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**AMERICAN COUNTRY MUSIC OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Master thesis

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Prehlásenie

Prehlasujem, že som diplomovú prácu na tému: *American country music of the second half of the twentieth century* vypracoval samostatne pod odborným dohľadom vedúceho diplomovej práce a uviedol som všetky použité podklady a literatúru.

V Olomouci dňa.....

Podpis

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore the establishment of American country music of the second half of the twentieth century. The main focus includes the following country musicians: Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain.

This thesis will commence with the historical overview of early country music in the United States and its effect on the audience. In addition, this chapter also examines particular music subgenres of American country music. Regarding the development of early country music, the music instrumentation and popular culture elements will be covered. The reasons why the country music started to flourish will be inspected as well.

The following chapter of the thesis will focus on the beginning of a new era in country music. It will also concentrate on country music transformation over the years. Moreover, the thesis will highlight the commercial element that is an integral part of American country music which helped this music to spread to every corner of America. The final subchapter will deal with contemporary country music formation as well as associations that were established to promote and retain this music genre.

Thereafter, the thesis will concentrate on the chosen country music practitioners: Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain. Each chapter about one of the country stars will present a precise information about their career and personal life events. It is known that these country musicians started their career thanks to other influential people and particular recording labels as well. This thesis will offer a chronological prospect of the selected musicians, their achievements and falls both in professional and personal life. Regarding the selected stars, all three practitioners were given approximately the same length of the thesis owing to their immense contribution to country music genre and culture. The mentioned chapters will mainly deal with a personal biography of each musician and his role as a singer in American country music sphere. At the end of each chapter, a brief summary takes place. The three chapters focused on country musicians are followed by the study of their music production.

The analysed songs will be selected on the basis of their success in the second half of the twentieth century depicted in the thesis and according to their contribution for both the songwriter and the listener. The study will primarily consist of my personal ideas and thoughts with respect to the theoretical part of the thesis and also my music experience.

Finally, the outcome of important facts will be summarized in the conclusion.

1 Country music background

1.1 American Folk music

Music is a harmony of instruments, notes, scales, rhythm, bass and melody. It is a phenomenon that people respond to. More often than not, people enjoy it as much as any spectacle, as it leaves a lasting good sensation. It stirs emotions that affect the minds and sometimes makes people want to dance.¹ We listen to music which has an aesthetic value and it is an essential part of human life.

Music is a moral law. It gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, and life to everything. It is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless dazzling, passionate, and eternal form.²

American folk music is the term which is widely spread and it is many times seemingly understood as a kind of music belonging to a particular ethnic, historical or regional group. The musical instruments which are associated with American folk music are the acoustic ones and they vary according to the country and geographical region. The most frequently used instruments include acoustic guitar, harmonica, banjo, mandolin, autoharp, accordion and violin.

The term folk music is derived from a term stemming from the realm of cultural studies. “ ”Folk” is essentially a constructed term, a European invention of the industrial era.”³ From the 8th century “folk” was considered by scholars as a lower class or ordinary people, stigmatized according to their otherness. It was also associated with the society which was reluctant to change their habits and customs due to the dynamic and advanced industrialised world that surrounded them. These definitions of “folk” continued through the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the second half of the twentieth century; the so called “popularisers” claimed that songs based on traditions of particular cultures must be performed only by interpreters originating from the same cultural background as the music. American folk music always originates from the identifiable community such as coal miners or Native Americans. These communities are spread through America and they can easily be characterized by their ethnic identity,

¹ Philip Dorrell, *What Is Music?: Solving a Scientific Mystery* (Raleigh: Lulu.com, 2005), 19.

² Derek Watson, *Wordsworth Dictionary of Musical Quotations* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1994), 45.

³ Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*. (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013) Kindle edition, 8.

the way how they speak or shared features like family names. Although in many cases the authorship is unknown, a particular song can be identified according to region or folk community. ““Pony Blues,” “Walking Blues,” and “Rollin’ and Tumblin’” clearly emanate from the Mississippi Delta blues tradition.”⁴ Not only is the folk music transmitted through the radio and recordings but it is also learned within the community and it consequently becomes its internal part. Ceremonies and celebrations during which these songs are sang, are very common and hence the process of learning does not require any music lessons or musical education. The performers are mostly non-professionals and a very small part of them earn their living through their hobby. The patterns associated with folk music often are repetitive paradigms. We could compare folk music to popular music in many ways, however, they do not have to be composed by academic institutions unlike, for example, opera.

1.2 Society and the birth of Folk music

Anglo-Celtic immigrants to North America contributed to shaping Hillbilly music thanks to their customs and traditions such as ballads, folksongs and dances which they brought. British folk culture penetrated all regions of English speaking North America and these traditions still remain in rural areas of New England and Maritime provinces in Canada. The conservative agricultural character of this area allowed inhabitants to stay in relative freedom and social security gained from cultivation of soil. The vast majority of country people were farmers who worked for self-fulfilment and pleasure to be part of rural life in the countryside. In the south people were stratified by both distance and social class. Lack of job opportunities created isolation from the north and south became a folk culture. Various ethnicities including slaves had been working on plantations and hence “the common people of the South shared a passionate commitment to music.”⁵ In fact, since they shared very similar cultural traditions, they kept the same songs and styles regardless the locality. “The socially ingrown rural South, from the tidewater of Virginia to the pine barrens of East Texas, encompassed a population that, in its commitment to and preservation of traditional cultural values, should be considered a distinct family unit.”⁶

⁴ Kip Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*. (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 13.

⁵ Bill C. Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), 3.

⁶ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 3.

There is no doubt that in the area of America, South was culturally intermixed. Tunes were influenced by Scots, Catholic-Irish and Welsh. Not all popular British ballads came to America but the ones that did had slightly changed meaning and vocabulary. American places and vocabulary was changed to English word forms from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Virtually, Southern America was so wild that it would be difficult to retain the specific features of British culture especially within music. All inhabitants including traders, workers, dancers, and other British migrants were in contact with all sorts of people like the Indians, Germans, Mexicans and black people and their folk culture blended together. These people sometimes with love-hate relationship were performing and listening to country music. One could say that country music was predominantly of white origin, however American music forms borrowed many features from black performers.⁷ Bill Malone claims:

White southerners who would be horrified at the idea of mixing socially with blacks have nonetheless enthusiastically accepted their musical offerings: the spirituals, the blues, ragtime, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and a whole host of dance steps, vocal shading and instrumental techniques.⁸

The contact of white and black people in America has begun so early that it is hard to say which side profited more from this cultural exchange. Therefore, the music in the south was neither rural nor commercial. Cultural and national trends went through the whole country and even though the previously conservative south adapted slowly, it changed as well. The popular folk music found its way to the audience through radio waves or television but more importantly, travelling shows became increasingly popular and performers who were many times circus clowns could perform on portable stages and pass their message to their rural audience. Besides circus-like performance also so-called medicine shows offered entertainment and country music. Singers were predominantly black playing the instruments and telling jokes.

On the larger scale, a bigger equivalent of the medicine shows were Tent Repertory Shows. These shows offered a more complex spectrum of entertainment including magicians and acrobats. In certain towns accommodation was built for performers. The tent-rep shows were somewhere named “Toby Shows” because a Toby featured in many plays; he was a red-wigged, clownishly dressed foil of the evil,

⁷ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 4-5.

⁸ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 5.

symbolizing urban characters that wanted to take advantage of ordinary rural people.⁹ Almost anyone could attend the show and the admission was often canned food or basic foodstuff. Basically, the country lifestyle went on to become a means: of entertainment, livelihood and a way how avoid static life.

1.3 Western music

It was people from the western United States who started to shape a new form of folk music, later called “western music.” The symbol of western music is a cowboy enjoying horseback riding and a ranch life in Western North America. Singing Cowboys became popular in the United States and the so called country-western music continued to grow in popularity. Consequently, one of the most interesting and diverse musical hybrids, the Western Swing was brought to life. Western Swing emerged in Texas and as Kip Lornell says, “The blues and jazz influence came from black musicians and the popular swing bands. Combine these influences with cowboy songs and fiddle tunes and you get western swing.”¹⁰ Bob Wills and his band Texas Playboys first played this kind of music while dressed in hillbilly outfits, and they attracted huge crowds. The term “hillbilly” was clarified for the first time in *The New York Journal* on April 23, 1900, where it was described as “a free and untrammelled white citizen of Alabama, who lives in the hills, has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him.”¹¹ This word can also have its origin in Scotland where the term “hill-folk” was used to describe a social outcast and “billie” to his/her companion associate.

In the states of Texas and Oklahoma, people were invited to dance halls to party. Western swing, which later became known as country music, helped attract masses and shake off the unfavourable “hillbilly” reputation. This hybrid genre let jazz music be internal part of western music for the first time. Western swing built a strong regional reputation and became specific American vernacular music but in the 1950s Texas radio stations started to stream the rock & roll music.

⁹ Loyal Jones, *Country Music Humorists And Comedians*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁰ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 107.

¹¹ “Early Country,” *Survey of American Popular Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://people.eku.edu/nelson/mus273/default.htm>.

Honky-Tonk was the next step, which has its roots in western swing. It was the main country style in 1950s. A honky-tonk is a working class bar where live band was providing country performance while white audience was refreshing themselves. This blue collar audience followed value of hard work combined with enjoying of pleasure thanks to music. “Honky-tonk updated the values found in earlier commercial country music and reflected the slow merging of regional styles into the national, anonymous country music sound churned out in today’s Nashville studios.”¹² In fact, this country style became popular during the era of prohibition in the western areas of the United States and the songs were characteristic by pastoral sentiments of other country styles. Lefty Frizzell, Webb Pierce or Ernest Tubb sang these songs, which openly depicted loneliness of displaced rural men, man’s view of work, adultery, divorce, family love and strains on traditional American values. Honky-Tonk is difficult to define and therefore “one can identify the distinction between, say, barn dance, bluegrass, and rockabilly, but bar room music has few definable characteristics. Honky-tonk arguably is an attitude more than a genre. In fact, most of what would be defined as mainstream country.”¹³ Topics related to singers’ home town and the environment in which they lived made honky-tonk one of the most popular styles of country music. However, when rockabilly and country-pop have found mainstream audience honky-tonk slowly declined in popularity. Listeners were given more choice and honky-tonk’s golden era was over.

1.4 The beginning of commercial development

In the first half of the twentieth century American music was focused on urban areas whereas rural population was neglected in terms of commercialism and fine arts. Owing to accessibility and population density, record business industry targeted urban population first, although rural markets later got the same material. Music business was characterized mainly by chronograph and records demand. The rural market was pleased about the possibility of getting the latest recordings but unfortunately things were complicated in the way that all production was urban, both created and performed. Fortunately the discovery of southern grass-roots music broke the boundary between cities in the north and villages in the south. It is reported that after the First World War the radio receiver was in every third household within the America. Moreover,

¹² Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 106.

¹³ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

decreased price and great money value increased spreading music industry and radio receiver could find its way to low-income population. Broadcasting stations could then appear in the south and there were 510 active radio stations all over the United States at the end of 1922, of which 89 were in the South. Consequently, rural musicians felt an opportunity to be heard and gain mass audience outside their state. There were also promoters who were the predecessors of today's managers who would profit from music demand and also bring the cheap kind of entertainment to hearers.¹⁴ The very first radio station in the south offering the country music was WSB in Atlanta. This station became popular due to the language and music fitting right for the southern blue collar audience. Soon, other stations, like WBAP, WSB, WLS and WSM, popped up all catering to people with a taste for folk and country music. The early recordings of hillbilly were produced together with recordings of talented black people. Interestingly, recording companies rarely used the term "hillbilly"; while the artists would call each other hillbillies, they reacted furiously if someone else called them so. However, this term pretty accurately described tastes of both musicians and audience at that time. The early commercial singers were working class men who were practicing music in their free time. There were of course a few professional singers who adopted the country music career later, for example Vernon Dalhart. The vast majority were performers who established local reputation. Their job was mill work, mining or carpentering. In their leisure time they switched to entertaining and singing. Their exhibition was based on traditions and the approach of a rambling man who had been everywhere and experienced life uncompromisingly and it revealed a positive reaction to their records among country music's folk listeners.

Important figures of early commercial hillbilly music were Ralph Peer, 'Fiddlin' John Carson, "Eck" Robertson, Uncle Dave Macon, Vernon Dalhart, The Skillet Lickers and Bradley Kincaid.¹⁵

1.5 The national Barn Dance and the Grand Ole Opry

It is very substantial to mention that due to the very popular radio broadcast country music could get to greater audiences. Besides playing songs and spoken word in the form of news or weather forecast, radio stations offered country music radio programmes as well. In 1946, Chicago was named the home of country musicians and the most advantageous radio station at that time was the WLS in Illinois. Here the

¹⁴ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 32.

¹⁵ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 37-55.

National Barn Dance radio program was brought to life. Despite the fact that the show was an experiment, the reaction of listeners was affirmative.¹⁶ They wanted more content and the producers were willing to prolong the air time to five hours. They also strengthened the station power to cover almost the whole Midwest of the United States.

The content was created by fiddlers, hillbilly musicians and comedians. By all means, commercialism had already spread and listeners could be pampered by more than daily weather broadcast. Kip Lornell in his book *American Made Music* further clarifies:

Weekly “barn dance” shows featuring country music were established by broadcasters eager to serve their rural listeners. Barn dance radio shows were by no means a uniquely southern phenomenon. As early as 1925 the powerful 50,000-watt signal of WLS in Chicago presented hillbilly talent to its vast midwestern audience. Small-town upper midwestern radio stations from Yankton, South Dakota, to Rice Lake, Wisconsin, featured daily radio programs spotlighting local talent performing music that ranged from polka to country.¹⁷

In the 1950s there were still less television viewers than radio listeners and country music became a competitive field among radio stations all over the country. After the Second World War many people were familiar with the National Barn Dance which was no longer producing something innovative and therefore its popularity started to decrease. When Nashville was introduced as the new music capital, the Grand Ole Opry appeared on air. This show was established by the former WLS pioneer George D. Hay and it started as barn dance programme characterized by “authentic rural musicians before a live audience. In 1927, his venture officially acquired the name of Grand Ole Opry and has continued as a highly popular twice-weekly program from WSM.”¹⁸ Due to a slightly later start, it had lower popularity at the beginning in comparison to the National Barn Dance but it slowly expanded its impact on listeners and “Grand Ole Opry grew into a multimillion-dollar business, the owners of the National Barn Dance did not expand their empire into other areas, such as music

¹⁶ Richard Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005), 148.

¹⁷ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 54.

¹⁸ William H. Young, *Music of the World War II Era (American History Through Music)*. (California: Greenwood Press, 2007), 171.

publishing or tourism.”¹⁹ At the same time, Nashville was a city sponsored by the mainstream music industry. Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry magnetized the top quality and the most popular stars from competitive shows were tempted to participate there to become more successful and famous. In fact the Opry represented two essential substances, the spirit of rural culture and good economy altogether to designate the traditional country.²⁰

In spite of rivalry, National Barn Dance and Grand Ole Opry had been two most popular wireless shows between the years 1924 and 1968. They satisfied the nation’s needs in terms of entertainment and country culture. They broadcasted artists such as Bob Wills, Red Foley, Patsy Montana, and His Texas Playboys, Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff, and besides them, certain popularity was given to non-country artists. For instance, Bing Crosby who recorded “Pistol Packin’ Mama” and the Andrews Sisters with their record “Don’t Fence Me In” boosted sales and impress broader audiences.²¹ Overtly, these two shows not necessarily complementing mutually, to their listeners for a long time.

Even during the war years they were supplying a juicy country music for the American society. What in the past seemed to be a limited audience, later turned out to bring great sales.

1.6 Rockabilly and its commercial success

Country music has always been a varied genre. New genres such as rockabilly emerged in the 1950s especially in the America’s South. The performers were of white origin and this genre remained popular for nearly twenty years. The term was coined by record reviewers who called it rock & roll which was played by hillbillies. By the end of 1940s radio stations were transmitting blues and gospel music that mirrored the rural philosophy of the Southern population. These genres inspired young working class musicians to mix their country music styles (boogie, honky-tonk) with styles of black music. The outcome was at the beginning labelled by the term “country-and-western rhythm and blues”. This title was too complicated and despite the pejorative connotation of the term hillbilly it became rockabilly.²²

¹⁹ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 148.

²⁰ Joli Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998) Kindle edition, 204.

²¹ Young, *Music of the World War II Era (American History Through Music)*, 19.

²² Morrison, Craig, “Rockabilly Music.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Last Modified November 21, 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/506220/rockabilly>.

With some borrowed features from western swing, “the record commonly identified as the first ever rockabilly record, Buddy Jones’ “Rockin’ Rollin’ Mama” of 1939, featured a boogie woogie piano solo and guitar work that anticipated the sound of the 1950s.”²³ The birth of rockabilly was later important for evolution of rock & roll and R&B. Many artists who first came through western swing and rockabilly would later segue into rock & roll. “Rockabilly is, and remains, aggressive and uncomplicated. Classic rockabilly is performed by a small ensemble (usually a trio or quartet) using an insistent duple meter to accompany an often frenzied vocal.”²⁴ Fast tempo and a specific echo are rockabilly features which are linked to singing done in churches and gospel music in the 1950s. Simple instrumentation and primal lyrics appealed strongly to audiences in the United States and Europe in late the 1970s. Initial rockabilly artists were outlandish and wild. They not only performed as black men but often behaved as Afro-American clowns as well. The reason for that can be the fact that white performers wanted to be on a par with their black counterparts. Rockabilly got on its popularity and “the message, spirit, and influence of rockabilly spread beyond the mid-South.”²⁵

In addition, Elvis Presley’s recordings helped the rockabilly to penetrate all over the country and his contribution is undeniable. His single guitar playing jazzy riffs together with heavy drums were a memorable evidence of this very popular hybrid style which was streamed by radio stations and sold on the daily basis. The Brunette brothers, Johnny and Dorsey, who led the Rockabilly Trio, were also successful. Even more well-known rockabilly star was Carl Perkins whose "Blue Suede Shoes" sold more than 20, 000 records, which made it first million-sold country songs ever seen in America.²⁶ Perkins’ innovative approach as a performer formed rockabilly sound and manner.

Inevitably, in the 1960s the rockabilly was absorbed by more mainstream rock & roll genre. Nevertheless, this temporary disappearance keeps rockabilly in the realm of rock and popular music. Rockabilly emerged again in the 1990s as a rediscovery by the neoswing. Nowadays, we can hear rockabilly elements in new country music, especially in heavy backbeat, but no contemporary artist aims solely on the rockabilly style.

²³ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

²⁴ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 336.

²⁵ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 337.

²⁶ Paul Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 412.

With the rise of television the music business became more powerful and dominant in the 1950s. Radio transmitters were cheaper and along with the jukeboxes helped develop and discover younger audience who liked cheerful tunes that was accurately linked with the rockabilly and it still was not pop music. Favourite music was voted for in various charts and it influenced the music business and recording sales. The best songs were played repeatedly on radio stations and television charts. Altogether, it started other chain reactions like “patterns of contractual agreement, professional song writing, and control of promotion and distribution.”²⁷ These cultural changes concurrently brought new values and attitudes into culture. Commercial music influenced etiquette, lifestyle, fashion and inadvertently the whole society. The flip side of the coin was a substantial change and development of rockabilly genre. Those who admired rockabilly worked to protect that against the commencing influence of rock & roll.

1.7 Country and controversial Rock & Roll

After the Second World War, America experienced demographic and economic shifts that made teenagers coalesce into social groups. The youth were no longer tied to their parents and this fact enabled them to search for new possibilities and personal experiences bounded to sexual intercourse, love and cultural independence.²⁸ The term rock & roll did not spring out of nowhere. Cleveland DJ Allan Freed used it in 1951 as a crossover term for black music on the Moondog House programme on WJW radio.²⁹ Another possible source for the term “rock & roll” is a slang of black people meaning activity of sexual intercourse.³⁰ Richard Carlin defines the term as a “popular music of the mid-1950s aimed at teenage listeners.”³¹ We do not know exactly whether the discovery of meaning of the term negatively changed the attitude of general public but it probably intensified the hype around rock & roll. One could ask about the originator but this genre does not consist of exact ingredients and hence it is subject to a wide mixture of influences. Rock & roll was definitely brought to life from various genres but it was mainly country and black music. In other words, black music genes were brought together seeing black and white people singing together and supplementing each other.

²⁷ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 184.

²⁸ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 336.

²⁹ Karel Veselý, *Hudba ohně: radikální černá hudba od jazzu po hip hop a dále*. (Praha: BigBoss, 2010), 40.

³⁰ Donald Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of Popular Music*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 373.

³¹ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 254.

The roots of rock & roll are deeply connected to American South, where the working class started this cultural and racial integration.³² Rock & roll could not have been successful without rockabilly music because it was instrumental in bringing up new genres based on country life and experience. Here, rock & roll seemed like a default subject to start from. Both genres were linked through “heavily accented backbeats on the second and fourth beat, a solo lead singer who was occasionally joined by a vocal chorus, the vocal alternating with an instrumental chorus, and the extensive use of electric guitar as a lead instrument.”³³

A good question to ask is who or what was the starter of this very important milestone in American culture. Bill Haley’s “Rock Around The Clock” was intended to be the song for the former western swing interpreter but instead it became the first example of American rock & roll.³⁴ Next was Chuck Berry whose “Maybelline” was “another perennial contender for the first rock & roll song. It was a reworking of Bob Wills version of the fiddle number “Ida Red”, released in 1938; it used drums, which was very unusual in country music at the time.”³⁵ Meanwhile, the biggest rock & roll superstar Elvis Presley was still only a regional star. Don Cusic in his book mentions that “the result was that country music almost disappeared from the radio air-waves. Or, rather, the music that country performers increasingly played did not sound like the country music of old.”³⁶

Berry’s debut single was released in 1955 and is described as a first rock & roll hit performed by a black singer. Simultaneously, Elvis Presley was moving towards more and more popular rock & roll due to an obvious reason. It was the next modern step in popular music in the second half of the twentieth century. His first single “Heartbreak Hotel” stayed among the top records in radio and television charts for more than two months. In less than a year he wrote songs, for instance, “Hound Dog”, “Don’t be Cruel” or “Jailhouse Rock” which made him very rich and popular. Presley’s dynamic style that targeted the young audience resulted in a huge demand for his recordings. They were sold to multiracial music markets including black, white and

³² “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

³³ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 337.

³⁴ Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song In America*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 394.

³⁵ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

³⁶ Don Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*. (California: Greenwood Press, 2008), 75.

Hispanic audience.³⁷ As already mentioned, “many leading rock & roll stars crossed over from country: Jerry Lee Lewis (whose piano style borrowed heavily from Merrill Moore’s), Buddy Holly, Gene Vincent, Eddy Cochran, Roy Orbison, the Everly Brothers, Del Shannon, Ricky Nelson, Wanda Jackson and so on. Many of them intermittently returned to their country roots.”³⁸

As successful and motivating rock & roll as it was, it was still criticised or even hated by many. By the end of the 1950s rock & roll was detested due to its apparent role in asocial behaviour, sexual promiscuity, rebellion and racial disharmony. There were anti-rock posters and demonstrations, which led to cases when artists were banned from performing or were excluded from certain communities. Furthermore, the popularity of rock & roll stars eliminated female musicians from music charts. They put everything they felt in that period into lyrics.³⁹ As indicated, rock & roll was not without drawbacks and side effects on popular culture. Racial segregation was deepened when American government ruined the well-established site of radio stations, record labels and urban dance halls due to censorship. Bigger corporations preferred white singers over black ones, to the point that they even promoted teen stars.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, black musicians could only helplessly watch the unlucky situation. David Nicholls comments on this situation in the following way:

White cover versions of hits by black musicians, such as Pat Boone’s covers of Little Richard’s records, often outsold the originals; it seems that many Americans wanted black music without the black people in it. Such recordings displayed little familiarity with or aptitude for African American musical traditions, but it is not that they were simply watered down, as is often charged.⁴¹

Within a few years, the genre which glued coloured people together broke the already established peace.

Rock & roll started to fade away as we moved towards the sixties, and Elvis Presley’s summoning to the army and the myriads of sexual scandals of rock & roll stars were to blame in part. The audience was overdosed by rock & roll music and many

³⁷ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 338.

³⁸ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

³⁹ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 358.

⁴⁰ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 358.

⁴¹ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 358.

times this music was heard out of jukeboxes because nothing else was available and overall demand for rock & roll dropped.⁴² Rock & roll's self-destruction can be viewed as a successful development for country music. However, country music was forevermore stamped by the usage of electrified instruments which became universal during the 1960s. The general opinion on country music was in form of pro-war and anti-youth opinions.⁴³ Despite the tremendous controversy hidden in rock & roll genre, it was powerful enough to exterminate country music forever.

⁴² Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 359.

⁴³ Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*, 361.

2 Golden Age Country

2.1 Country pop and Nashville sound

The crisis created by rock & roll in the 1950s negatively influenced attitudes of traditional country listeners. To some of them rock & roll “was an example of musical barbarism or worse, a reflection of a degenerate society.”⁴⁴ Unhappy audience many times referred to rock & roll as an establishment aimed to rekindle the animal instincts in modern teenagers. Hence, some historians say that country music was pushed to its extinction in the 1950s but fortunately it got recovered.

The magic trick was hidden behind the emergence of Nashville Sound and as it was later noticed, it really helped the country music to rise from the ashes. This shift, which country music experienced in the early 1960s, is based on how Nashville established and reinforced its position as a centre for music creation and a place for music publishing.⁴⁵ This place became “the spiritual and economic home of country music because it houses both the *Grand Ole Opry* and *Music Row*. The *Opry* is the so-called mother church of country music, while *Music Row*, with its publishing houses, record companies, and booking agents, is where the money, and music, is made.”⁴⁶ Such steps proved that country music is still alive and good to make business on. Consequently, it encouraged promoters, talents, professional bands to come to Nashville due to recording purposes.

In fact, the Nashville musicians became famous for their adaptability and extemporization. These skills developed a brilliant reputation for Nashville and it was soon called the “Music City of USA.”⁴⁷ Their work also discouraged the creative side of country music and many interpreters had been working on similar projects, the outcome of which suffered from the lack of inventiveness.

Commercial world of a studio environment together with modern equipment and technology helped musicians make hit records. The transition from live performances to studio recordings began a common business practice. Don Cusic notes that “the studio was an excellent facility—the engineers were top notch and produced quality recordings.”⁴⁸ One might ask a simple question whether this change did not corrupt the genre itself but the answer can cover only speculations. The central figure was Chester

⁴⁴ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 247.

⁴⁵ Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music*, 197.

⁴⁶ Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music*, 202.

⁴⁷ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 257.

⁴⁸ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 78.

Atkins who started and stood behind musical business in Nashville. He was the pioneer in making recordings on his own and many historians credit him for making electric guitar a distinctive solo instrument in country music.⁴⁹ Between 1957 and 1963, Nashville got on its popularity. Also during that period, American culture lost singing cowboys that found themselves off the silver screen together with majority of barn dances.⁵⁰

All these changes were made to invite larger audience to listen to country music, and the venture paid off. It brought in more commerce, and, in turn, better profits for influential producers and radio stations owners. Don Cusic highlighted the best of production of Nashville sound as follows:

Three of the biggest hits to come out of Nashville during this period were “El Paso” by Marty Robbins and “Battle of New Orleans” by Johnny Horton, both in 1959, and “Big Bad John” by Jimmy Dean in 1963. Johnny Cash established himself as a top country artist during this period of time, and Jim Reeves wore tuxedos as he sang country songs with his smooth, velvet voice.⁵¹

Since a large number of musicians only touched rock & roll genre, they never went too far from the original source of their production. It was many times considered a side effect experience and that was enough. Concurrently with Nashville sound came the country-pop. Singers who experienced and profited from commercial success could thanks to the addition of “pop” to the country music - take advantage and multiply their sales and popularity.⁵² However, after the removal of the fiddle and banjo, the reactions of country traditionalists were mostly acerbic. The pop trend that was followed by many artists almost banned steel guitar from recordings played from jukeboxes and air waves.⁵³ Don Cusic documents the slow pace of adaptation to country-pop:

In 1946, the year after the War, there were eight million records sold; country music accounted for 13.2 percent of sales topped only by “popular” with 50 percent and classical with 18.9 percent. The 550,000 juke-boxes, which before the war accounted for most of the sales of country records, still accounted for a

⁴⁹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 257.

⁵⁰ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 86.

⁵¹ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 86.

⁵² Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 258.

⁵³ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 256.

significant amount of sales but consumers increasingly purchased country records on 78 rpm discs.⁵⁴

For better imagination, the popular country music was received from local disc jockeys on radio shows as a result of Nashville sound impact on media. The pinnacle epoch of pop-country arrived between 1957 and 1958 when Sonny James' "Young Love," Ferlin Husky's "Gone," George Hamilton IV's "A Rose and Baby Ruth," Johnny Cash's "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," and chiefly, Marty Robbins' "White Sport Coat" and "Story of My Life" came out. They were outstanding models of songs that aimed to cater to teenage musical taste.⁵⁵ Nashville had always been received as a spiritual cradle of commercial country music or "hillbilly heaven". By the same token, merchandisers and chart creators found a way to get the maximum from pop-country. They simply stopped to advertise music with genre and variety categorization. Consequently, charts consisted of songs without labels and style identification.⁵⁶

Furthermore, what contributed to the rise of popular country commercial expansion was the Country Music Association (CMA) established in 1958. This organization was built out of the former Disc Jockey Association and its main aim was to return country music its lost respectability and to accomplish wider renown. In other words it was a couterstrike against the harm caused by rock & roll.⁵⁷ Within several years the CMA spread its competence from a small group of enthusiasts to a proper office in Nashville downtown. The biggest goal was achieved through sponsorship of all country music radio stations. As the outgrowth continued, CMA became the linking point between record sales and radio broadcasting. Consequently, country music went on to become an enduring part of American life. Radio station personnel were often unhappy though to stream only country music. They were given a predefined playlist and had to stick to it, even if there were demands for a different genre of music like rock & roll. The result was that certain songs were played over and over again during the day.⁵⁸ From the financial point of view, CMA was incredibly successful. For illustration, Don Cusic reports:

In their first official survey of country radio in 1961 the CMA discovered only 81 stations playing country music full time. However, through their efforts the

⁵⁴ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 58.

⁵⁵ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 256.

⁵⁶ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 256.

⁵⁷ Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music*, 380.

⁵⁸ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 265.

number of country stations began to increase and showed a steady climb throughout the 1960s. Meanwhile, country music pursued the “crossover,” or a recording that appeared on both the pop and country radio formats. Some of the crossover artists who enjoyed the benefits of this move were Roger Miller, Eddy Arnold, Ray Price, Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves, and Johnny Cash.⁵⁹

Indeed, CMA deserves credit for a world-wide expansion of country music during the 1960s. Nashville music business was generating enormous income and between 1966 and 1969 country radio tripled so that, by the last year of the decade, there were 606 radio stations programming country music full time.⁶⁰ As it later turned out, promoting the radio stations and direct focus on urban generation generated both success and cash.

Despite disagreements in opinion on pop-country, the lucrative features of pop stayed and were inevitably important in the development and revitalization of country music during 1960s. Nashville sound put together the music industry and as time passed, pop and rock element were there to stay untouched.

2.2 Bluegrass Music

In the years following the emergence of the country-pop, movements such as “back-to-the-roots” became prevalent. The term “bluegrass” was used for the first time when disc jockeys started to refer to the music played by Bill Monroe and his later followers. Robert Cantwell describes the very first bluegrass musicians as “musicians adopting some early version of the bluegrass style and acknowledging the affinities among Appalachian traditional music.”⁶¹ Bill Monroe is considered to be the founder of bluegrass, sometimes called “country music in overdrive.”⁶² This nickname was coined because bluegrass music was often full of energy, drive and speed. This power comes from gospel, honky-tonk and rock music. Malone defines the territory where bluegrass was brought to life as follows:

Bluegrass, for example, is often equated with mountain music or seen as its natural outgrowth. Many of the major performers did indeed come from the southeastern hill country, but some seminal bluegrass musicians - including Bill Monroe - came from other areas. Stylistically, bluegrass is indebted to musicians

⁵⁹ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 114.

⁶⁰ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 114.

⁶¹ Robert Cantwell, *Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 149.

⁶² Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 15.

and styles from a variety of nonmountain and mountain sources, and its songs come from no one region.⁶³

Virtually, bluegrass took country back to its rustic roots and the same applies for the musical instruments used. Rosenberg stresses the instrumentation in the following way:

a band usually consisting of a guitar and bass, used for backing, and one or two fiddles, a banjo and a mandolin used for lead or solo playing. The songs themselves, if not actually folk or "old-time" songs, generally are closer to that tradition than to the modern tradition of popular Tin Pan Alley or hillbilly songs.⁶⁴

Despite its traditional origin, bluegrass, right from the onset, was perceived as an experienced and commercial incarnation. It attracted a lot of fans thanks to the compensation of the much-disliked pop style that previously hit country music. When talking about the origin of bluegrass music, we have to go further in history. It must be mentioned that there were two groups of influencers: the first group includes American immigrants from the British Isles (Scots and Irish) and the second, African musicians. Here we can observe the cultural mixture of Euro-Americans and African Americans.⁶⁵

Undoubtedly, the most significant group was the one formed in 1938 called the Blue Grass Boys consisting of brothers Bill, Charlie and Birch. They started their career in Kentucky where they employed acoustic instruments "using the fiddle, mandolin, guitar, five-string banjo, dobro, and bass"⁶⁶ to create a driving string sound. What made a difference between Monroe and other bluegrass bands was that Monroe encouraged his musicians to perform solo. When Blue Grass Boys appeared in 1946 on the Grand Ole Opry, Robert Cantwell described their performance in this way:

[It was] a wildly accelerated, almost violently high-pitched frenzy of mountain music, one which while treading very close to the edge of the bizarre displays an incredible virtuosity which audiences in those days saw, and were plainly encouraged to see, as a prodigy. With Monroe's voice blasting like an air-raid

⁶³ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 323.

⁶⁴ Neil V. Rosenberg, *Bluegrass: A History (Music in American Life)*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 111-112.

⁶⁵ Irena Přibylková, *Minstrellové s černou tváří*. (Náměšti nad Oslavou: MěKS print, 2009), 94.

⁶⁶ Rosenberg, *Bluegrass: A History (Music in American Life)*, 3.

siren and Scruggs' banjo hurrying forward on ten thousand wheels, that band came at you like the Normandy invasion.⁶⁷

The band drew a large audience over the years, and Monroe, who was very modest, decided to accept himself as a father of bluegrass. His talent was inherited from his parents who had musical endowment. Monroe was later called a "mandolin maestro" and his singing was referred to as "high lonesome sound." If a musician got a compliment it would be "you can sing as high as Bill Monroe!"⁶⁸ Despite Bill Monroe's quality and innovation there were other seminal bands in the field of bluegrass. For instance, Roy Hall and the Blue Ridge Entertainers and J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers both had strong roots in western North Carolina.⁶⁹ Performances were held at the country music parks which were prosperous and faddish in the 1930s. During the 1960s bluegrass bands had an opportunity to compete with their competitors at various festivals. As Malone illustrates, "Southeastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware have been a particularly fruitful area for bluegrass expansion and both local bands and touring musicians have found enthusiastic audience there."⁷⁰

Nevertheless, bluegrass was shown that it is wanted in places like Boston and Detroit but it did not get urban reception more powerful than in Washington for instance. Of course, country music was not tailored for cities and therefore the main base for bluegrass was in small towns near Virginia and Maryland. Commercial success which accompanied bluegrass was not as big as in the case of rock & roll or country-pop. In addition, Don Cusic notes that "bluegrass evolved into a separate genre under the country music umbrella as the twentieth century progressed. The sound of bluegrass remained essentially unchanged as it stayed true to its musical roots but was never as commercially successful as the mainstream country music that developed."⁷¹ Bluegrass satisfied the hungry "back-to-roots" audience and moreover it drew family bands on stage which was unusual until Blue Grass Boys came on stage.⁷² The dividing line between folk and bluegrass music recently almost diminished and nowadays, it is hard to index this genre exactly. However the target audience of both bluegrass and folk music have familiar taste in old-time music played on various "back-to-roots" festivals.

⁶⁷ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 104.

⁶⁸ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 326.

⁶⁹ Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*, 102.

⁷⁰ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 347.

⁷¹ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 57.

⁷² Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 367.

2.3 Modern Country music of 1970s and 1980s

In the seventies, country music was received as a successful mainstream genre, but the industry felt the best way to reach the audience was by not having regional features. The Grand Ole Opry was moved to the outskirts of Nashville and this move said a final goodbye to country music's rural history. In addition, the movie business opened up for the country musicians who, however, rarely became actors. There were films based on cowboy materials, fictional or authentic, a true mirror to a country musician's life. These movies had no impact on American popular culture though. On the contrary, the television was the traction force for country presentation. For example, the Country Music Awards screened through the cable channels under the patronage of CMA.⁷³ Unsurprisingly, many TV shows were very much the same when The Nashville Network came with "Yesteryear in Nashville" airing interviews with old-time pioneers of country music which was later shown as the saviour project.⁷⁴ For those who were looking for middle ground country music, pop was the best option. However, many singers returned to country music in the 1970s from various genres. Bill Malone describes it as follows:

Moving into country often meant nothing more than adding a pedal steel guitar to one's accompanying instrumentation, or it might mean merely the use of Nashville recording studios and musicians. The country-pop impulse did not necessarily preclude the use of down-home country instruments such as fiddles or dobros, but being country was primarily a matter of being defined or packaged with that description.⁷⁵

As the previous chapter already pointed out, the Nashville music production kept releasing more and more uninteresting music which certain audience undoubtedly found boring. In the following years, many classic country performers were facing the cultural change. One of the prominent figures was Willie Nelson who was voted the CMA's entertainer of the year. He can be described as being frustrated with Nashville hegemony and hence he was looking for his own ways to produce music. Consequently, progressive country or "the outlaw movement" was born. The term "outlaw" insinuates a lawless behaviour and refers to a movement led by Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kristofferson. These three musicians wanted more autonomy in music style and the

⁷³ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 372.

⁷⁴ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 372.

⁷⁵ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 379.

right to express freely their negative attitudes about Nashville objectives.⁷⁶ The outlaws were not just a secret movement but they got into the minds of listeners who believed that such a movement really existed. In fact, the movement got them into commercial music thanks to the image they presented. They were presenting an image of a cowboy (in shape of a villain or street person). Their main asset for an increasing popularity was the authentic image of antihero, present in American culture since the Second World War.⁷⁷ Behind the criminals, as many thought, was something glamorous. The outlaw externalized “resenting the way your record company hashed up your music, not that you’d knocked over a liquor store last Friday.”⁷⁸ Apparently, the outlaw movement evoked the charismatic atmosphere of the Wild West.

For certain musicians the outlaw movement helped to restore the falling popularity of country music production. For instance, Johnny Cash experienced a career resurgence during the outlaw movement. Regarding the genre, outlaw country slightly flick through rock genre with Willie Nelson’s “Red Headed Stranger” which was very popular⁷⁹ but the biggest crowd-puller was an album compiled by Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser in 1976 called “Wanted: The Outlaws.” Despite the fact that this album consisted of previously released materials, it still met big success due to a clever marketing strategy. The album quickly reached the number one spot on country music charts and it also became the first record album to sell a million copies.⁸⁰ This, without any doubt, denotes the appreciation for the band that decided to rebel against the conservatisms of Nashville sound.

Country music between the 1970s and 1980s also brought back some forgotten country music roots like the western swing. There was also a revival of cowboy music which shifted to “urban cowboy” style on the basis of the movie with the same name. Real cowboy music became popular again as some artists had never forgotten their roots and history.⁸¹ In every respect, it was not only the idea of the old Wild West that was brought back to life, but musicians also came with updated versions of cowboy music, where cowboys, who were predominantly associated with sitting on horseback, were

⁷⁶ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

⁷⁷ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 398.

⁷⁸ Barbara Ching, *Wrong's What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 120.

⁷⁹ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

⁸⁰ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 41.

⁸¹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 406.

transferred to pickup trucks. These new era cowboys symbolized the statute of independence and men with an enjoyable lifestyle. Another genre which saw a revival was the honky-tonk style. Although it was not so popular during the 1980s, honky-tonk still managed to find its way back to mainstream music. Unfortunately, the majority of the greatest honky-tonk artists had retired or ended their career in that period. George Jones is a good example of life-time honky-tonk experience, there were also new musicians who profited from its almost forgotten appeal. The new generation of honky-tonk singers that revolted against the popular touch were George Strait, Mel Street, Gene Watson, John Anderson and Moe Bandy.⁸² The shape of honky-tonk varied from conservative and traditional to neo-honky-tonk style.

As it was mentioned earlier, *The Outlaws* hit the one million album sales boundary due to clever marketing. “The key to big sales in country music from the 1960s until the 1980s was having crossovers; records that crossed over to pop radio, reached the pop audience, and achieved big sales by not appealing strictly to the country audience.”⁸³ In practice, this meant special songs directly aimed to target audience that was supposed to boost the sales. On average, a country album had one or two exceptional songs paired with more popular features that were not genre specific. This successful strategy was used from the 1970s and 1980s by Kenny Rogers, Ronnie Milsap and Dolly Parton for instance.⁸⁴ Musicians took over their marketing strategy and budget thanks to crossover plans to attract wider audience.

Progressively, artists were becoming more and more independent with regards to financing. In the 1980s country music slipped to cash flow business and the distribution chain changed as well. From many small and independent distributors (mainly in bigger cities) music albums made their way in retail. Of course there were major labels that later took all responsibility for the overall distribution, and as a result, the middle part of the distribution chain was skipped and smaller independent labels were very rare throughout the 1980s. Hence it became the norm to join bigger labels to stay in business. These steps were efficient for musicians as they saved costs and got their albums distributed.⁸⁵ It is important to mention that despite small innovations in the country genre, the industry started to prosper well thanks to marketing arrangements and

⁸² Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 409.

⁸³ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 122.

⁸⁴ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

⁸⁵ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

introducing music videos which meant the country musicians no more went unrecognised.

2.4 Contemporary Country music

With the decreasing demand for urban cowboy music in the second half of the 1980s the New York Times critic Robert Palmer declared that country music is dead. There even was a song about the slowly dying country music called “Murder on Music Row” by George Strait and Alan Jackson. This song portrays the fact that country genre lost its heart and soul.⁸⁶ Country became synonymous for commercial music thanks to MTV, jukeboxes, recording companies, Nashville network and radio.⁸⁷ Without a shadow of doubt, country music shifted from its rural roots towards more popular genres such as rock, blues or soul. However, there was still a certain demand for hillbilly sounds within the society and with the arrival of popular video clips fans started to look for new music inspiration. Bill Malone mentions this trend as follows:

Since the late eighties, a rash of young and generally photogenic entertainers, described variously as Young Country or New Country, have edged the older performers aside and consequently have renewed anxieties concerning the music’s identity. Some musicians have attached themselves to country music because it is in vogue or because they were advised to do so, mainly as a marketing decision by promoters or recording executives who believed that their clients could “fit” the market niche and profit from country music’s popularity with a “target” audience.⁸⁸

As we can see from the quote, the marketing trend that was mentioned previously continued in the following decade and it became a key factor to achieving success in music. In fact, it would be a matter of discussion whether the new country rises from tradition but the truth is that young country performers had grown up listening to mixture of popular genres in the United States and their decision to perform country style was for sure not easy. The new era of musicians labelled “New Country” performers generated an extraordinary commercial boom at that time. In 1986 many new and young country musicians came to the scene. They profited from both the hard

⁸⁶ Bill C. Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), 417.

⁸⁷ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

⁸⁸ Bill C. Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), 419.

country style (traditional) and pop-country that generated profit for all members involved in promoting.⁸⁹ In every respect, technology helped artists build their careers too. In other words, the recording industry could rely on the compact disc (CD) that was introduced to American public in 1983. The CD invention was a market turning point because this medium replaced an obsolete vinyl and cassette tape. Musicians and recording companies could celebrate because compact disc resolved old issues with tape piracy which was ripping financial resources from music production companies. Virtually, if someone wanted to have his own copy of recording he either had to buy one or to build an expensive CD plant where mediums were manufactured.⁹⁰ In the same way, sales could be measured more easily thanks to bar code scanning done at the time of procurement. Sales were registered as every single CD was scanned in retail stores and in 1995 a research that was carried out by CMA showed that more than 37 per cent of American society was in favour of country music.⁹¹ This survey can serve as evidence that country was once again very popular in America.

During the 1990s country music was on the pop charts and the number of talented stars increased as well. This decade brought singers who were uncategorized or they were in a juncture between neo-traditional style and crossover performing. As a result they appealed to their country target audience and at the same time they made enemies due to explicitness to various genre alternatives. This expansion led to dance mania in the 1990s as people showed an interest in new dance halls when Cotton Eyed Joe, for example, was danced to.⁹² The mixture of good looking musicians and dancing abilities transferred into video broadcast confirmed the continual interest in country music. The next milestone during the 1990s was the rise of female entertainers. “Women have not only emerged as independent stylists and as architects of their own careers, they have also begun comment more freely on issues that are relevant to their lives.”⁹³ Women in country music were sincerely accepted and moreover, feminist fans liked them. Female performers brought fresh ideas and lyrics that could be hardly heard from male musicians. Many of them came from working-class backgrounds or were descendants of already known country musicians. Specifically, such female musicians

⁸⁹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 422.

⁹⁰ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 127.

⁹¹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 420.

⁹² Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 429.

⁹³ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 431.

were Sara Evans, Ann Womack, Deana Carter, Shania Twain or Faith Hill.⁹⁴ The overall atmosphere was more open as it could be seen on lyrics that were liberal and demanding sexual equity and freedom. Women were open to the use of their sexuality for commercial purposes and they frequently selected seductive clothes on their videos and album covers. Of course this phenomenon commenced with Tanya Tucker and Dolly Parton when they displayed their women's weapons on stage but their female colleagues were substantially more aggressive in the way they presented themselves publicly. Conservative country fans pointed out that only the vocal aspect was what made a good country musician, but the female band The Dixie Chicks invalidated that claim.⁹⁵ This inspiring trio showed that music culture can be enriched by good looking musicians and at the same time can offer traditional country values.

The shift that country music experienced during the 1990s can be better illustrated by the age group of people who were buying the records. The average listener in the 1980s was between 25 and 50 years of age, but ten years later, this range was extended. The country music audience ranged from teenagers through to pensioners. On one hand, the most important group was teenagers because they set the trends and they also assured that country music was not at the edge of extinction. At the same time, the record companies adored youthful artists who were offered contracts. Country music CDs were given its own place in the stores, more precisely the back of the shops. Furthermore, as it was later discovered, country music in the 1990s outsold other popular genres not only in direct sales but it became very popular on charts as well.⁹⁶ Thanks to musicians such as George Strait, Ricky Skaggs, Alan Jackson, Vince Gill or the biggest megastar of that period Garth Brooks, country music became a world-famous phenomenon.⁹⁷ Not only commercial success but also various country-dance styles kept accompanying this even nowadays popular genre.

⁹⁴ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 432.

⁹⁵ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 433-434.

⁹⁶ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 129.

⁹⁷ "Country History," *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

3 American country music stars of the second half of the twentieth century

The outstanding personalities and also central country music characters of the second half of the twentieth century are these five practitioners: Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Bill Monroe and Shania Twain. Whether we hear their old school country or crossover hits, they all still evoke unforgettable music experience. Undoubtedly, the result of their artistic effort and creativity is seen in commercial success that these country legends still profit from. Their immense popularity brought them very high sales which can be rated in millions of sold copies. Without innovative approach, musical talent and ability to win audience's favour they would never get such a fame. The central focus in this chapter is given to Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain.

3.1 Johnny Cash

Johnny Cash was born in 1932 in Kingsland, Arkansas as the third son of Carrie and Ray Cash. His mother's wish was to name him John but his father's wish was to name him after him. Both the parents were steadfast to their ideas, so they decided to make a compromise and name him simply J.R.

The Cashes were a poor farm family, but were offered a better life by the "A New Deal" programme, which saw them relocated to a federally assisted house in Dyess colony.⁹⁸ Growing up, J.R. enjoyed two kinds of things- walking alone on gravel road and singing on his own.

There was something about music that was even more magical to him than movies, a fascination that came naturally. His family, especially his mother, had always turned to songs for comfort and inspiration. Soon after he started grade school, J.R. knew he wanted to be a singer on the radio, and he began to think of that gravel road at night as his own secret stage.⁹⁹

Apparently, settings in Dyess offered him an inspiration for his future development. The first ever song that J.R. encountered was "I Am Bound for the Promised Land." The song was kind of symbolic of his journey to a new home, which Johnny described in his autobiography as a "real jungle." When his father bought a

⁹⁸ Edward Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*. (New York: Enslow Publishers, 2010), 14.

⁹⁹ Robert Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*. (London: Little Brown and Company, 2013) Kindle edition, 9.

second-hand radio, J.R. started to enjoy the power of music. His mother liked gospel music and his father adored country tunes. The moments spent by listening to music were precious to Johnny because batteries were expensive to be recharged.¹⁰⁰

His early music attempts started when he, as a student, did not sympathize with his peers. Also when his brother Jack died, he was blamed by his father for what had happened. This terrible accident served as a kick-starter for his song-writing. He started to write down his feelings and attitudes in the form of poems or stories. The thoughts were a result of his loneliness, which Johnny explained as follows: “I was trying to put down what I was feeling.”¹⁰¹ However in 1940s it was still far away of what he achieved later. Johnny’s mother believed that his voice is a gift from God and therefore she started to work extra hours to pay for his singing lessons. J.R. also started to spend time with his schoolmate Jesse, who could play the guitar and who was willing to teach him. Despite the hard work, Johnny could not catch on. Both friends were obsessed with music, jukeboxes and radio. When the teacher who guided him discovered his voice, he asked Johnny to never come again because such a nice voice should not be changed.¹⁰²

J.R. continued to sing for himself until he moved to high school. When he turned 15 his voice started to change and his body started to develop muscles, both of which made him very attractive for girls. Socializing helped him to get rid of shyness and his mother also helped: she made him sing with the church choir in front of the audience. Johnny kept writing his poems and he was really good at it because he was writing homework for his classmates who gave him money for that. All the time he was dreaming of how to get on stage. There was something that he had in common with his friends - they did not want to be farmers as their parents were. After several disappointments while looking for a job in the north, he finally decided to go back home. Afterwards he was enlisted to air force base for four years in Texas.¹⁰³ There he got, besides other duties, a radio work. This meant to sit by the radio and decode the transmissions during the cold war. Later, he went to West Germany where he was monitoring radio waves from the Soviet Union. Edward Willett describes that period in his book *The Man in Black* as follows:

He didn’t drink and hung out with other men who didn’t drink. He spent a lot of time playing and singing old songs, especially gospel songs, with other

¹⁰⁰ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 20.

¹⁰² Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 22.

¹⁰³ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 51.

homesick soldiers, most of whom were more accomplished musicians than he was. Playing with them, Cash improved his own guitar playing. Cash also started writing his own songs for the first time, including his first gospel song, “Belshazzar”.¹⁰⁴

Apparently, Cash’s duty had been shortening in Germany and he did not forget about his dream to become a singer. In addition, he was writing letters to his future first wife Vivian Liberto, which were more than sincere.

In the summer of 1954 Cash returned to the United States and the first thing he did was that he married his long distance fiancé. Johnny was independent and intended to do anything to make his dream come true.

To start off, he decided to step into the music business in Memphis.¹⁰⁵ He soon formed a new music band consisting of Marshall Grant and Luther Perkins. This trio appeared in public during church concerts, when J.R. did most of the singing. Consequently, they were playing in a restaurant and for three months they appeared on a radio station where Johnny worked as an announcer at the same time. The still unknown trio was eager to go further and Cash was the one who knew that if they want a career a recording is needed.

Meanwhile, Sam Phillips had started his own record company called the Sun Records.¹⁰⁶ Sam was very ambitious and his idea was “to listen to and record anyone he thought was good, no matter what genre they worked in.”¹⁰⁷ Phillips discovered Elvis Presley and recording his songs that made Elvis popular. In fact, Cash was more and more attracted to his own record so he kept calling the Sun Records but Phillips was too much occupied with Presley. Phone calls that had not been answered by Phillips encouraged J.R. even more and then he decided to visit him personally.¹⁰⁸ Cash wanted to record his gospel music and when he ran out of his patience he went to the Sun Records. There he waited outside for Phillips and when they met, John was invited to perform his songs. Fortunately, Phillips was amazed and he let the trio to record “Hey, Porter”, a song composed by John Cash while on duty in Germany. Moreover, J.R. was asked if he can write a love song. Instantly, Cash wrote “Cry, Cry, Cry” that later found

¹⁰⁴ Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 29.

¹⁰⁵ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 102.

¹⁰⁶ Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 124.

its place as a single.¹⁰⁹ Cash's music career started but before that Sam Philips decided that J.R. Cash will be known as Johnny Cash.¹¹⁰ This clever step guaranteed his name to be catchy and easy to remember.

Within a month, Cash and Elvis Presley appeared together on stage in Memphis.¹¹¹ The record "Hey, Porter" was ready to be realised and Phillips adjusted the title of the song to: "Cry! Cry! Cry!" and the artist name was written in big font: "Johnny Cash." Phillips wanted J.R. to take early copies to DJs in Memphis among those who heard the record was Bob Neal. He was amazed and told Cash that he would be played a lot. Consequently, his first commercial song was played by five radio stations the following days. Soon, the majority of Southern radio stations were playing that record that ended on the 14th place on country music charts. Bob Neal became the first manager of Cash's band and he also encouraged him to play in some bars and restaurants for a smaller audience, where the conditions were primitive.¹¹² Thanks to this experience the band could perform in any conditions and it also served as a vehicle to become more well-known. After several tours with Elvis Presley, Johnny and his wife were overwhelmed by the positive reaction from the fans.

"John was becoming popular, with that little different sound we had. His big gigantic voice was cutting through something fierce. You could see it grow day by day."¹¹³ Cash's voice has something that attracted many young girls and they were shouting his name when he was on stage.

Johnny loved his wife and therefore he wrote a ballad for her. This slow moaning - as his manager called it was titled "I walk the Line." Phillips did not like the slow style performed by Cash and he encouraged him to play it again with a faster tempo. This version was later released. At the beginning Cash was not much of a fan of his faster version, but it became a very popular love song in 1956. Later he appeared in Ole Opry, where many listeners compared Cash to Elvis and they predicted his success. On the top of that, Phillips decided to advertise Cash in *Billboard* magazine as rock & roll musician that tied him close to Elvis and promoted his career.¹¹⁴ Due to a certain

¹⁰⁹ Willett, *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*, 34.

¹¹⁰ Nick Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*. (Louisiana: Wise Publications, 2003), 6.

¹¹¹ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 6.

¹¹² Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 176.

¹¹³ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 186.

¹¹⁴ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 190-221.

reason, they decided to forget about hillbilly times and concentrate more on the increasingly important rock & roll market.

The first bigger concert tour Cash was looking forward to was in California. His time on stage can be described as follows: “He had a physical presence that was commanding, plus this great, authentic voice, and he meant it when he sang. His music wasn’t any casual, showbiz thing. When he sang, it came from the guts of his soul.”¹¹⁵ As the quote suggests, Cash was an exceptional country star that deserved all the publicity.

At the beginning of the 1960s Johnny was devoted to his music in the same way as he was devoted to pills. For the band constantly on the road, it was a common practise to take drugs to keep them awake. Long distance journeys were sucking out their energy and musicians were forced to help themselves. On the one hand, J.R. was a kind man who always helped others. For example, when he saw a struggling family he used to buy food for them. On the other hand, his Christian temper had changed a lot during the years. He was searching for women’s love and pleasure. The combination of alcohol and amphetamines to which he was addicted, and the pills made him behave unexpectedly. Fortunately, “he spent only one day in jail in El Paso, for possession of pills that would have been legal with a prescription.”¹¹⁶ However, Johnny knew that he was not the kind of a musician who would survive with one or two songs for the rest of his career. He was still into gospel music which seemed to be dull for Phillips. There was a period of decline and Cash compared his slow pace to Presley’s fame and salary. He felt underpaid and he decided to end his contract with the Sun Records. In fact, there were two reasons: firstly, the Sun Records did not want him to release slow gospel songs; and secondly, Phillips refused to raise Cash’s share in sales. The first full-length album was named *Johnny Cash with His Red, Hot and Blue Guitar*.¹¹⁷ He liked to keep the titles long as he knew that his song writing was coming from his heart.

“Cash’s road was expanding to include a new kind of TV exposure. Thanks to the appeal of “Teenage Queen,” Dick Clark booked Cash for appearances on both American Bandstand and later the new, more formal concert-style Dick Clark Show.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 225.

¹¹⁶ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 7.

¹¹⁷ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 262.

¹¹⁸ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 274.

His move to the new record label, Columbia Record, turned out as a lucky step forward. His family moved to California into a house in Coldwater Canyon where he was very close to Hollywood. During this period he hit the roads again, which further raised his popularity. The record company was so satisfied with the sales of his records that he got his contract extended. Not only that, he was given a financial bonus.¹¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, he became even more addicted to pills and at the same time his career was taking off at unbelievable speed. With increasing pressure from each side, his pill addiction became stronger.

His personal life was also getting worse as he and Vivien felt more distant, partially because J.R. did not like the fact that his wife was just not interested in music and also because he had desire for other women. In addition, his Hollywood movie was a disaster.

The next unpleasant chapter of his life started when he was found overdosed by amphetamines. His wife divorced him because he spent hardly any time with his family and also because he had an affair with June Carter. She gave him an inspiration for the next remake of the song “Ring of Fire”. This one met with the success and Cash married June in 1968.¹²⁰ It seemed that Cash’s career momentum was on the top level and as described in the book *The life* “the album, titled Ring of Fire: The Best of Johnny Cash, spent more than a year on the pop charts, giving Cash his first gold record, [registering] sales of at least 500,000.”¹²¹ As we can see, John Cash became once again the bestselling musician for Columbia Records. In the following years, he started his own network television show where he introduced Bob Dylan, for instance. His ability to respond to music demand was one of his universal strengths. With the arrival of country pop, he introduced song titled “A Boy Named Sue” which immediately became the greatest pop hit.¹²² Evidently, even country, rock & roll and gospel musicians could not resist the temptation to have a pop song.

The following release “Man in Black” (both song and new album) made him a symbol of hopeless and struggling Americans, because Cash was supporting tolerance and equity. Thanks to this image, Cash could appear in western movies such as *Rawhide* and *A Gunfight*. He also appeared in many TV shows that helped him to promote his

¹¹⁹ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 316.

¹²⁰ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 11.

¹²¹ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 458.

¹²² Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 13.

records and to sell more concert tickets.¹²³ So much that he toured Australia and Europe and he also kept writing songs. Cash thanks to Columbia Records, released live albums “At Folsom Prison”, and “At San Quentin”, then “Live at Madison Square Garden”, where he featured with the Carter Family, the Statler Brothers, and Carl Perkins.¹²⁴

Since his very first record at the Sun records, he did more than 1,800 concerts, released 50 albums, 5 films and 12 TV shows.¹²⁵ With this amount of work, there is no wonder J.R. started to be exhausted. The pills were an integral part of his life and this route could not work forever.

During the 1980s, Cash was introduced to the Country Music Hall Of Fame. He was also working on the song “Highwayman” which symbolized veteran talents of country music. In the meantime, Columbia records cancelled his contract after 28 years. He also underwent a triple bypass heart operation.¹²⁶ He enjoyed his stay in the hospital and he was getting ready for the upcoming decade.

The musical progress of Johnny Cash was speeding up in the 1990s. In 1992 he was introduced to Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Surprisingly, he continued experimenting with various genres such as alternative rock, rap or metal, thanks to which he found a new audience. Despite some critics, Cash won his 11th Grammy award in 1999. Still Cash would not stop writing and it culminated in the album “The Man Comes Around”. The 2002 album also included some covers of already known songs. The following year brought the death of his wife June Cash and Johnny composed seven more songs then.¹²⁷ The pain that he suffered from her loss was enormous and he died less than four months after her. His death surprised his good friend Bob Dylan, who said: “Johnny was and is the North Star; you could guide your ship by him—the greatest of the greats, then and now.”¹²⁸

3.1.1 Summary

To sum up, Johnny R. Cash, who was known as “The Man in Black”, spent five decades on stage performing various music genres including gospel, folk, country and rock & roll. Thanks to his family who loved music and singing, he developed his

¹²³ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 755.

¹²⁴ Leigh Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 20.

¹²⁵ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 814.

¹²⁶ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 14-16.

¹²⁷ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 1151.

¹²⁸ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 1171.

baritone-bass and he established his own music style.¹²⁹ Despite the drug dependence he never took an extended break from writing or singing songs. Thanks to his innovative approach he gained greater audience around the United States and abroad. His first music band included Marshall Grant and Luther Perkins. After hits as “Hey Porter” and “Cry Cry Cry” his music career was met with rapid popularity.¹³⁰ He also tried his hand in the movie business, making appearances in several movies. By the 1958, he sold more than six million records which made him the youngest musician introduced into the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. On the top of that, Country Music Television recognised him as the top male country musician of all time.¹³¹ Through the 1990s and up to the 21st century he kept writing songs which led to many award-winning records. Leigh Edwards adds: “Cash’s albums surged in popularity just after his death; his sales doubled, and a number of biographies were published.”¹³² Although Johnny Cash was never as famous as Elvis Presley, his patriotic style remains an inseparable part of American country music culture even today.

3.2 Johnny Cash: song analysis

Other than the bibliographical information on Johnny Cash, we will also examine selected songs that made him the famous country musician. The following chapters offer analysis of Cash’s songs that were mentioned in previous chapter. The selected lyrics are taken from biographical literature stated in footnotes. Listening to the original songs helped me to check the correctness of those texts.

3.2.1 “Hey, Porter”

As the chapter 3.1 already stated “Hey, Porter” was the very first song that was performed by Johnny Cash and his two colleagues publicly. When one looks at the lyrics for the first time, it seems that this song does not demonstrate any of the energy and power that Cash was famous for. It shows a repetition of first line in each strophe but such practise was common in the 1950s country music. However, these repetitions make the song catchy and easy to follow.

Cash wrote this poem at end of his duty in Germany. It informs us that Johnny is looking forward to his former promised land. He wants to speed up the time because he

¹²⁹ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 256

¹³⁰ Michael Streissguth, *Johnny Cash: The Biography*. (Boston: Da Capo Press Inc., 2006), 52.

¹³¹ Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 21.

¹³² Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 23.

cannot wait to see his girlfriend whom he did not see for a long time. A “porter” is a railroad employee who assists passengers on sleeping cars. He mentioned him repeatedly, as he was travelling back home.

Hey, porter, hey, porter,
would you tell me the time?
How much longer will it be 'til we cross
that Mason Dixon Line?¹³³

These lines are focused on homesickness and Cash was obviously looking forward to the person that he cared for the most – his beloved Vivien.

Hey, porter, hey, porter,
please get my bags for me.
I need nobody to tell me now
that we're in Tennessee.

His confidence in music was written down in the shape of a love poem. With each mile he was closer to his home and the feelings were intensified. In fact, this kind of song was not exceptional but Cash added something that the female audience loved about him. On the other hand there are suggestions of American patriotism in the last two lines of lyrics:

I'm gonna set my feet on southern soil
and breathe that southern air.

Thanks to the duality behind the lyrics he gained both female and male audience when the record was released. The complete text of the song “Hey, Porter” is enclosed in the Appendix.

¹³³ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 98.

3.2.2 “I Walk the Line”

The birth of this song is discussed in chapter 3.1 together with its background story. The text includes repetitive phrases and therefore it is not too complex. Moreover, it shows human emotions that Cash tried to capture. His long journeys and tours made him confess what he missed the most. For him, being on the road was the time during which he could compose believable stories from his heart. America loved that kind of lyrics as its success suggests.

I keep a close watch on this heart of mine.
I keep my eyes wide open all the time.
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds.
Because you're mine I walk the line.¹³⁴

There were, without doubt, temptations of women other than his wife but thinking about his wife enabled him to resist the temptation while he was far away from home. The relaxed ballad is felt in the lyrics. The passion in his words is emphasised when he highlighted his loneliness:

I find it very, very easy to be true.
I find myself alone when each day is through.
You've got a way to keep me on your side.
You give me cause for love that I can't hide.

By all means the title “I Walk the Line” had a secondary meaning as well. Cash's next most favourite style was gospel. In his autobiography, *Man in Black* he clarifies that the title had spiritual meaning and it was intended to pass the message to anybody who heard it. In other words, this song was for an audience that believed in God. Therefore, Cash regarded the song as a gospel hit.¹³⁵

I keep you on my mind both day and night.
And happiness I've known proves that it's right.
Because you're mine I walk the line.

¹³⁴ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 48-56.

¹³⁵ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 199.

Indeed, a choir in church can sing the lyrics discussed above and it can be applied to God as well. The substance is the same - showing endless love and devotion.

3.2.3 “Ring of Fire”

Johnny Cash did not write this country song - Merle Kilgore and June Carter penned the original version - but he made it famous. The story behind the song is not the happiest one, as it speaks of the love triangle between Cash, Vivien and June Carter. It was June who put down the lyrics as a result of her affection for Cash, who was at that time married.

The theme clearly describes Johnny’s situation being in a love triangle he was caught in. The fact that this hit is considered to be the greatest song performed by Johnny Cash just suggests the audience empathised with the situation. Cash’s question in this part is whether to stay with Vivien or to succumb in to the temptation:

Love is a burnin' thing,
And it makes a fiery ring
Bound by wild desire
I fell into a ring of fire.¹³⁶

The second part of the story in this song reveals that the man fell in love with another woman. He enjoys the power of love and feeling it produces. Virtually, this story came true and as mentioned in chapter 3.1, John went on to marry June Carter.

The taste of love is sweet
When hearts like ours meet.

Cash enhanced the song by using Mexican horns instrumentation and the overall performance of this autobiographical hit made this song majestic.¹³⁷ Unsurprisingly, the topic of a man cheating on his wife piqued the public attention, especially the young audience.

And it burns, burns, burns,

¹³⁶ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 64-9.

¹³⁷ Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 103.

The ring of fire, the ring of fire.
The ring of fire, the ring of fire
The ring of fire

The last verses of this song examine that there is no way to escape and once a man is in the ring of fire, he will not put out the blaze that makes him feel good inside. In contrast to the previous song, the “ring of fire” breaks the religious and ethical traditions when showing hints of immorality.

Again, for better experience, the complete lyrics can be seen in Appendix.

3.2.4 “Man in Black”

This song is a result of Cash’s efforts to convey the fact that he is just an ordinary country musician who cares for other people. This song clearly demonstrates the country folk nature. The theme of lyrics reflects corruption, abuse, thoughts against racism, illness of drug users, anti-war opinion and injustice in the world. The lyrics explain why Cash was wearing black clothes during his career. The text is more comprehensive but uncomplicated and it serves the purpose of delivering the idea:

Well, you wonder why I always dress in black,
Why you never see bright colors on my back,
Well, there’s a reason for the things that I have on,
I wear the black for the poor and the beaten down,
livin’ in the hopeless hungry side of town;¹³⁸

“Man in Black” is the title for both song and album. Although it was not released as a gospel album, we can still find religious context in it. His faith in Jesus is present in the text when he is sorry for innocent people dying in Vietnam.

Each week we lose a hundred fine young men.
Ah, I wear it for the thousands who have died,
believin’ that the Lord was on their side.

¹³⁸ Crispin, *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*, 30-36.

In fact, the text of this song appears to be more important than music. The verse includes the term “bad trip” which has two meanings: either it is a connotation for drug users experiencing hallucinations¹³⁹ or it is a trip to Vietnam which means the war. Its particular meaning can be only assumed because of the politically correct language used. The following instance demonstrates that:

For the reckless ones
whose bad trip left them cold,
I wear the black in mournin'
for the lives that could have been,
Each week we lose a hundred fine young men.

Contrarily to the preceding song, “Man in Black” recovers the moral tradition of country music. It clearly describes the reason why Johnny Cash had never worn white clothes. The text also captures the aspects of poverty and simplicity that was prevalent in the 1970s America.

To sum up the chapter which is focused on music of Johnny Cash, it is important to highlight the fact that all the selected songs are written in a simple way. They mostly describe the life and feelings that Cash experienced during his fruitful career.

3.3 Willie Nelson

Willie Hugh Nelson was born in 1933 in Abbott, Texas, just a year later,¹⁴⁰ than Johnny Cash. When he was six, his parents moved to Arkansas in search of employment. Unfortunately, Nelson’s mother died and he and his sister Bobbie were raised by their grandparents. Similarly, to Johnny Cash, the religion played an important role in Nelson’s life. The grandparents signed both Willie and Bobbie in Abbot Methodist Church, where Alfred Nelson (Willie’s grandfather) became church’s music director. There Willie could practise the singing that was an important element for

¹³⁹ “Avoid Bad Trips,” *The Good Drugs Guide*, accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.thegooddrugsguide.com/info/bad_trips.htm.

¹⁴⁰ Joe Nick Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*. (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008) Kindle edition, 7.

Abbott's Christians.¹⁴¹ In addition, the grandparents supported singing outside the church and they decided that Willie and Bobbie should learn how to read a score. Alfred's support continued when he bought a first radio to their house.¹⁴² There is a certain similarity with the growing-up years of Johnny Cash, as he also got in touch with the church and radio transmitter.

The Nelson's financial situation was typical for American South: the family was poor and they had to harvest and grow if they wanted to eat. Despite the poverty, his grandfather gave Willie his first musical instrument.

When Willie Hugh turned six, Mamma and Daddy Nelson bought him a Stella guitar out of the Sears catalog. Daddy Nelson taught him how to make the D, A, and G chords gave him a chord book, and taught him the song "Show Me the Way to Go Home." "Polly Wolly Doodle" and "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain" followed.¹⁴³

Bobbie and Willie were given lessons about proper singing and breathing by their grandmother Nancy. This fundamental knowledge allowed Willie to expand his music abilities. The 1940 brought an unexpected event. Alfred Nelson died from pneumonia at the age of 56, when Willie was only 6.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, the family moved to a smaller abode next to tabernacle. Obviously the family could not afford the big house anymore because their income had shrunk. The hole in Willie's heart inspired him to write songs about losing love, sadness and betrayal. Nancy was trying to keep the family stable and to make some money by giving music lessons and playing the organ. When Nelson was a 10 years old, he joined Billy Pope and they built a clubhouse from cardboard, where he and his fellows could socialize. He continued to write songs and he managed to snag a spot in John Rejcek's orchestra as an acoustic guitar player.¹⁴⁵ There, still young Willie got his first music salary and he understood that the music allows him to make more money in comparison to manual work on cotton fields. Nelson spent his time at high school proactively. Besides being the best entertainer in class he was a sportsman too. When he completed the high school, he started to play and sing with Bobbie's husband Bud Fletcher. During this period Nelson started to

¹⁴¹ Willie Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*. (New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2013), 11.

¹⁴² Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 307.

¹⁴³ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 343-344.

¹⁴⁴ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 11.

¹⁴⁵ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 440.

drink alcohol which was not exceptional in Texas. However, his idle times, which he filled by occasionally playing and doing nothing, were over as he joined the United States Air Force in 1950.¹⁴⁶

In fact, Willie did not stay too long in the army and he returned back home. He was present in performances with Texans in extensively rough-and-tumble- honky-tonks. After two years he married only sixteen-year old Martha Matthew.¹⁴⁷ Unsurprisingly, the couple was young and unsettled and hence they fought regularly. Willie found a job as a radio DJ and once during late afternoon, he complained to his colleague that he is able to write and sing songs that are better than the ones he played on the radio. Having said that, he utilized electronic music instruments and recorded his two previously written songs and sent them to Sarg Record. Unfortunately, Willie was not making any progress because he did not receive any feedback at all. His wife wanted him to make enough money to meet end needs but he wanted to achieve that only through the music. One setback was followed by another and this story ended when he decided to have a break from music. He spent one year as a sales manager selling Bibles and hoovers.¹⁴⁸ This skill later allowed him to sell his songs and to make a progress in his career.

When living in Houston, Willie had three jobs and he was very exhausted. During this time he was offered a job as a guitar teacher at high school. Nelson's chase for turnaround in his song-writing career ended when he signed with D Records.¹⁴⁹ Besides that he tried to sell his songs wherever he could. When Nelson did not have any financial resources for his family he was selling his songs to his friend Paul Buskirk. For instance, "Night Life" and "Family Bible" increased Nelson's family budget by 150 dollars.¹⁵⁰ Obviously, selling songs was morally more correct than lending money. "Night Life" was one of many songs early in his progress that helped him to finance a recording fees and travelling costs. This particular song was very successful for Ray Price in 1963 as it was the B-side of his single¹⁵¹ Without a shadow of doubt, Willie's songs were becoming popular even his name was still unknown for America.

In 1960 Nelson moved to Nashville because he felt that he has to find right people who could help him to promote his songs. Nashville held the so-called "guitar

¹⁴⁶ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 649.

¹⁴⁷ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁴⁸ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 946.

¹⁴⁹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1447.

¹⁵⁰ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1543.

¹⁵¹ Steven Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*. (Texas: Eakin Press, 1998), 23.

pulling” whose aim was to introduce new musicians.¹⁵² Here, Willie met Hank Cochran who was amazed by songs performed by Nelson. Unsurprisingly, Nelson was told to get to the Pamper Music office where Hank was working.¹⁵³ The collaboration of Hank and Nelson turned out to be a successful one, because Hank made Nelson to write couple of songs they could work with. Martha told Faron Young (another big country star) that her husband had written songs tailored for him. These songs were “Hello Walls” and “Congratulations.” When Young released the single written by Nelson in Honky-tonk style, “Hello Walls” stayed on position number one for nine weeks.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, Nelson found what he was looking for in Nashville. In addition, Hank Cochran continued in finding singers who could perform Nelson’s songs. In very short time, Nelson sold his next song “Crazy” to Patsy Walker. Because Willie knew the recipe how to compose a great hit, this song was too met with success.¹⁵⁵ Apparently Nelson was very popular songwriter but still not known as a musician.

Nelson was relentless and he moved to Los Angeles in 1961 and signed a recording contact with Liberty Records.¹⁵⁶ There Willie joined Ray Edenton, Pig Robbins, Joe Zinkan, Anita Kerr and Buddy Harman. They recorded Nelson’s earlier songs “The Part Where I Cry” and “Touch Me”. Unfortunately these songs were not as good as Willie wanted them to be. People in Liberty Records were trying to find out, where Nelson should belong as a musician.

Joe Allison who was in service decided to bring in Shirley Collie. She was a young country star who was appearing on various television shows in Los Angeles.¹⁵⁷ Although Willie met her before, he never sung with any woman. They made a duet and two singles “Touch Me” and “Willingly” received a positive feedback. Nick Patoski described how these two singles were successful as follows:

Their duet, “Willingly,” issued as a Willie Nelson record, rose into the country Top 10 when it was released in March 1962 with “Our Chain of Love” on the flip side. Their harmonies were as sweet as the Everly Brothers’, with Willie sticking to an artificially high tenor to blend in with Shirley’s richer voice, which carried the song. [...] A third single, “Touch Me,” sung without Shirley,

¹⁵² Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1739.

¹⁵³ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁵⁴ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1799.

¹⁵⁵ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁵⁶ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 56.

¹⁵⁷ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2020.

was released in May 1962 and broke into the Top 10 country singles chart, rising to number 7.¹⁵⁸

Such a career boost helped him to be known not only as a song writer but also as a country musician. In addition, Willie and Collie fell in love and because she was a kind of woman that Nelson ever wanted, they were about to get married.¹⁵⁹ Nelson's wife Martha was of a typical Cherokee character and when she got to know that her husband had had an affair with Collie she found a boyfriend and moved to Las Vegas with children. Collie had run away from her husband Biff and she married Nelson in 1963.¹⁶⁰ In essence, there is almost no difference between Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. They both remarried and they were given an inspiration for their further career growth.

Nelson became member of Grand Ole Opry in 1964 and in the same year he signed for RCA recording label. Moving to Ole Opry was a smart step forward because he extended his radio audience. Moreover, Willie became a face of a modern country music as he appeared in *The Ernest Tubb Show* as a vehicle to improve his sales.¹⁶¹

Willie's career was getting the right direction but he was still not satisfied. He said: "I didn't want to sit there and raise hogs and write songs, I wanted to be out there playing, going from town to town and playing my music."¹⁶² Apparently, his determination was enormous and he knew he has to form a band. He got to know musicians Johnny Bush, Jimmy Day, David Zettner and Paul English who helped him with releasing "One in a Row" and "The party's Over". While still in RCA, these two singles became between 1966 and 1969 a very popular records.¹⁶³

After series of happy moments in his personal life, Willie also experienced many sad moments in 1970. The first was, the divorce with Shirley Collie, the second was the blaze in his house as a result of bad electric wiring and the last was poor sale of his latest albums with RCA. He simply decided to have a break for a certain time.

While living in Texas with his new wife Connie Koepke, he performed a new kind of country music mixed with jazz features¹⁶⁴. In fact, he promoted himself and his

¹⁵⁸ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2060-8.

¹⁵⁹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 64.

¹⁶⁰ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁶¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2536-2621.

¹⁶² Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2624.

¹⁶³ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 416.

¹⁶⁴ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 3366.

reception in Texas was better than one would assume.¹⁶⁵ Later, Nelson decided to come back to recording songs releasing a series of albums such as “Shotgun Willie”, “Phases and Stages” and “Redheaded Stranger”. The last one was released in association with Columbia Records and its theme was a western love story. The Columbia Records gave him an artistic freedom over his songs. Paradoxically, his version of Fred Rose’s “Blue Eyes Cryin’ in the Rain” turned out to be the number one song in 1975.¹⁶⁶ After many years of Nelson’s effort to breakthrough with his singing, his qualities finally came to light.

The most important landmark in Nelson’s music career came with the release of “Wanted! The Outlaws.” As it is already described in chapter 2.3, this compilation quickly became a platinum LP.¹⁶⁷ Nick Patoski in his book *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life* commented on sales as follows: “The album stayed atop the country album chart for three months, eventually going double platinum, signifying sales of two million units.”¹⁶⁸ The CMA awarded this album as Album of the Year in 1976.¹⁶⁹ Without doubt, Willie was nationally recognised as a singer and thanks to album’s converse image in comparison to albums made in Nashville he offered an exclusive medley of songs for country music audience. In the same year, Nelson continued with two well selling albums “The Sound in Your Mind” and “Troublemaker”. The latter album included spiritual and church collections.¹⁷⁰ Nelson’s perfect ability to adapt the country market continued when he released “Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys.” By the end of the 1970s Nelson went to a film industry where he played in several movies. For example, in *The Electric Horseman* he had a supporting role with Robert Redford.¹⁷¹ In 1980 Nelson released touring song “On the Road Again” that reached number 20 on Billboard hot 100.¹⁷² As a matter of fact, it was the film industry that changed Nelson’s personal life again. During the television remake of the movie *Stagecoach* Willie got to know Ann Marie D’Angelo. As the movie crew pointed out, the movie itself was not so important but the fact that Willie met the makeup girl was significant. Her origin and a way she looked and behaved reminded him his first wife Martha. Annie had Sicilian roots and she came from Los Angeles.

¹⁶⁵ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁶⁶ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 149.

¹⁶⁷ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁶⁸ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 5527-8.

¹⁶⁹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 232.

¹⁷⁰ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 5190-5434.

¹⁷¹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 233.

¹⁷² Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 417.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Nelson with Merle Haggard produced a duet album “Pancho & Lefty” which scored in country single chart. Nelson had many successful songs written by Kris Kristofferson and Steve Fromholz and Willie’s covers were more popular than original versions.¹⁷³ In 1982 Nelson released the next cover version and this time it was the song “Always on My Mind” written ten years before Nelson recorded it. Steven Opdyke depicted the success of the song and the album with the same name as follows:

“The song and recording won both the single of the year and song of the year awards from the Country Music Association. Willie also won the Academy of Country Music's Entertainer of the Year award for 1982.”¹⁷⁴ No one would assume such an extreme turnaround in Nelson’s career. His popularity continued as he formed a country super group. Nelson and Waylon Jennings were called “outlaws” that were once part of a band. The second part included Johnny Cash and Kristofferson. The band altogether was given name *The Highwaymen*. Their all-star world tour accomplished positive feedback and they sold millions of records.¹⁷⁵

Conversely to his commercial success, Nelson’s personal life was ruined. Nelson’s affair with Annie went on the surface and when Connie got to know about them, she moved away from Willie. The next bad news for Nelson was that his daughter Paula Carlene had to undergo the drug abuse treatment. Paula was seventeen and she was Nelson’s only child with completed high school.¹⁷⁶ Nelson also came under fire for his unpaid taxes. In the early 1990s he owed to the government more than a million dollars. However, his solution was simple: he released two solo albums including his older songs and he also advertised this album on television programme.¹⁷⁷ Although his profit covered all debt to the Internal Revenue Service, he is, even nowadays target of comical commentary about taxes in America.

Nelson continued with recording for commercial labels in the 1990s as well. When he turned sixty he released the album “Teatro” featuring Island Records.¹⁷⁸ In 1993, Willie Nelson was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame.¹⁷⁹ In addition, Nelson was awarded the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame, native son of The State of Texas

¹⁷³ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 328.

¹⁷⁴ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 180.

¹⁷⁵ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 81.

¹⁷⁶ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 6380-6403.

¹⁷⁷ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 6747.

¹⁷⁸ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 305.

¹⁷⁹ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 376.

and Living Legend Award.¹⁸⁰ Apparently, Nelson's country music activity brought him success similar to Johnny Cash's.

3.3.1 Summary

Willie Hugh Nelson without doubt, belongs in the team of ultimate country musicians of the second half of twentieth century. In his still on-going career, he has achieved many milestones thanks to his relentless character. He was given a musical gift, which set off his country career. His music character is represented by the fact that he was never afraid to tackle anything. His fans liked his writing and singing talent. His biggest career achievements root from outlaw country era, as he topped music charts and sold more than a million albums all over the United States. His reputation suffered from love affairs, compulsive behaviour and unpaid invoices. Despite his hard childhood when he experienced a lot of unhappy moments he always stood within country music boundary. Nelson as a musician, songwriter, producer, actor and activist not only brought to country music some of the greatest evergreens, he also linked American music popular genres to his typical style. In 2015, he will celebrate his 82nd birthday.

3.4 Willie Nelson: song analysis

Willie's life and career milestones that made him profound country music talent of the second half of twentieth century have to be supplemented by analysis of the songs that were mentioned in previous chapter. The following lyrics were obtained from *MetroLyrics* website stated in the footnote. The analysed examples are extracts from complete lyrics that can be found also in Appendix. Possible incorrectness was eliminated by listening to the original songs.

3.4.1 "Hello Walls"

"Hello Walls" was composed as notes written down on a piece of cardboard paper.¹⁸¹ Even the song was result of a pause in Willie's garage, it became a dominant hit for Faron Young and later for Nelson. Moreover, the song had an important function – it was earning Nelson's living in the time when he was known only as a songwriter.

This song demonstrates the theme of unwanted loneliness and the feeling when man has to unburden himself. In fact the only things that were handy were walls,

¹⁸⁰ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 441.

¹⁸¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1780.

window and ceiling. This denotes the evidence of otherness at that time when only a minority of men would confess they miss somebody. The infinite loneliness attracted the audience because the song was definitely different in comparison to what was on the music scene in 1962. The idea of gentle words made the audience to think about the lyrics 'content.

Hello, walls, (hello) (hello)
How'd things go for you today
Don't you miss her
Since she up and walked away
And I'll bet you dread to spend
Another lonely night with me ¹⁸²

A man complains about woman's mysterious disappearance to a window. There is a trace of love and wrath, as he cannot understand why she left.

She went away and left us all alone
The way she planned
Guess we'll have to learn to get along
Without her if we can;

The song for sure evokes the country atmosphere, as Nelson's unmistakable baritone is complemented by smooth vocals. The text, which centres on man staring at the ceiling and repeating that he misses the woman, is important too.

Hello, ceiling, (hello) (hello)
I'm gonna stare at you awhile
You know I can't sleep
I've got a feelin'
She'll be gone a long, long time

¹⁸² "Hello Walls Lyrics," *The Essential Willie Nelson*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/hello-walls-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

Obviously, the mysterious loss of the woman is painful inside for this man. The story is open-ended and therefore every listener can interpret to his/her own liking. The song remains popular even nowadays and Nelson's version is as good as Faron's one. The whole text can be seen in Appendix.

3.4.2 "Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain"

This song is a good illustration of resuscitation of an old song that would perhaps end up forgotten. The song was composed thirty years ago by Fred Rose and recorded so many times that the proper question would be: who did not record that song? The success of Nelson's version is mentioned in chapter 3.3. The reason for its popularity is clear. Nelson's main character remembers his love that is gone yet. The sad atmosphere suggests the title of the song. This theme is familiar to everyone who ever lost someone close.

In the twilight glow I see her
Blue eyes crying in the rain
When we kissed goodbye and parted
I knew we'd never meet again¹⁸³

The main protagonist kisses his love to say goodbye because he knows that he will not have the ability to see her again. Ordinary life is the subject Nelson presents for his audience in the best way.

Love is like a dying ember
And only memories remain
And through the ages I'll remember
Blue eyes crying in the rain

In addition, as the song continues the grieving person is yet an old man who did not find pure love in his life again. Besides the text, song excels thanks to Nelson's guitar playing approach. He explains:

¹⁸³ "Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain Lyrics," *Souvenirs*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/blue-eyes-crying-in-the-rain-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

“I didn't use a pick on that one. Sometimes I use my thumb by itself, to get a softer sound.”¹⁸⁴ Frankly, the simplest details made it different from the previous versions. There is no doubt that Nelson's specific style was more fruitful.

Some day when we meet up yonder
We'll stroll hand in hand again
In a land that knows no parting

As the last strophe demonstrates, denouement comes at the end when the man is looking forward to meeting his love of life in heaven. Nelson's musical part plays an important role because his version gained the biggest popularity. Again, the complete song is attached in Appendix.

3.4.3 “On the Road Again”

This is legendary hit written and performed by Willie Nelson that owing to its country drive found its place in many television shows and movies.¹⁸⁵ This touring song features typical country text that Willie wrote about all musicians travelling all around the country and making music.

On the road again
Just can't wait to get on the road again
The life I love is making music with my friends
And I cant wait to get on the road again¹⁸⁶

The vivacity of this text is simply astonishing. Willie portrays his life and also lives of his music colleagues who travel a lot to make tours and concerts. Nelson remembers writing this song as follows: “[he picked up] an envelope or maybe it was an airsick bag and wrote “On the Road Again” chorus.”¹⁸⁷ The text pattern is simple:

On the road again

¹⁸⁴ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 159.

¹⁸⁵ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 5646.

¹⁸⁶ “On The Road Again Lyrics,” *Souvenirs*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/on-the-road-again-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

¹⁸⁷ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 236.

Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world keep turning our way
And our way, is on the road again

The whole song supports the country tradition, portraying ordinary people as best friends who are popular and prosperous and they also possess a good fortune. Besides the originality of the text, this song is special for Willie's guitar solo and the sound of harmonica in background.

Goin' places that I've never been
Seein' things that I may never see again
And I can't wait to get on the road again

Unlike the two preceding songs, "On the Road Again" is in high spirits. Nelson knew the way to gain the audience, especially the senior audience. This epic song captured the wanderlust of American nation and it is still a very popular movie song. For better experience see Appendix.

3.4.4 "Always on My Mind"

Indisputably, this is another roaring hit that made Nelson a highly regarded country legend. The popularity was achieved by Nelson's performance that is believable enough. The topic of this song deals with love and thanks to his experiences, he could veraciously portray the story. This song is an exceptional piece of art because Nelson set his baritone voice into agreeable position. His precise guitar style plays a significant role as well.

Maybe I didn't love you
Quite as often as I could have
Maybe I didn't treat you
Quite as good as I should have
If I made you feel second best
Girl I'm sorry I was blind¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ "Always On My Mind Lyrics," *Souvenirs*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/always-on-my-mind-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

The song starts with a confession of a man who declares that he did not show his feelings to his dearest as he should. In fact, the simplicity and universality of the text make it easy for audience to imagine the content and almost everyone had to ever touch that subject.

But you were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

These last two verses state that the man could not forget about his love and she will always stay in his heart.

All those lonely, lonely times
I guess I never told you
That I am so happy that you're mine

The narration about an unfulfilled love is an integral part of country music. Love is what fills lives of people in rural areas and hence this song warms the cockles of audience's hearts. In addition, Nelson's audience think that he has a "corny taste" and therefore his version became one of the bestselling singles.¹⁸⁹ Apparently, his interpretation was clearly aimed on American popular music audience. Again, the whole lyrics can be seen in Appendix.

To summarize, Willie Nelson's songs dealt with miscellaneous themes. His biggest hits are different from one another. However, they contain reasonable amount of repetitions which are necessary for good listening experience. The lyrics are related to real life situations, which almost every country music listener is familiar with. In addition, Nelson's live performances offer the ultimate country music experience by all means.

¹⁸⁹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 365.

3.5 Shania Twain

She was born as Eileen Regina Edwards Timmins, Ontario, Canada on August 28, 1965¹⁹⁰ - the same year that Willie Nelson joined the Grand Ole Opry and Johnny Cash was forming his romantic country outlaw image. She was the first child of Sharon Marrison and Clarence Edwards. Eileen was only two when her parents divorced and Sharon was left with three children on her own. Fortunately, when Eileen was four years old, her mother married Jerry Twain- an Indian from Ontario. The Twain family, as they legally changed their names multiplied when Jerry and Sharon had their son Mark. Eileen had a tough childhood and she experienced fights between her parents, food scarcity and tight family budget. She developed a strong relationship with music when she started to attend school. The musical instruments fascinated her and she had a strong desire to create music even as early as the age of seven.¹⁹¹ Apparently, despite many existential issues she still could find a way to make herself happy.

Her first music attempts came when she sang at home for a pleasure. She described her musical beginnings in her autobiography as follows:

I sang all the time: to the car stereo (either the radio or the eight-track tape), whatever was playing around the house, with restaurant jukeboxes. Everywhere there was music playing, I was singing along. It was how I spent most of my recreational time, much in the same way that other kids my age caught butterflies in jars or collected lucky pennies in a tin.¹⁹²

This statement, that portrays Eileen's beginning, shows that her passion for music was an integral part of her free time. In addition, her mother encouraged her to sing for the family while playing the guitar. When she was eight, she started to write her own songs with an acoustic guitar in tow. When she was in her late teens, she liked to sing a folk music and she developed her acoustic artist style. Despite the tight family budget, Eileen was given a piano and she was attending singing lessons as well. Her first public performances were in bars, where she sang to customers late at night when the bar stopped serving drinks. She grew up really quick and she joined the adult world

¹⁹⁰ Shania Twain, *From This Moment On*. (New York: Atria Books, 2011) Kindle edition, 196.

¹⁹¹ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 200-373.

¹⁹² Twain, *From This Moment On*, 414-416.

guided by her parents.¹⁹³ Her parents were supporting Eileen by all means. They sacrificed their lives so Eileen could get a proper training. Eileen tried to make some money by giving guitar lessons, singing at the concerts as a guest. Her first song was called “Just Like the Storybooks” and it was about lost love. Her mother worked hard and she booked her on many local televisions, where she performed for charity shows. The breakthrough came when Eileen was invited to appear on *Tommy Hunter Show* on CBC.¹⁹⁴ There she could experience what it means to be in country music show in Canada. She was introduced as Ellie Twain and she sang “Walk On By” by Leroy Van Dyke.¹⁹⁵ Without doubt, being invited to TV show meant getting wider audience and new invitations.

After a few TV appearances, her mother arranged a meeting with Kelly Kramer, whose task according to Eileen’s mother was to promote her music talent and to get a recording contract. After a short period of time, Eileen’s professional relationship with Kramer was over. Eileen’s mother became her new manager and she continued to book her for various exhibitions and senior’s concerts. When Eileen was in high school, she joined a rock band titled *The Longshot*. The band had five members and Eileen was the lead singer. It allowed her to create her own repertoire including the commercial Top 40. Consequently, the band got booked at local bars where they performed country, rock, and rock & roll style. Twain soon became a key member, which allowed her to leave the guitar and focus on singing only. After her graduation from high school she joined another band called *Flirt*. In fact, this move was so quick that within a few days Eileen was on her first ever tour.¹⁹⁶ Thanks to her family’s support and her relentless nature, Twain could experience what a professional career tastes like.

In 1987 Twain came back home to help her parents with tree-planting business. During that time, their family friend Mary Bailey organized a couple of concerts for Eileen in Toronto. Consequently, she got to know John Kim Bell who was an older orchestra conductor and piano player. Kim and Eileen got into a relationship against her parents’ wishes and they later moved together into a house in Toronto. Kim arranged for Twain a performance in the fundraiser for the National Aboriginal Achievement

¹⁹³ Dallas Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*. (Québec: ECW Press, 1998), 39.

¹⁹⁴ Robin Eggar, *Shania Twain: The Biography*. (New York: Pocket Books, 2005), 43.

¹⁹⁵ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 55.

¹⁹⁶ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 2386-2415.

Foundation, where she performed with Toronto Symphony Orchestra.¹⁹⁷ Her performance was not without flaws and therefore Eileen decided that she will stay rather within country music.

Surprisingly, on November a bad news came to Eileen. Her parents had a tragic car accident and they both died. Virtually, this news changed Eileen's life. She became a breadwinner for her siblings and she came back home to take care of family business and simply to survive. The next bad news was that Kim left her when she needed moral help.¹⁹⁸ Without a shadow of doubt, Eileen knew that she had to forego her musical career for a while and just concentrate on paying the bills. Fortunately Mary Bailey helped her to find a job to support the family. Mary took her to a town called Huntsville. Dallas Williams described that place as follows: "The upscale Deerhurst resort was then staging a nightly musical variety revue. The show was called Viva Vegas and it drew relatively large crowds of tour-group members, corporate conventioners, vacationers, and locals."¹⁹⁹ As a matter of fact, the whole family had to move to Ontario where Eileen could easily support them.

During the Deehurst period, Eileen wrote emotional songs about her parents. Her main goal was to write songs and she created for instance "Send It with Love", "No One Needs to Know" and "Wind Beneath My Wings." Eileen knew that she has to record a demo if she wants to build a professional career. Therefore, she asked her colleagues to record her early works at a primitive homemade music studio. Moreover, Mary Bailey had arranged her an appointment with Nashville music manager Richard Frank, who was willing to listen to her records. Unsurprisingly, Eileen gained a contract with Mercury Nashville Records label.²⁰⁰ Frankly, this was a key moment in Eileen's life because with a proper contract she could attract greater audience and support her siblings better as well. Eileen found herself in Nashville, the country music's hub, and therefore the place for her career growth.

When Eileen quit her job in Deerhurst she moved to Melisa, where she rented a small bungalow. The managers of label had to determine where Eileen would fit as a singer. At the same time, she was working on her own songs. At the beginning, she had

¹⁹⁷ James Hale, "Shania Twain," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

¹⁹⁸ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 26.

¹⁹⁹ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 157.

²⁰⁰ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 171.

to record songs of already famous musicians, which was not to her liking, but it was a routine for newcomers to Nashville. Soon, Eileen started to record her own album. She was working with an older musician, Nashville independent producer and song writer called Norro Wilson who was in love with her voice.²⁰¹ Her debut album was called “Shania Twain” and it was released in April 1992.²⁰² In the meantime, Eileen changed her first name to Shania to honour the Ojibwa origin of her stepfather.²⁰³ The album included songs co-written by Shania and other older song writers. In fact, Shania was influenced by country musicians such as Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton. Her music inspiration came from the old country style she remembered from her childhood. Marketing was an inseparable part of music industry, so Shania had to create music videos on the side-lines of audio records. Canadian Steven Goldman directed the video, and he was also teaching her how to perform in front of camera and how to synchronize her lips with the video. Their common effort, together with precious clothes selection led into Miami Beach recorded “What Made You Say That” single. When the single was aired in 1993, Shania went to her first professional tour featured with John Brannen and Toby Keith. Meanwhile, the single reached the fifty-fifth place on the *Billboard* country chart.²⁰⁴ Of course, Steven saw Shania’s potential as a singer, song writer and in her physical beauty. After her first video aired she was offered to shoot next one. This time the director was Sean Penn who was enthusiastic enough to help her with “Dance with the One That Brought You.” While the song was an average one it pushed Shania forward in her career. Thanks to Penn’s faith, Shania could cover basic bills and concentrate on her future formation.

As already mentioned, Penn helped Shania to get noticed publicly and subsequently he also arranged her a meeting with Robert John “Mutt” Lange, a London-based music producer who had been writing songs for artist such AC/DC, Bryan Adams or Def Leppard.²⁰⁵ Mutt initiated a phone call through Shania’s manager Mary; Shania flew to London to meet Mutt personally and to share with him all the ideas about music she kept for herself since she was a bar singer. Their friendship segued into a song writing collaboration, which yielded enough music material for the whole album. The first album was fading away, so she needed to record a new album as soon as possible.

²⁰¹ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 171.

²⁰² Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3548.

²⁰³ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²⁰⁴ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3665- 3687.

²⁰⁵ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 163.

After couple of weeks Shania came back to Nashville, where she performed the songs that were written in collaboration with Mutt. It was met with success and Mutt later helped Shania with the release of her next album: “The Woman in Me” in 1995. After six months of knowing each other, the happy couple got married and they spent their honeymoon writing and finishing the song collection. The new album needed some visual marketing and Shania did photo shooting followed by a radio tour in order to promote her new album which included songs, “Any Man of Mine”, “(If You’re Not in It for Love) I’m Outta Here!” and “Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?”²⁰⁶ The album met mixed critical reaction, peaking at eleventh position on *Billboard* music chart. In other words, the success was simply one step at a time and Shania still needed some time to shine. “All of the songs were marked by a spunky forthrightness in their lyrics that appealed strongly to women, while the sexy underpinning—and basically romantic and nonthreatening message—made the songs attractive to men.”²⁰⁷ From the onset, Shania found her target audience thanks to her precise lyrics that were combined with her unique voice, melodic and rhythmic drive. The album “The Woman in Me” became gigantic hit that ended up nine times platinum and was on the top of chart almost 200 weeks. In addition, the crossover song “Any Man of Mine” hit the number one spot on *Billboard*’s country music ladder in 1995 and it went on to become the bestselling album by a non-American woman musician in the country music history. Shania sold nine million albums in America and twelve million internationally.²⁰⁸ In fact, Shania supplied what American country scene was missing and her songs affected not only older audience but young as well. In addition, her first commercial album generated a promising career.

In 1996 Shania started to build her own professional image. Majority of promotional jobs she did herself, including meet and greet, music videos and photo shoots. When a successful album is released, artists normally go on tour. Shania avoided going on tour because she was afraid that people could get fed up of hearing her. Instead of going on tour, she decided to work on next album.²⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, Twain was not used to being famous and she felt exhausted. She described it in her memoir as follows: “I had to hire a security staff for being out in public. [...] I didn’t drink alcohol at all, took no drugs, barely even a painkiller, or other soothing helpers.

²⁰⁶ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 553.

²⁰⁷ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 204.

²⁰⁸ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 433.

²⁰⁹ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 106.

[...] I was alone in this mess with seemingly no way out.²¹⁰ In comparison to Willie Nelson or Johnny Cash, Shania Twain did not use any drugs or alcohol and her approach to music and fans was very serious. The year 1996, “The Woman in Me” went on to win the Grammy Award for Best Country Album and Album of the Year at the Country Music Awards.²¹¹ Apparently, her devotion to music made her even more concerned about wellbeing of her audience.

The following year, Shania released the crossover album “Come On Over”. This album was a result of co-operation of Mutt and Shania’s new manager John Landau, who was famous for his guiding of Bruce Springsteen. Because she refused to go on tour with the first album, Shania became the target of harsh criticism that she is only a studio singer who is not able to perform live. To be honest with her fans, she decided to go on tour for this album.

“Come On Over”, although a “country” album in name, was in reality a mainstream pop album along the lines of Gloria Estefan or Celine Dion.”²¹² This album combined country and popular music features and it helped Shania to reach out to wider audience. Shania wanted the tour to be something extra and she also wanted the audience to have the perfect experience. Her first show was in 1998 at Sadbury Community Arena in her birth place.²¹³ Frankly, the domestic audience can always appreciate the effort and talent Shania showed on her first show. Bill Malone portrayed her live performance as follows: “Her stage performances have been marked by a playful and assertive sexiness, provocative songs, and costumes that take advantage of her physical attractiveness. She became famous in fact, for her bare midriff.”²¹⁴ Before long, she was given the nickname “The Madonna of Country.”²¹⁵ Obviously, the most positive aspects were her exceptionality as a person, her voice and her physical prettiness. All these factors pulled crowds to her concerts. The booming songs on this record were “You’re Still the One”, “From This Moment”, “That Don’t Impress Me Much” and “Don’t be Stupid”²¹⁶. These hits were breaking the sales and “You’re Still the One” was her first record to be aired on adult contemporary radio, staying on the top

²¹⁰ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4302-4257.

²¹¹ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4337.

²¹² Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 204.

²¹³ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4608.

²¹⁴ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 433.

²¹⁵ Stuart A. Kallen, *The History of Country Music (The music library)*. (California: Lucent Books, 2002), 94.

²¹⁶ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 205.

for the whole summer.²¹⁷ In the late 1990s Shania formed a golden country triangle with the Dixie Chicks and they were playing in old country style including fiddle and banjo. Consequently, she had an impact on a new generation of female country audience.²¹⁸ Her second commercial album sold more than eighteen million copies, making her the best-selling female country artists. Her success was the result of her husband, who co-wrote her songs, and her manager, who made her a country and pop queen at that time.

After a successful tour, Shania and her husband moved to Swiss Riviera and she gave birth to son Eja.²¹⁹ Later, she started to working on her next recording “Up!.” This album was also co-produced with her husband and the new manager Peter Mensch. The CD had different musical arrangements and Shania decided not to focus only on one music genre. In late 2002 when the album “Up!” was released, there were three different versions. European version was a mixture of pop and country style, whereas American market was able to get two CDs, one recorded in country style and the second in pop style.²²⁰ And again, we can see that Shania was profiting from helpful co-operation of experienced people and of course, her indisputable talent. The first single on the album “I’m Gonna Getcha” was an instant hit.²²¹ The next hits such as "She's Not Just a Pretty Face", "Forever and For Always" and “Ka-Ching!” contributed to the overall success of the album that sold more than five million copies. The album was also awarded by the Country Recording of the Year and the Fan Choice Award, among others.²²² Shania became a female country and pop country symbol in America and Europe, and as a result, she fulfilled her dream to become a well-known country singer.

Conversely to the success, Twain experienced a painful divorce with her husband.²²³ In addition, her new album was delayed due to dysphonia; she suffered the inability to sing. Fortunately, she overcame the vocal chords disorder and she remarried in 2011 to Frederic Nicolas Thiébaud.²²⁴ Besides her music career, Eileen Twain has shone on TV screen on *Good Morning America*, for example. She supports various charity organizations like *Shania Kids Can*, which is foundation of unprivileged

²¹⁷ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4616.

²¹⁸ Kallen, *The History of Country Music (The music library)*, 97.

²¹⁹ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4716.

²²⁰ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²²¹ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 205.

²²² James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²²³ Shania Twain, *From This Moment On*. (New York: Atria Books, 2011) Kindle edition, 5285.

²²⁴ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

children.²²⁵ The year 2015 symbolizes Shania's 49th birthday and also her "Rock This Country Tour."²²⁶ After eleven years, she has decided to go on tour, which demonstrates her musical longevity and loyalty to her fans.

3.5.1 Summary

To sum up, Shania Twain's music established her not only as an American superstar but also as an international country music symbol. Her energetic stage performances coupled with her music talent made her a lucrative commercial artist. She brought the country a fresh style by incorporating rock and pop and enhanced woman's confidence.

3.6 Shania Twain: song analysis

Her physical beauty was not the main reason behind her success. Her overall repute as "The Madonna of Country Music" is supported by her deeply felt texts and her opinion that women have to be independent. The cited texts are taken from her own song book called *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits*. The analysed parts demonstrate only the first citation of the passage of the song. All selected lyrics were listened to in order to prove the correctness of the song in the songbook.

3.6.1 "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under"

As it is pointed out in chapter 3.5, this song was the first single from Shania's first commercially prosperous album. This single, which was in true classic country style, was co-written with Robert Lange.²²⁷ Apparently, this cooperation resulted in a fruitful career for Shania.

This song also surely belongs to the realm of vigorous country music. The jolly atmosphere of this song has an impact on listener who, might start to feel uplifted.

Whose bed have your boots been under?

And whose heart did you steal I wonder?

This time did it feel like thunder, baby?²²⁸

²²⁵ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 6121.

²²⁶ "Shania Twain Announces Farewell Tour," *Abc News*, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/shania-twain-announces-farewell-tour/story?id=29378517>.

²²⁷ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4083.

²²⁸ Shania Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*. (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 118.

In other words, the lyric's atmosphere is affirmative. The theme focuses on questions that are asked by woman. The female interrogator freely admits that she knew about every step a transponder made. Obviously, the ends of each line rhyme, create an engaging effect.

Whose bed have your boots been under?
Don't look so lonely, don't act so blue
I know I'm not the only girl you run to
I know about Lolita, your little Spanish flame
I've seen you around with Rita, the redhead down the lane

These lines informs how rooted the lyrics of country music are to the lives of country people. Although, the interrogator's monologue reveals that the findings are not heart-warming, the atmosphere stays positive.

Come on boots
Oh yeah
Bring it boys

In addition, the country atmosphere is shown through cowboy symbols such as boots. This creates a familiarity with the Wild West environment where, men were not only honest but also wandering. As a matter of fact, this text proves that Shania Twain utterly belongs to best country performers of the second half of twentieth century. Whole lyrics can be found in Appendix.

3.6.2 “Man, I Feel Like a Woman”

As mentioned previously, this musical piece comes from the “Come on Over” album released in 1997. It can be described as a song that completely ignores the roles prescribed for women. In fact, this song represents peculiar form of country music that Shania introduced. Undoubtedly, this is demonstrated by charismatic text:

Let's go girls, com'on
I'm goin' out tonight, I'm feelin' alright
Gonna let it all hang out

Wanna make some noise, really raise my voice
Yeah, I wanna scream and shout²²⁹

The beginning of the song is aimed to women's audience. The text encourages women to go out and forget all about being correct and decorous. This time, the woman will be noisy and she will let her hair down.

No inhibitions, make no conditions
Get a little outta line
I ain't gonna act politically correct
I only wanna have a good time

As the text further suggests, now it is a party time. The song has a faster tempo and therefore it encourages the listener to follow the ideas mentioned in the lyrics. The person tries to arouse the outlaw atmosphere and she also wants women to be proactive. The following passage portrays the idea of women's liberty.

Oh, oh, oh, go totally crazy, forget I'm a lady
Men's shirts, short skirts
Oh, oh, oh, I wanna be free-yeah, to feel the way I feel
Man, I feel like a woman

It is a catchy song, made all more compelling by Shania's powerful vocal performance and feminist theme. For better experience the whole text can be seen in Appendix.

3.6.3 "That Don't Impress Me Much"

Similarly, this song speaks to the female listeners, too. Shania Twain explains the existence of this song in her biography *From This Moment On*. Her sister's boyfriend Jeff gave her the inspiration because he kept his car clean and she had to take her boots off before she got in.²³⁰ This experience can be seen in the following passage:

²²⁹ Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 50.

²³⁰ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3240-1.

You're one of those guys who likes to shine his machine
You make me take off my shoes before you let me get in²³¹

The atmosphere of the song is demonstrated by experienced woman who shows disrespect for a man she refers to. She tries to point out that it is the personality that is important rather than physical beauty:

I never knew a guy who carried a mirror in his pocket
And a comb up his sleeve-just in case
And all that extra hold gel in your hair oughta lock it
'Cause Heaven forbid it should fall outta place
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're special
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're something else

Although, this song is played in very cheerful mood, the negative attitude continues in the following stanza where it is softly intensified.

Okay, so you're Brad Pitt
That don't impress me much
So you got the looks but have you got the touch
But that won't keep me warm in the middle of the night
That don't impress me much

Virtually, this song also represents female independence through the symbol of Brad Pitt. The first line mentions the name of Brad Pitt that can be understood as a symbol of men's beauty. Despite the comparison the protagonist is not impressed. In other words, the physical beauty is not the only factor that is considered when selecting a partner.

Okay, so what do you think you're Elvis or something
Whatever

²³¹ Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 35.

That don't impress me

The dismissive theme continues with the mention of Elvis Presley, who is a rock & roll legend. The final verse shows the repetition that signifies the female protagonist did not change her mind and she is not interested in men. These lyrics depict the stereotypical men that every woman comes across. For ultimate experience see Appendix.

3.6.4 “You're Still the One”

On the contrary, this song of Shania Twain’s country music stirs up emotions. The main subject is love. The woman proves that despite all prejudices their love is still here and she also shows that her affection for him is satisfying as well.

When I first saw you, I saw love
And the first time you touched me, I felt love
And after all this time,
You're still the one I love²³²

Perhaps the true story was written down to demonstrate to the whole world that love between the mentioned couple has power to last forever. We can assume that female listeners must have been enthralled. The following verses show even greater outburst of emotions:

You're still the one I run to
The one that I belong to
You're still the one I want for life
You're still the one that I love
The only one I dream of
You're still the one I kiss good night

This romantic song serves as an example of crossover competence. Although, the song possess country elements such as acoustic strumming, piano and organ it

²³² Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 68.

appealed to wide audience mainly thanks to warm and soft voice of Shania. In addition, she considers this song a landmark of her music career.²³³ The following lines express devotion for pure love:

They said, "I bet they'll never make it"
But just look at us holding on
We're still together still going strong

The chapter 3.5 substantiates the fact that Shania Twain has created the milestone in the country music of the second half of the twentieth century. The aspect of themes she has covered varies from blue collar songs to deeply felt emotional pieces. Who would show disrespect for female country breakthrough musician? The resolution is in hands of fans, devotees, supporters and critics. Given her relentless talent and dedication, Shania's popularity and fame is very well-deserved.

²³³ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4619.

4 Conclusion

The main purpose of my master thesis based on the theoretical knowledge and a song analysis was to provide a narrative of the development of country music of the second half of the twentieth century through three artists: Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain. These musicians represent the given time period in the best light thanks to their popularity and commercial success.

Thanks to the well-gained information, my aim has been gradually fulfilled in the particular chapters. While writing the thesis, I was using information from specialized literature, journals, web pages and autobiographies to match the thesis contents.

The thesis begins with the description of music in general and what it means to listen to music. The narrative then moves to the birth of country music that has its roots in American folk music.

The cultural blending of white and black inhabitants in the southern parts of the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century essentially influenced the country music. The simple people did not want to give up their customs and cultural habits and they became stigmatised for that.

Soon, their music dissipated to other parts. People had a need to show their musical skills publicly and therefore first country shows were born. These shows served as a tool of social bonding and thanks to their entertaining character they attracted various audiences. The country music could get new three-dimensional shape due to its multipurpose character. In fact, the country music would not be so popular without radio broadcasting. The radio helped country musicians and their songs get noticed. It was a medium that formed the first country music stars as well. Since television broadcasting was not widespread, the radio remained very popular thanks to country music shows that were aired. The best artists and radio shows gave rise to the commercial development of country music genre.

The subchapter 2.1 portrays the golden era for country music. The demand for recording increased and the music market was growing in an enormous speed. The vast

majority of recordings then were made in Nashville. This city guaranteed popularity for performers, as they could collaborate with the already known songwriters. Through the years the country evolution was transferred in many subgenres of country music. After the Elvis Presley-led rock & roll era, the music scene experienced the country pop genre. Thanks to a new trend that was followed by many country musicians, they gained greater audience and their fame multiplied. This situation created a certain resistance from conservative country listeners because they knew that the original country music was fading away.

Fortunately, as the subchapter 2.2 proves, new movements following the first idea of country music emerged. The Nashville sound's long lasting hegemony resulted in the outlaw movement, which breathed a new life into country style. Special credit belongs to Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson who reinvigorated the country style trends.

The fourth chapter belongs to the most representative country artists of the second half of the twentieth century. Thanks to their devotion to music, the world could hear and experience country music at its purest form. Their work attracted crowds of fans, who showed their loyalty by following these country practitioners all over.

Although Johnny Cash has died, his popularity and fame will last forever, with many even considering him the symbol of American country music. The other two mentioned artists are not too far behind Cash in terms of their contribution to the country style. Songs created by Shania Twain symbolise a freedom for female audience and good visual experience for men's audience as well. Willie Nelson's talent for song writing together with his guitar-playing skills make him a distinguished musician of American country era.

Resumé

Country hudba je jedným z najpopulárnejších hudobných žánrov dvadsiateho storočia. Počas svojho vývoja postupne menila svoj charakter až do podoby, ktorú poznáme dnes. Vznikla na území juhu Spojených Štátov Amerických, kde najskôr slúžila ako spôsob využitia voľného času a taktiež ako médium ľudovej zábavy. Zvyky obyčajných ľudí z tohto územia sa stali neodlúčiteľnou súčasťou ich života a taktiež ich kultúry. Vidiečania sa nechceli vzdať svojich kultúrnych hodnôt, a preto boli mestskými ľuďmi za to označení. S postupom času sa ich hudba dostala do viacerých častí krajiny. S príchodom prvých country show, sa ľudia navzájom zblížovali a tieto show obsahovali okrem spevu, hudby, tanca aj vystúpenia lokálnych ľudových zabávačov, ktorí hovorili vtipy a historiky. Publikum si tieto predstavenia zamilovalo a preto sa country show postupne rozšírili po celej krajine, kde ich publikum vítalo a niektoré mestá týmto potulným hosťom dokonca poskytovali nocľah ako prejav vďaky za ich kultúrny prínos. Následne na to, country hudba dostala nový rozmer a mala všestrannejšie využitie. Slúžila ako útek pred statickým a nudným životom, ako spôsob zábavy a v neposlednom rade ako spôsob obživy. Country hudbu ovplyvnilo práve kultúrne prepojenie bieleho obyvateľstva a černošských prisťahovalcov v južnej časti Spojených Štátov na začiatku dvadsiateho storočia. Ľudoví interpreti zužitkovali všetko, čo ponúkali černošské rytmy a zakomponovali ich do svojich piesní. Cowbojský štýl priniesol obrovský úspech a popularitu. Vyjadroval spojenie amerického vidieka, módnych doplnkov a postoja, že cowboji precestovali celú krajinu a zažili mnoho situácií. Naopak, po celodennej práci sa schádzali v baroch, kde ich okrem občerstvenia muzikanti obohatili aj hudobné vystúpenie v podobe country hitov a populárnych tancov, na ktoré sa dokázali pozerieť celé hodiny.

Bez rádiového signálu by country hudba svoj rozmach možno ani nezažila. S príchodom vojny, chcelo byť civilné obyvateľstvo informované o dianí v krajine, a preto bol rádio prijímač nevyhnutnou súčasťou niektorých amerických domácností. Okrem spravodajstva, sa do rádiových staníc postupne začali dostávať country melódie a prvé country show. Tieto hudobné relácie ponúkali niekoľko hodinové vysielanie raz týždenne, čo malo pozitívny ohlas medzi poslucháčmi. Takto sa potulné country show preniesli cez rozhlasové vlny do väčšiny domácností a poslucháči si mohli vychutnať svojich obľúbených interpretov. Vďaka rádiovému vysielaniu mohli v minulosti

neznámi hudobníci osloviť väčšie publikum a stať sa známym aj za hranicami svojho okolia. Dostupnosť rádiových prijímačov bola s postupom času lepšia a rádio sa stalo pevnou súčasťou každej rodiny. Neutíchajúci dopyt po hudbe spôsobil vznik niekoľkých stoviek country rozhlasových staníc a rozsah vysielania sa na požiadavky poslucháčov rozširoval. Country hudba spájala vidiecke a mestské oblasti a následne na to sa čoraz viac dostávala do veľkých miest. Rádio bolo taktiež médium, ktoré vyformovalo prvé country hviezdy. Televízne vysielanie nebolo v tom čase tak rozšírené ako rádio. Vďaka tomu ostalo rádiové vysielanie veľmi populárne hlavne kvôli jednoduchej dostupnosti. Tí najlepší hudobníci dali neskôr country hudbe obrovský komerčný rozmer. Hlavným mestom hudby v Spojených Štátoch sa stal Nashville a tak vznikla príležitosť nastávajúcim interpretom rozšíriť svoje obzory a urobiť prvé nahrávky.

Komerčná country hudba začala formovať takzvanú „zlatú éru“ country hudby v druhej polovici dvadsiateho storočia. S príchodom nahrávok country hudobníkov sa zvýšil dopyt a takisto sa zväčšil aj trh. Väčšina nahrávok vyprodukovali v meste Nashville. Toto mesto garantovalo istú popularitu pre hudobníkov, pretože sa im naskytla príležitosť spolupracovať so slávnymi muzikantmi a textármi. Za niekoľko rokov sa hudba posunula k rôznym podžánrom tohto štýlu. O rozruch sa ako prvý postaral Elvis Presley, ktorý preslávil éru rock & rollu. Jeho pôsobenie na scéne prinieslo mnohé úspechy aj neúspechy. Elvis vyobrazoval prosperujúcu spoločnosť po skončení druhej svetovej vojny a vo svojich piesňach prinášal rebéliu, napätie aj lásku. Odlišnosť rock & rollu od tradičnej konzervatívnej country hudby priniesla vlnu odporu zo strany konzervatívnych country poslucháčov, ktorí si mysleli, že prvotná country hudba sa začína vytrácať. Navyše, tento hudobný žáner zvyhodňoval bielych spevákov na úrok čiernej rasy. S postupom času sa rock & roll začal vytrácať z hudobnej sféry aj kvôli mnohým škandálom, ktoré sprevádzali hviezdy tohto hudobného štýlu. Nepopierateľným faktom zostáva to, že rock & roll mohol vyhubiť country hudbu v Amerike, pretože počas jeho rozmachu sa country hudba skoro vytratila z rádii a jukeboxov po celej krajine.

V šesťdesiatych rokoch dvadsiateho storočia komerčná country hudba spolu s modernou technikou priniesla postupný presun umelcov, ktorých domovom bolo javisko, do hudobných štúdií. Tu mohli nahrávať štúdiové hity, ktoré mali lepšiu kvalitu

vd'aka zdokonalenej technike. Úspešní hudobníci začali v štúdiách pridávať k svojej tvorbe prívlastok „pop.“ Toto im umožnilo dostať sa do výhody oproti iným hudobníkom, ktorí sa držali iba jedného hudobného žánru. Prívlastok „pop“ znamenal, že sa hudobník vzdal zopár hudobných nástrojov, ktoré symbolizovali country hudbu. Tento trend sa nakoniec stal veľmi populárny a nasledovalo ho veľa hudobníkov. Nový trend znamenal aj nové publikum, a tak sa hudobníci zamerali na mladých poslucháčov, ktorých už konzervatívna country hudba nebavila. K hudobníkom sa pridali diskdžokeji a producenti, ktorí začali ich hudbu prezentovať bez akýchkoľvek prívlastkov a tým sa im podarilo zaujať širšie masy. K popularite country-pop žánru prispelo aj vytvorenie organizácie CMA, ktorej cieľom bolo prinavrátiť country hudbe popularitu a stálosť. Počas pôsobenia asociácie pre country hudbu, sa tomuto štýlu darilo, čo sa premietlo aj do predajov a následnej popularity.

Reakciou na country-pop bolo množstvo hnutí, ktoré chceli country hudbu prinavrátiť späť ku svojim koreňom. Toto oživenie bolo realizované vd'aka bluegrass žánru, ktorý spájal ľudovú hudbu a energiu vychádzajúcu z klasických country hudobných nástrojov. Poslucháči našli opäť ten svoj country žáner, ktorý bol považovaný za hudbu britských a škótskych predkov a môže byť charakterizovaný ako spojenie bluegrass štýlu a ľudovej hudby amerického juhu.

S príchodom sedemdesiatych rokov bola najpopulárnejšia hudba, ktorá nemala žiadnu regionálnu charakteristiku a bola neutrálna. V určitom slova zmysle to znamenalo rozlúčenie sa s vidieckou históriou. Na druhej strane to však prinieslo návrat mnohých autorov k čistému country žánru. Spolu s nástupom televíznych relácií, ktoré boli pod patronátom Nashvillu, ľudia mohli nielen počuť, ale aj vidieť svoje obľúbené hviezdy na obrazovkách. Televízne vysielanie taktiež oživilo aj cowbojov z divokého západu a relácie prinášali okrem iného aj rozhovory so súčasnými, ale aj bývalými country hudobníkmi. Keďže všetko bolo riadené z jedného centra v meste Nashville, hudobný obsah, ktorý sa v tých rokoch objavoval na scéne bol homogénny. Hudobníci chceli skončiť túto hegemoniu hlavného mesta country hudby a začali pracovať na kultúrnej zmene. Výsledkom snahy viacerých hudobníkov bolo hnutie „outlaw“, ktoré si žiadalo autonómiu v hudobnom priemysle a najmä v country štýle. Popredné postavy tohto hnutia prezentovali obraz cowboja ako zločinca alebo obyčajného človeka. Po vojne sa stal taktiež populárny obraz anti-hrdinu, ktorý bol parodovaný na kultúrnych

podujatiach. Okrem znovu oživeného obrazu divokého západu, hnutie „outlaw“ pomohlo znovu oživiť upadajúcu country hudbu.

Cowbojov sediacich na koňoch postupne vystriedali mestskí cowboji, ktorí sa vozili v obrovských dodávkových automobiloch. Vďaka hudobným videám sa do dobre rozbehnutého biznisu zakomponoval aj marketing. Práve marketing bol kľúčovým faktorom, ktorý doviedol country hudbu k úspechu. S príchodom osemdesiatych rokov, sa dostali na scénu aj veľmi mladí interpreti, ktorí mali plnú dôveru zo strany nahrávacích spoločností. Ich cieľovým publikum bolo mladé obecnstvo, ktoré potrebovalo ukázať ten správny smer v populárnej hudbe. Mladí country hudobníci taktiež odštartovali tanečnú mániu na prelome deväťdesiatych rokov.

Ďalším z míľnikov v country hudbe bol príchod sebavedomých speváčok. Speváčky boli väčšinu času v úzadí, a preto bolo otázkou času, kedy sa ukážu pred country publikom. Ženy priniesli do country hudby iný pohľad na život. Väčšina z nich pochádzala z obyčajných vidieckych rodín alebo boli potomkami už známych country spevákov. Okrem textov, ktoré boli plné slobodných názorov a ženskej odviazanosti, ženy využívali svoje zbrane na prilákanie hlavne mužského publika. Na hudobných videách a obaloch ich albumov ženy profitovali z výberu oblečenia, ktoré veľakrát viac odhaľovalo ako zakrývalo. Toto všetko ešte viac umocňovalo hudobný zážitok, ktorý ženy v country hudbe prinášali. Okrem dobre vyzerajúcich speváčok, bola hudba obohatená o tradičné kultúrne hodnoty a zároveň ženy pozdvihli úroveň tohto hudobného štýlu a aj predaj nahrávok. Po príchode country speváčok sa zmenilo aj posluchácke osadenstvo. Aj toto svedčí o zmenách v country hudbe počas deväťdesiatych rokov. Zameranie sa na mladé publikum dopomohlo zachovať tento populárny hudobný žáner pre ďalšie generácie.

Vzorku najreprezentatívnejších country hudobníkov v tejto práci tvoria: Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson a Shania Twain. Títo hudobníci prezentujú vybrané obdobie v tom najlepšom svetle vďaka svojej popularite a komerčnému úspechu. Na základe ich oddanosti k hudbe, nejedno publikum mohlo počuť a zažiť najčistejšiu country hudbu. Ich práca upútala obrovské davy fanúšikov, ktorí preukázali svoju oddanosť podporou týchto hudobných priekopníkov.

Napriek tomu, že Johnny Cash už nežije, získal a naďalej si aj získava fanúšikov po celom svete. Mnohí ho stále považujú za symbol americkej country hudby. Dvaja ďalší autori taktiež nezaostávajú v ich prínose pre country žáner. Piesne vytvorené Shaniou Twain symbolizujú slobodu pre ženské obecnstvo a zároveň predstavujú vizuálny zážitok pre mužských poslucháčov. Talent Willieho Nelsona na písanie piesní spolu s jeho talentom v hraní na gitaru ho robí jedným s uznávaných hudobníkov americkej country éry.

Vďaka tejto práci som mal možnosť nazrieť do tematiky country hudby a som rád, že som mal príležitosť venovať sa téme, o ktorú sa zaujímam.

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Appendix

“Hey, Porter”

Hey porter! Hey porter!
Would you tell me the time?
How much longer will it be till we cross
that Mason Dixon Line?
At daylight would ya tell that engineer
to slow it down?
Or better still, just stop the train,
Cause I wanna look around.

Hey porter! Hey porter!
What time did ya say?
How much longer will it be till I can
see the light of day?
When we hit Dixie will you tell that engineer
to ring his bell?
And ask everybody that ain't asleep
to stand right up and yell.

Hey porter! Hey porter!
It's getting light outside.
This old train is puffin' smoke,
and I have to strain my eyes.
But ask that engineer if he will
blow his whistle please.
Cause I smell frost on cotton leaves
and I feel that Southern breeze.

Hey porter! Hey porter!
Please get my bags for me.
I need nobody to tell me now
that we're in Tennessee.
Go tell that engineer to make that
lonesome whistle scream,
We're not so far from home
so take it easy on the steam.

Hey porter! Hey porter!
Please open up the door.
When they stop the train I'm gonna get off first
Cause I can't wait no more.
Tell that engineer I said thanks alot,
and I didn't mind the fare.
I'm gonna set my feet on Southern soil
and breathe that Southern air.

“I Walk the Line”

I keep a close watch on this heart of mine
I keep my eyes wide open all the time
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds
Because you're mine, I walk the line

I find it very, very easy to be true
I find myself alone when each day is through
Yes, I'll admit that I'm a fool for you
Because you're mine, I walk the line

As sure as night is dark and day is light
I keep you on my mind both day and night
And happiness I've known proves that it's right
Because you're mine, I walk the line

You've got a way to keep me on your side
You give me cause for love that I can't hide
For you I know I'd even try to turn the tide
Because you're mine, I walk the line

I keep a close watch on this heart of mine
I keep my eyes wide open all the time
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds
Because you're mine, I walk the line

"Ring Of Fire" (originally by Anita Carter)

Love is a burning thing
And it makes a fiery ring.
Bound by wild desire
I fell into a ring of fire.

I fell into a burning ring of fire,
I went down, down, down as the flames went higher
And it burns, burns, burns,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire.

The taste of love is sweet
When hearts like ours meet.
I fell for you like a child,
Oh, but the fire went wild.

I fell into a burning ring of fire,
I went down, down, down as the flames went higher
And it burns, burns, burns,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire.

I fell into a burning ring of fire,

I went down, down, down as the flames went higher
And it burns, burns, burns,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire.

And it burns, burns, burns,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire.

“Man in Black”

Well, you wonder why I always dress in black,
Why you never see bright colors on my back,
And why does my appearance seem to have a somber tone.
Well, there's a reason for the things that I have on.

I wear the black for the poor and the beaten down,
Livin' in the hopeless, hungry side of town,
I wear it for the prisoner who has long paid for his crime,
But is there because he's a victim of the times.

I wear the black for those who never read,
Or listened to the words that Jesus said,
About the road to happiness through love and charity,
Why, you'd think He's talking straight to you and me.

Well, we're doin' mighty fine, I do suppose,
In our streak of lightnin' cars and fancy clothes,
But just so we're reminded of the ones who are held back,
Up front there ought 'a be a Man In Black.

I wear it for the sick and lonely old,
For the reckless ones whose bad trip left them cold,
I wear the black in mournin' for the lives that could have been,
Each week we lose a hundred fine young men.

And, I wear it for the thousands who have died,
Believen' that the Lord was on their side,
I wear it for another hundred thousand who have died,
Believen' that we all were on their side.

Well, there's things that never will be right I know,
And things need changin' everywhere you go,
But 'til we start to make a move to make a few things right,
You'll never see me wear a suit of white.

Ah, I'd love to wear a rainbow every day,
And tell the world that everything's OK,
But I'll try to carry off a little darkness on my back,
'Till things are brighter, I'm the Man In Black.

“Hello Walls”

Hello walls, (Hello, hello.)
How'd things go for you today?
Don't you miss her.
Since she up and walked away?
And I'll bet you dread to spend another lonely night with me,
But lonely walls, I'll keep you company.

Hello window, (Hello, hello.)
Well, I see that you're still here.
Aren't you lonely,
Since our darlin disappeared?
Well look here, is that a teardrop in the corner of your pane?
Now don't you try to tell me that's it's rain.

She went away and left us all alone the way she planned.
Guess we'll have to learn to get along without her if we can.

Hello ceiling, (Hello, hello.)
I'm gonna stare at you a while.
You know I can't sleep,
So won't you bear with me a while?
We gotta all stick together or else I'll lose my mind.
I gotta feelin' she'll be gone a long, long time.

(Hello, hello wall.)

“Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain”

In the twilight glow I see them
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain
When we kissed goodbye and parted
I knew we'd never meet again

Love is like a dyin' ember
Only memories remain
Through the ages I'll remember
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain

Some day when we meet up yonder
We'll stroll hand in hand again
In a land that knows no partin'
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain

Now my hair has turned to silver
All my life I've loved in vain
I can see her star in heaven
Blue eyes crying in the rain

“On the Road Again”

On the road again
Just can't wait to get on the road again
The life I love is making music with my friends
And I can't wait to get on the road again

On the road again
Goin' places that I've never been
Seein' things that I may never see again
And I can't wait to get on the road again

On the road again
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world keep turning our way and our way

Is on the road again
I just can't wait to get on the road again
The life I love is making music with my friends
And I can't wait to get on the road again

On the road again
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world keep turning our way and our way

Is on the road again
Just can't wait to get on the road again
The life I love is making music with my friends
And I can't wait to get on the road again
And I can't wait to get on the road again

“Always on My Mind”

Maybe I didn't love you
Quite as often as I could have
And maybe I didn't treat you
Quite as good as I should have
If I made you feel second best
Girl I'm sorry I was blind

You were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

And maybe I didn't hold you
All those lonely, lonely times
And I guess I never told you
I'm so happy that you're mine
Little things I should have said and done

I just never took the time

But you were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

Tell me
tell me that your sweet love hasn't died
And give me
Give me one more chance
To keep you satisfied
I'll keep you satisfied

[Instrumental Interlude]

Little things I should have said and done
I just never took the time

But you were always on my mind
You were always on my mind
You were always on my mind

“Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under”

Whose bed have your boots been under?
Whose bed have your boots been under?
And whose heart did you steal I wonder?
This time did it feel like thunder, baby?
Whose bed have your boots been under?

Don't look so lonely
Don't act so blue
I know I'm not the only
Girl you run to
I know about Lolita
Your little Spanish flame
I've seen you around with Rita
The redhead down the lane

Whose bed have your boots been under?
And whose heart did you steal I wonder?
This time did it feel like thunder, baby?
And who did you run to?
And whose lips have you been kissin'?
And whose ear did you make a wish in?
Is she the one that you've been missin', baby?
Well whose bed have your boots been under?

I heard you've been sneakin'
Around with Jill
And what about that weekend
With Beverly Hill

And I've seen you walkin'
With long legs Louise
And you weren't just talkin'
Last night with Denise

Whose bed have your boots been under?
And whose heart did you steal I wonder?
This time did it feel like thunder, baby?
And who did you run to?
And whose lips have you been kissin'?
And whose ear did you make a wish in?
Is she the one that you've been missin', baby?
Well whose bed have your boots been under?

Come on boots...

So next time you're lonely
Don't call on me
Try the operator
Maybe she'll be free

Whose bed have your boots been under?
And whose heart did you steal I wonder?
This time did it feel like thunder, baby?
And who did you run to?
And whose lips have you been kissin'?
And whose ear did you make a wish in?
Is she the one that you've been missin', baby?
Well whose bed have your boots been under?

I wanna know whose bed, baby
Whoa baby, tell me
Whose bed, yes I wanna know
You better start talkin'
Or you better start walkin'...

“Man, I Feel Like a Woman”

Let's go girls! Come on.

I'm going out tonight-I'm feelin' alright
Gonna let it all hang out
Wanna make some noise-really raise my voice
Yeah, I wanna scream and shout
No inhibitions-make no conditions
Get a little outta line
I ain't gonna act politically correct
I only wanna have a good time

The best thing about being a woman
Is the prerogative to have a little fun

Oh, oh, oh, go totally crazy-forget I'm a lady
Men's shirts-short skirts
Oh, oh, oh, really go wild-yeah, doin' it in style
Oh, oh, oh, get in the action-feel the attraction
Color my hair-do what I dare
Oh, oh, oh, I wanna be free-yeah, to feel the way I feel
Man! I feel like a woman!

The girls need a break-tonight we're gonna take
The chance to get out on the town
We don't need romance-we only wanna dance
We're gonna let our hair hang down

The best thing about being a woman
Is the prerogative to have a little fun

Oh, oh, oh, go totally crazy-forget I'm a lady
Men's shirts-short skirts
Oh, oh, oh, really go wild-yeah, doin' it in style
Oh, oh, oh, get in the action-feel the attraction
Color my hair-do what I dare
Oh, oh, oh, I wanna be free-yeah, to feel the way I feel
Man! I feel like a woman!

The best thing about being a woman
Is the prerogative to have a little fun (fun, fun)

Oh, oh, oh, go totally crazy-forget I'm a lady
Men's shirts-short skirts
Oh, oh, oh, really go wild-yeah, doin' it in style
Oh, oh, oh, get in the action-feel the attraction
Color my hair-do what I dare
Oh, oh, oh, I wanna be free-yeah, to feel the way I feel
Man! I feel like a woman!

I get totally crazy
Can you feel it
Come, come, come on baby
I feel like a woman

“That Don't Impress Me Much”

I've known a few guys who thought they were pretty smart
But you've got being right down to an art
You think you're a genius-you drive me up the wall
You're a regular original, a know-it-all
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're special
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're something else

Okay, so you're a rocket scientist
That don't impress me much
So you got the brain but have you got the touch
Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright
But that won't keep me warm in the middle of the night
That don't impress me much

I never knew a guy who carried a mirror in his pocket
And a comb up his sleeve-just in case
And all that extra hold gel in your hair oughtta lock it
'Cause Heaven forbid it should fall outta place

Oh-oo-oh, you think you're special
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're something else

Okay, so you're Brad Pitt
That don't impress me much
So you got the looks but have you got the touch
Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright
But that won't keep me warm in the middle of the night
That don't impress me much

You're one of those guys who likes to shine his machine
You make me take off my shoes before you let me get in
I can't believe you kiss your car good night
C'mon baby tell me-you must be jokin', right!

Oh-oo-oh, you think you're special
Oh-oo-oh, you think you're something else

Okay, so you've got a car
That don't impress me much
So you got the moves but have you got the touch
Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright
But that won't keep me warm in the middle of the night

That don't impress me much
You think you're cool but have you got the touch
Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright
But that won't keep me warm on the long, cold, lonely night
That don't impress me much

Okay, so what do you think you're Elvis or something...
Oo-Oh-Oh
That don't impress me much!

Oh-Oh-Oh-Oh-No
Alright! Alright!

You're Tarzan!

Captain Kirk maybe.
John Wayne.
Whatever!
That don't impress me much!

“You're Still the One”

When I first saw you, I saw love.
And the first time you touched me, I felt love.
And after all this time, you're still the one I love.)

Looks like we made it
Look how far we've come, my baby
We mighta took the long way
We knew we'd get there someday

They said, "I bet they'll never make it."
But just look at us holding on
We're still together, still going strong

(you're still the one)
You're still the one I run to
The one that I belong to
You're still the one I want for life
(you're still the one)
You're still the one that I love
The only one I dream of
You're still the one I kiss good night

Ain't nothing better
We beat the odds together
I'm glad we didn't listen
Look at what we would be missing

They said, "I bet they'll never make it."
But just look at us holding on
We're still together still going strong

(you're still the one)
You're still the one I run to
The one that I belong to
You're still the one I want for life
(you're still the one)
You're still the one that I love
The only one I dream of
You're still the one I kiss good night

You're still the one

(you're still the one)
You're still the one I run to
The one that I belong to
You're still the one I want for life
(you're still the one)
You're still the one that I love
The only one I dream of
You're still the one I kiss good night

I'm so glad we made it
Look how far we've come, my baby

Annotation

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Abstract: The aim of the thesis is to concentrate on the topic of American country music of the second half of the twentieth century with respect to life and career achievements of three eminent American country music practitioners: Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain. The first part consists of the theoretical knowledge about history and gradual development of this genre. Consequently, it is supplemented by culture movements accompanied with American country style that lead into commercial expansion of this popular music genre. It is assumed that chapters devoted to the above mentioned singers will show the reasons of their popularity and success. Every chapter focused on a particular musician is followed by the analysis of four representative songs. The outcome will be summarized in the conclusion.

Anotácia

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Kľúčové slová: Americká country hudba, americká kultúra, generácia mladých, outlaw, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Shania Twain

Abstrakt: Cieľom tejto práce je opísať obdobie americkej country hudby v druhej polovici dvadsiateho storočia so zameraním na život a kariéru troch významných predstaviteľov tohto hudobného žánru, a to Johnnyho Casha, Willieho Nelsona a Shaniu Twain. Prvú časť práce tvoria teoretické poznatky o histórii a postupnom vývoji tohto žánru. Následne budú tieto teoretické poznatky obohatené o kultúrne hnutia, ktoré sprevádzali americkú country hudbu a neskôr viedli k jej komerčnému rozmachu. Predpokladá sa, že kapitoly, ktoré sú venované jednotlivým umelcom, odhalia dôvody ich popularity a slávy. Každá kapitola, ktorá sa venuje príslušnému hudobníkovi, je doplnená analýzou jeho štyroch vybraných piesní. Všetky zistenia budú zhrnuté v závere práce.