariéře zajistila až píseň „Single Girl Married Girl“ věnující se tématu manželství a nedostatku svobody v něm, stejně tak jako v dalším jejich zkoumaném textu „Lulu Walls“. Písně zachycují pesimistický postoj k manželství, který ve dvacátých letech dvacátého století převládal. V té době se od vdané ženy očekávalo, že se jejím hlavním posláním stanou těžké domácí práce a starost o děti, často rozené jedno za druhým. The Carter Family byla jednou z mála country skupin, kde byly hlavními interprety právě ženy. Sara Carter dokonce svým rozvodem sama bořila stereotypy. Hlavními interprety, poté co Sara Carter ukončila svou kariéru, byli až do objevení Kitty Wells muži.

Díky poválečným problémům se začalo dařit novému subžánru country hudby, honky tonku. V country hudbě se objevovala taková tabu témata jakými jsou nevěra, rozvod a alkohol. Veškerou vinu za vzniklé problémy společnost přisoudila ženám. Kitty Wells na takovou situaci odpovídala svými písněmi a stala se tak zástupcem všech obviněných žen. V písni „It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels“ vrací veškerou zodpovědnost zpátky mužům a v další „Cheatin's a Sin“ zpívá, že nevěra mužů není v pořádku. Písně od The Carter Family pouze poukazovaly na těžkosti v životech žen, ty od Kitty Wells zaujaly obranný postoj. Po jejím úspěchu, který u ženy v rámci country průmyslu nikdo neočekával, se konečně začaly psát texty i pro ženské interpretky.

V písních Loretty Lynn „The Pill“ a „Hey Loretta“ ženy konečně vezmou život do vlastních rukou a uniknou stereotypickým ženským rolím tím, že začnou užívat antikoncepci a opustí svého neuznalého manžela. Tyto písně šly ruku v ruce s ženským osvobozeneckým hnutím, které usilovalo o rovnost pohlaví ve všech aspektech života ženy. Lynn byla za šíření povědomí o antikoncepci v písni „The Pill“ kritizována v té době stále konzervativní společností, která odmítala změnu. Přesto některé změny přišly a vznikl nový obrázek vzoru ženy, pracující ženy. U Lynn, stejně jako

Wells, měli muži určitou zásluhu na jejich úspěchu, to ale nebyl případ poslední umělkyně zahrnuté v této práci.

Dolly Parton, skladatelka, autorka textů, zpěvačka, herečka, byznysmenka a filantropka zastupuje představu ženského úspěchu, moderní ženu. V písni „Jolene“ se Parton zabývá tématem respektu ženy k ženě a zároveň otevřeně hovoří o mužské nevěře. V druhé analyzované písni „Working Girl“ zase utváří obraz moderní pracující ženy. Parton, která je muzikantkou ve stejné míře jako byznysmenkou, objevila způsob, jak docílit velkého prodeje tím, že smísila svůj původní country styl s popovým a mnohonásobně tak rozšířila své publikum.

Od počátků country hudby se životy žen výrazně změnila a úspěch žen už nezávisí výhradně na mužích. Ženy dnes působí ve všech oblastech amerického života a to, že vstupují na trh práce, již není raritou, ale spíše přirozeným jevem. Přestože mužská dominance v oblasti country žánru přetrvává, můžeme slyšet velké množství žen vyjadřující svoji identitu, tak jako kanadská country zpěvačka k.d. lang, která boří stereotyp poslušné ženy v domácnosti otevřeností ohledně své homosexuální orientace, nebo skupina Dixie Chicks, která otevřeně projevuje své politické názory a vzbuzuje tak vztek u konzervativních fanoušků. Kanadská country a pop zpěvačka Shania Twain ovlivňuje country scénu svými drzími výroky a povzbuzuje ženy, aby vyjádřily svou sexualitu a přijaly své nedokonalosti. Jedna z nejprodávanějších umělkyně všech dob, Taylor Swift ovlivňuje nejnovější generaci country a pop zpěvaček svým vystupováním mocné ženy. Další představitelka moderní pop-country hudby Miley Cyrus rozvinula svou image o ženu otevřeně projevující svou sexualitu a šokovala tak dnes už o něco méně konzervativní country-popovou scénu.

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## 9 Annotation

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The aim of this work is to show how women were perceived in American society through country music culture, specifically through the country music of female artists. The work provides an overview of the country music general background information and the picture of women’s lives in the Appalachian Mountains area, where the music originated. The practical part focuses on introducing selected artists and analyzing the texts of songs of the time period from the birth of country music in 1920s, through the afterwar era and the Women’s movement until the 1980s. The purpose of the analysis is to provide a clearer view on how women’s roles in society evolved. The focus is on The Carter Family who describes the still quite patriarchal, sexist society of the between-the-wars period. Starting with Kitty Wells and continuing with Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton more feminist topics appear, such as, birth control, sexual liberation, working women, double standard and divorce.

## 10 Anotace

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Hlavním cílem této práce je ukázat, jakým způsobem byly ženy vnímány napříč kulturou country hudby, přesněji řečeno, přes hudbu předních amerických country umělkyní. Práce nabízí obecný stručný přehled prostředí a vývoje country hudby a zároveň poskytuje informace o způsobu života žen žijících v oblasti Appalačského pohoří, kde hudba vznikala. Praktická část je zaměřena na představení vybraných umělkyní a analýzu textů písní od dvacátých let dvacátého století, kdy vznikala country hudba, přes poválečné období a ženské osvobozené hnutí až po osmdesátá léta dvacátého století. Cílem této analýzy je poskytnutí jasnějšího vhledu do vývoje rolí žen ve společnosti. Pozornost je zaměřena na The Carter Family popisující vcelku patriarchální a sexistickou společnost meziválečného období. S příchodem Kitty Wells a působením Loretty Lynn a Dolly Parton se v průběhu let objevují v hudbě více feministická témata zabývající se rozvodem, antikoncepcí, sexuálním osvobozením, pracující ženou a dualistickým přístupem k ženám.