

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC
FACULTY OF ARTS
Department of English and American Studies

Martin Hujčák

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

Master thesis

Supervisor: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2015

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Martin Hujčák

**AMERICKÁ COUNTRY HUDBA DRUHÉ POLOVINY 20.
STOLETÍ**

Diplomová práce

Vedúci práce: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2015

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

Ďakujem vedúcemu mojej diplomovej práce Mgr. Jiřímu Flajšarovi, Ph.D. za užitočné rady a pripomienky. Ďalej pánu doktorovi ďakujem za podnetné diskusie a trpezlivosť pri odpovedaní mojich otázok.

V Olomouci 2.12.2015

Martin Hujčák

Contents:

Introduction	8
1 Country music background	10
1.1 American Folk music	10
1.2 Society and the birth of Folk music.....	11
1.3 Western music	13
1.4 The beginning of commercial development.....	14
1.5 The national Barn Dance and the Grand Ole Opry	16
1.6 Rockabilly and its commercial success	17
1.7 Country and controversial Rock & Roll.....	19
2 Golden Age Country	23
2.1 Country pop and Nashville sound	23
2.2 Bluegrass Music	26
2.3 Modern Country music of 1970s and 1980s	29
2.4 Contemporary Country music	32
3 American country music stars of the second half of the twentieth century	35
3.1 Johnny Cash.....	36
3.1.1 Summary	42
3.2 Johnny Cash: song analysis.....	43
3.2.1 “Big River” 1958.....	43
3.2.2 “Cocaine Blues” 1968	45
3.2.3 “A Boy Named Sue” 1969	47
3.3 Willie Nelson.....	49
3.3.1 Summary	56
3.4 Willie Nelson: song analysis	56
3.4.1 "Jimmy’s Road” 1965	56
3.4.2 “On the Road Again” 1980	58
3.4.3 “Seven Spanish Angels” 1984	59
3.5 Shania Twain	61
3.5.1 Summary	68

3.6	Shania Twain: song analysis	68
3.6.1	“Man, I Feel Like a Woman” 1997	68
3.6.2	“If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!” 1997	70
3.6.3	“That Don't Impress Me Much” 1998.....	72
4	Conclusion	74
	Resumé.....	77
	Bibliography	82
	Appendix.....	85

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 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 these 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 chapters will mainly deal with a personal biography of each musician and his/her role as a singer in American country music sphere. At the end of each chapter there is a brief summary. The two theoretical chapters focused on these musicians are followed by the study of their music production.

The analysed songs will be selected in order to demonstrate country music development process in American culture from the 1950s up to the millennium. The main aim of the song analysis is to portrait how country music themes evolved within the given time period. The study will primarily consist of my personal ideas, thoughts

and secondary literature 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 a 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 a 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 appeared 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 to 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 was a working class bar where a live band was providing country performance while white audience was refreshing themselves. This blue collar audience followed the value of hard work combined with enjoyment 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 found mainstream audience, honky-tonk slowly declined in popularity. Listeners were given larger choice of styles 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 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

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>.

the radio receiver was in every third household within the America. Later on, decreased price and great money value increased the expansion of music industry and radio receiver found its way to low-income population as well. Broadcasting stations could then appear in the south - 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 that fitted well to 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 carpentry. 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 which 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

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

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

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 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

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.

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 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 impressed broader audiences.²¹ These two shows were not necessarily complementing each other but they were offering popular tunes to their audience for a long time.

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

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

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.

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

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 the late 1970s. Initial rockabilly artists were outlandish and wild. They not only performed as black men despite being white but they often behaved as Afro-American clowns as well. The reason for that could have been the fact that white performers wanted to be on a par with their black counterparts. As a result, rockabilly got on its popularity and “the message, spirit, and influence of rockabilly spread beyond the mid-South.”²⁵

In addition, Elvis Presley’s contribution is undeniable - his recordings helped the rockabilly to penetrate all over the country. 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

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

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.

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 kept 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 some rockabilly elements in the new country music, especially in heavy backbeat, but no contemporary artist aims solely on the rockabilly style.

With the rise of television the music business became even 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 were accurately linked with the rockabilly but it still was not pop music. Favourite music was voted on in various charts which influenced the music business and recording sales. The best songs were played repeatedly on radio stations and television charts. Altogether, it initiated 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

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

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 dale*. (Praha: BigBoss, 2010), 40.

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. 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 a song for a 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,

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.

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>.

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 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

Although successful and motivating, rock & roll 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 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:

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

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.

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 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 because this music was often heard out of jukeboxes as nothing else was available. As a result, an overall demand for rock & roll dropped.⁴² Rock & roll's self-destruction can, however be viewed as an aid to successful development of country music. On the other hand, country music has since then been stamped by the usage of electrified instruments which became universal during the 1960s. As for the content, the general opinion saw country music as representing pro-war and anti-youth attitudes.⁴³ Therefore, despite the tremendous controversy hidden in it, rock & roll genre was still powerful enough to exterminate country music forever.

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

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 often 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 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 and 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 However, this trait of their work could also discourage the creative side of country music as many interpreters had been working on similar projects, the outcome of which was that the scene 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

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.

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 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 gained more and more popularity. Also during that period, American culture lost singing cowboys that found themselves off the silver screen together with the 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 there appeared 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

⁴⁸ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 78.

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.

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 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 become widely renown again. In other words it was a counter-strike 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 integral part of American life. However, radio station personnel were often unhappy 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

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.

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 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 earned 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 the 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

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

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.

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 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. When Blue Grass Boys appeared in 1946 on the Grand Ole Opry, Robert Cantwell described their performance in this way:

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 Přibyllová, *Minstrelové s černou tváří*. (Náměšti nad Oslavou: MěKS print, 2009), 94.

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

[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 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 his role as a father of bluegrass. He inherited his talent 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 During the 1960s bluegrass bands had an opportunity to compete with their competitors at various festivals. As Malone illustrates, "Southeartern 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 was 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

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.

stage which was unusual until Blue Grass Boys came on stage.⁷² The dividing line between folk and bluegrass music has 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.

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 live. 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 a cultural

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

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

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

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

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" suggests 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 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 (carrying an image 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 an 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

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.

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 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, but 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 a clever marketing strategy. “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

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

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>.

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 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

⁸⁵ “Country History,” *A Brief History of Country Music*, accessed January 30, 2015,

<http://www.halfhearteddude.com/2013/01/history-of-country-ebook>.

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.

success in music. In fact, it would be a matter of discussion whether the new country rose from tradition but the truth is that young country performers had grown up listening to a 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 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 the American public in 1983. The CD invention was a market turning point because this medium replaced the 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 a 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 could be seen as a link 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

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.

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 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 for their videos and album covers. 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.

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

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 the following five practitioners: Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Bill Monroe and Shania Twain. When we hear their school country or crossover hits, they all 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 has 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 have never got such a fame. The central focus in this chapter is given to Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Shania Twain.

The main purpose of this study is to show how country music themes and country music as a whole progressed within fifty years' time. Focusing on selected songs, the lyrics are examined to see how they address specific themes and how they represent the country music development process stated in the theoretical part.

The selection of these three practitioners was made because they represent and cover the examined time period. I have chronologically divided the given period into three parts. These authors helped me to portray particular time periods from the 1950s to the end of the twentieth century.

Johnny Cash represents the early development of country music. He and his generation of musicians depict country music themes from the 1950s up to the 1970s. Cash also exemplifies the traditional country background from the American south and his music creation (both lyrics and music instrumentation) is based on national culture. The content of his songs reflects the common country music themes covered also by many of his contemporaries.

Willie Nelson demonstrates American cultural movements from the hippie to the outlaw era which were transformed to his country music production. Nelson also serves as a link between traditional and modern approach to country regarding the music instruments used. Both Nelson and Cash stand for masculinity and traditional gender roles seen in the country music early development. Their music production was predominantly preoccupied with man related topics which ultimately sympathized with male audience.

Shania Twain represents a contemporary breakpoint in country music development in the 1990s. Although there has been some discussion going on as for whether or not she belongs to American country, I believe that she rightfully falls into this category, despite the fact she comes from Canada. Her work represents a feminist approach to country music and demonstrates new themes in country music, based on women rights and independence. Not only does she sing for new audience, she also uses contemporary music instrumentation by which she embodies a new generation of female country musicians emerging since the end of the twentieth century.

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 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

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.

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

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 often wrote 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 was assigned, 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 homesick soldiers, most of whom were more accomplished musicians than he was. Playing with them, Cash improved his own guitar playing. Cash also started

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.

writing his own songs for the first time, including his first gospel song, “Belshazzar”.¹⁰⁴

Apparently, Cash’s days in Germany were coming to an end 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 fiancé. Johnny 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, during which 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 recorded 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 record “Hey, Porter”, a song composed by John Cash while on duty in Germany. Moreover, J.R. was asked if he could write a love song. Instantly, Cash wrote “Cry!, Cry!, Cry!” that later found its place as a single.¹⁰⁹ Cash’s music career started but before that Sam Phillips

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.

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

decided that J.R. Cash would 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 carried out together with the second song whose title Phillips adjusted to: “Cry!, Cry!, Cry!” ,the artist’s name was written in big font: “Johnny Cash.” Phillips wanted J.R. to take the 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 in 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 rather 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 had something that attracted many young girls and they were shouting his name when he was on stage.

Johnny’s affection towards his wife proved to be fruitful on the professional part too as 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 remake it 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 top of that, Phillips decided to advertise Cash in *Billboard* magazine as a rock & roll musician that tied him close to Elvis and promoted his career.¹¹⁴ Due to a certain reason, they decided to forget about hillbilly times and concentrate more on the increasingly important rock & roll market.

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.

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. His Christian temper, however, 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, together with 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. As a matter of fact, his first full-length album with the Sun Records 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. Consequently, “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 Despite relatively successful period, Cash was still into gospel music which seemed to be dull for Phillips. There was a period of decline during which 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.

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 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”. It proved to be very successful, following which 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, Johnny 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 the 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 a song and a 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 & 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. Cash still 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. Johnny composed seven more songs then,¹²⁷ but 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 great audience around the United States and abroad. His first music band included Marshall Grant and Luther Perkins. After hits such 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 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 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, I will also analyse selected songs that demonstrate how lyrics content and country music themes changed within the second half of the twentieth century. The songs that capture the development of country music themes are: “Big River,” “Cocaine Blues” and “A Boy Named Sue”. In the analysis, stress is put on the content of the selected lyrics to show how the substance and music instrumentation progressed within the years. Listening to the original songs helped me to check the correctness of those texts. Full text of lyrics can be found in the Appendix.

3.2.1 “Big River” 1958

The first song chosen for an analysis is “Big River.” It was released as a single and then recorded again on *I Walk the Line* album in 1964. Generally, the song represents two deep-rooted themes of country music, the geographical place and a male protagonist who grieves over his lost object of affection. Such themes are unexceptional and popular for their simplicity and straightforwardness through the country music

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.

history. Moreover, the instrumentation is simple and it includes a solo singer accompanied by an acoustic guitar.

In the song Cash unfolds a story of unrequited love told to the Mississippi River (called Big River). The protagonist follows a woman's trajectory down from St Louis to Memphis and when in New Orleans, he stops his efforts and gives up. In fact, the Mississippi River is not mentioned explicitly but it serves as an imaginary spot that is known in American literature as the phrase Big River is used for example by William Faulkner or Mark Twain. The river denotes also different political and geographical frames but mainly it is a metaphor for elusive love.¹³³ Further I think that the song has a sense of narrative language which portrays the American landscape.

As for the formal and visual aspect, the song consists of four quatrains and the first stanza serves as a refrain. The stanzas have a regular rhyme scheme aabb. In addition, lines (3) and (4) include an internal rhyme. In a certain way, the song is poetic, and this claim can be supported also by Bob Dylan's evaluation: "There are so many ways you can go at something in a song, one thing is to give life to inanimate objects. Johnny Cash is good at that. He's got the line that goes, 'A freighter said, She's been here, but she's gone, boy, she's gone. That's great. That's high art. If you do that once in a song, you usually turn it on its head right then and there.'"¹³⁴ Uneven lines and regular rhyme scheme indicate the poetic structure of the song.

Now, I taught the weeping willow how to **cry cry cry**, a
and I showed the clouds how to cover up a clear, blue **sky**. a
And the tears that I cried for that woman are **gonna** flood you, big river. b
Then I'm a **gonna** sit right here until I die. b
I met her accidentally in **St. Paul** (Minnesota). a
And it tore me up every time I heard her drawl, **Southern drawl**. a
Then I heard my dream was back Downstream cavortin' in **Davenport**, b
And I followed you, Big River, when you **called**.¹³⁵ b

¹³³ Streissguth, *Johnny Cash: The Biography*, 114.

¹³⁴ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 263.

¹³⁵ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 263.

Despite the concise formulation, the song touches the themes that represent a post–World War II era in American country music.¹³⁶ The sense of dislocation together with a woman’s departure appears in more songs performed by Johnny Cash for instance “Wide Open Road,” “So Doggone Lonesome,” “Port of Lonely Hearts” or “There You Go.” In their songs, Cash and his contemporaries also cover the themes of America’s working class, Native Americans, legendary characters and topics from rural southern America. All those songs were customarily characterized by strings and vocal choruses. It is safe to say that the poetic lyrics on nature or love themes together with simple tunes were often present in country music era of the 1950s.

3.2.2 “Cocaine Blues” 1968

One decade later, country music themes changed from songs picturing love and geographical places to opposite direction denoting abuse and the use of illegal substances. Of course it was partially connected to the outlaw image and so the peaceful country themes changed into songs oriented towards youthfulness, sex, narcotics and rock and roll.¹³⁷ Some of Cash’s songs appeared to be following this trend as well. “Cocaine Blues” released in May 1968, demonstrates provocative lyrics. The song was released on the album *At Folsom Prison* which is considered to be the most dynamic work during his time at the Sun Recordings.¹³⁸ The whole album comprises themes of loneliness and inner feelings of caged residents behind the prison bars at Folsom State Prison, as the title of the album may suggests. The song arrangement is plain again and it is achieved by a solo singer accompanied by an acoustic guitar only.

This song mirrors a brutal narrative which commences with a murder. The lyrics follow the autobiographical account of Willie Lee called a “heck,” which we might assume to stand either for a prison or a police officer. In particular, Willie, under the influence of alcohol, takes a dose of cocaine and murders his unfaithful wife by shooting her down. Afterwards, he departs for Mexico but he is caught and taken to custody and court. When his trial begins, Willie remembers his brutal crime but he feels no sorrow what so ever. Consequently, he is sentenced to 99 years in the Folsom “pen”

¹³⁶ Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 84.

¹³⁷ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 87.

¹³⁸ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 907.

(prison). We can observe the presence of the outlaw image in the lyrics and protagonist's explicitness towards felony and narcotics.¹³⁹

Early one mornin' while makin' the **rounds** a
I took a shot of cocaine and I shot my woman **down** b
I went right home and I went to **bed** c
I stuck that lovin' .44 beneath my **head**¹⁴⁰ c

The song consists of ten stanzas from which nine are quatrains and the last stanza is enriched by two embedded lines. Further, lines (6) and (7) comprise an anaphora that stands for a repetition of words at the beginning of the lines. When observing the rhyme structure, the song works with various rhyme schemes. "Cocaine Blues" is definitely in contrast to previous Cash's songs and it shows no trace of romance or tenderness. Despite Willie's brutality the last stanza ends with a tearful entreaty to leave alcohol and illegal substances alone.

The judge he smiled as he picked up his **pen** d
99 years in the Folsom **pen** d
99 years underneath that **ground** b
I can't forget the day I shot that bad bitch **down** b
Come on you've gotta listen unto **me** e
Lay off that whiskey and let that cocaine **be**¹⁴¹ e

¹³⁹ Alice Randall, *My Country Roots: The Ultimate MP3 Guide to America's Original Outsider Music* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 101.

¹⁴⁰ "Cocaine Blues Lyrics," *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/cocaine-blues-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

¹⁴¹ "Cocaine Blues Lyrics," *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/cocaine-blues-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

3.2.3 “A Boy Named Sue” 1969

Johnny Cash is often viewed as an icon of Southern white blue collar class masculinity. This topic as well as his and also general public’s disbelief towards bureaucratic authority is reflected in his country music themes. “A Boy Named Sue” unmistakably belongs among the songs that touch the topic which was for a long time connected to country music – American manhood.

The song depicts attitudes of anti-authoritarian “common man” with heroic and muscular sentiment. However, Cash simultaneously stages and questions this iconic masculinity and presents an ambivalent version of Southern white working-class masculinity with the usage of black humour that may serve as a comic relief. Leigh Edwards adds:

Cash’s representations of gender offer opposing forces and competing tendencies that are not easily resolved. Instead, his texts examine some of the difficult tensions that inhere in the performance of gender in different socio-historical contexts, treating the paradoxes and oppositions with respect, exploring them in all their polyvalence.¹⁴²

As the quote suggests, J.R. was not always positive about the acts his male characters executed although he tried to sympathize with them. What makes this particular song unique is that Cash tries to find the frontier of masculinity that was set in American culture and is known for instance from *Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West shows*. This country music socially suburban experience unfortunately came to a crisis in the 1980s and 1990s due to feminism, gay and lesbian movements.

The lyrics written by Shel Silverstein include references to drinking, fighting and “a’ gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer.”¹⁴³ This parody on classic country theme was performed publicly for the first time in front of prisoners at Sun Quentin, California. It was a follow-up to the previous album *At Folsom Prison*. As for the content of the song, it depicts an infant abandoned by his erroneous father and the song’s hero is haunted by the only legacy that his “pa” gave him – the name Sue. Consequently, he pledges that he will find his father and kill him. Furthermore, the hero admits that his life was shameful and agonizing with his girl’s name. This attitude can be seen in the following lines.

¹⁴² Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 66.

¹⁴³ Hilburn, *Johnny Cash: The Life*, 683.

My daddy left home when I was **three** a
 And he didn't leave much to ma and **me** a
 Just this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze b
 Now, I don't blame him cause he run and **hid** c
 But the meanest thing that he ever **did** c
 Was before he left, he went and named me "Sue."¹⁴⁴ b

His story reaches a crescendo when he discovers his father in a bar and after a growing rift, he attempts to shoot him. However his father appeals to his emotions by confessing that his son's shameful name "helped to make him strong."¹⁴⁵ Admittedly, we can observe that even long-absent fathers can accomplish their parental duties and teach their descendants about manhood.

And he said: "Son, this world is rough a
 And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough a
 And I knew I wouldn't be there to help ya **along** b
 So I give ya that name and I said goodbye c
 I knew you'd have to get tough or die c
 And it's the name that helped to make you **strong**¹⁴⁶ b

In addition, Kristine McCusker claims:

The song's irreverent play on masculine gender conventions held obvious appeal for an all-male audience of inmates whose own experiences must have borne out

¹⁴⁴ "A Boy Named Sue Lyrics," *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-boy-named-sue-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Kristine M. McCusker and Diane Pecknold, *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), xix.

¹⁴⁶ "A Boy Named Sue Lyrics," *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-boy-named-sue-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

the lyrical assertion that “the world is rough, and if a man’s gonna make it, he’s gotta get tough,” and who might have sought reassurance about their personal identities as absent fathers, estranged sons, and men.¹⁴⁷

Being driven by emotions, the two have a lachrymose reunion despite the fact that the main hero confesses in the last line that he still has not come to terms with his name.

The song comprises nine six-lined stanzas and the final stanza includes one additional line. Once again Cash uses a simple acoustic guitar but this time he is accompanied by two electric guitars to enhance the rhythmic speech – a talking blues which can be delineated as a spoken story.¹⁴⁸ The song is characterized by end rhyme with unconventional scheme aabccb.

3.3 Willie Nelson

Willie Hugh Nelson was born in 1933 in Abbott, Texas, just a year later, than Johnny Cash.¹⁴⁹ When he was six, his parents moved to Arkansas in search of employment. Unfortunately, Nelson’s mother soon died and he and his sister Bobbie were raised by their grandparents. Similarly, to Johnny Cash, religion played an important role in Nelson’s life. The grandparents registered both Willie and Bobbie in Abbot Methodist Church, where Alfred Nelson (Willie’s grandfather) became church’s music director. There Willie could practise singing that was an important element for Abbott’s Christians.¹⁵⁰ In addition, the grandparents supported singing outside the church and they decided that Willie and Bobbie should learn how to read the score. Alfred’s support continued when he bought the first radio to their house.¹⁵¹ There is a certain similarity with the growing-up years of Johnny Cash, as for both of them getting in touch with the church and radio transmitter played a very important role in their future. The Nelson’s financial situation was typical for the American South: the family was poor and they had to work on the field if they wanted to eat. Despite the poverty, his grandfather gave Willie his first musical instrument.

¹⁴⁷ McCusker, *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music*, xix.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Scott, *Chord Progressions For Songwriters* (Indiana: iUniverse, 2003), 99.

¹⁴⁹ Joe Nick Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*. (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008) Kindle edition, 7.

¹⁵⁰ Willie Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*. (New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2013), 11.

¹⁵¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 307.

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.¹⁵²

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 year of 1940 brought an unexpected event. Alfred Nelson died from pneumonia at the age of 56, when Willie was only 6.¹⁵³ 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 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.¹⁵⁴ There, still young Willie got his first music salary and he came to understand that 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 high school, he started to play and sing with Bobbie’s husband Bud Fletcher. During this period Nelson started to 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 1950.¹⁵⁵

In fact, Willie did not stay in the army for too long. After he returned back home, he appeared in performances with Texans in extensively rough-and-tumble honky-tonks. After two years he married only sixteen-year old Martha Matthew.¹⁵⁶ Unsurprisingly, the couple was young and unsettled and hence they fought regularly. Willie found a job as a radio DJ and he once complained to his colleague that he was able to write and sing songs that are better than the ones he played on the radio. Having

¹⁵² Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 343-344.

¹⁵³ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 11.

¹⁵⁴ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 440.

¹⁵⁵ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 649.

¹⁵⁶ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

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 make ends meet but he wanted to achieve that only through music. One setback was followed by another and finally he decided to have a break from music. He spent one year as a sales manager selling Bibles and hoovers.¹⁵⁷ 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. Soon after Nelson's chase for a turnaround in his song-writing career ended when he signed with D Records.¹⁵⁸ 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. To understand the situation better, for instance, "Night Life" and "Family Bible" increased Nelson's family budget by 150 dollars.¹⁵⁹ Obviously, selling songs was morally more correct than borrowing money. "Night Life" was one of the many songs early in his career that helped him to finance the recording fees and travelling costs. This particular song was very successful for Ray Price in 1963 as it was the B-side of his single¹⁶⁰ 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 had to find the right people who could help him to promote his songs. Nashville held the so-called "guitar pulling" whose aim was to introduce new musicians.¹⁶¹ Here, Willie met Hank Cochran who was amazed by the songs performed by Nelson. Unsurprisingly, Nelson was told to get to the Pamper Music office where Hank was working.¹⁶² The collaboration of Hank and Nelson turned out to be a successful one, because Hank made Nelson to write a couple of songs they could work with. Also, 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 the number one position for nine

¹⁵⁷ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 946.

¹⁵⁸ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1447.

¹⁵⁹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1543.

¹⁶⁰ Steven Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*. (Texas: Eakin Press, 1998), 23.

¹⁶¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1739.

¹⁶² Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

weeks.¹⁶³ Consequently, Nelson found what he was looking for in Nashville. In addition, Hank Cochran continued to look for singers who could perform Nelson's songs. In a 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 received with a good ardour.¹⁶⁴ Apparently Nelson was already a very popular songwriter but still unknown as a musician.

Nelson was relentless and he moved to Los Angeles in 1961 where he signed a recording contract with Liberty Records.¹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁶⁶ Although Willie had met her before, he had never sung with any woman. This time they made a single "Touch Me" and a duet "Willingly" which received a positive feedback. Nick Patoski described how these two records 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, was released in May 1962 and broke into the Top 10 country singles chart, rising to number 7.¹⁶⁷

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 the kind of woman that Nelson had ever wanted, they were about to get married.¹⁶⁸ Nelson's wife Martha was of a typical Cherokee character so when she learned that her husband had an affair with Collie she found a boyfriend and moved to Las Vegas taking

¹⁶³ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 1799.

¹⁶⁴ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁶⁵ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 56.

¹⁶⁶ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2020.

¹⁶⁷ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2060-8.

¹⁶⁸ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 64.

their children with her. Also Collie had run away from her husband Biff and married Nelson in 1963.¹⁶⁹ In this respect, there is almost no difference between Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. They both remarried by which they were given an inspiration for their further career growth.

Nelson became a 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 the face of modern country music as he appeared in *The Ernest Tubb Show* as a vehicle to improve his sales.¹⁷⁰

Willie's career was going in 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."¹⁷¹ Apparently, his determination was enormous and he knew he had to form a band. He got to know the 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 very popular between 1966 and 1969.¹⁷²

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

While living in Texas with his new wife Connie Koepke, he performed a new kind of country music mixed with jazz features¹⁷³. In fact, he promoted himself and his reception in Texas was better than one would assume.¹⁷⁴ 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. Unsurprisingly, his version of Fred Rose's "Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain" turned out to be the number one song in 1975.¹⁷⁵ After many

¹⁶⁹ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁷⁰ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2536-2621.

¹⁷¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 2624.

¹⁷² Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 416.

¹⁷³ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 3366.

¹⁷⁴ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁷⁵ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 149.

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.¹⁷⁶ Nick Patoski in his book *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life* commented on its sales as follows: "The album stayed atop the country album chart for three months, eventually going double platinum, signifying sales of two million units."¹⁷⁷ The CMA awarded this album as Album of the Year in 1976.¹⁷⁸ Without doubt, Willie was nationally recognised as a singer and thanks to this album's converse image in comparison to the albums made in Nashville he offered an exclusive medley of songs for the 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.¹⁷⁹ Nelson's perfect ability to adapt to 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 the film industry where he played in several movies. For example, in *The Electric Horseman* he had a supporting role with Robert Redford.¹⁸⁰ In 1980 Nelson released the touring song "On the Road Again" that reached number 20 on Billboard hot 100.¹⁸¹ 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 met 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 the way she looked and behaved reminded him of his first wife Martha. Annie had Sicilian roots and she came from Los Angeles.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Nelson with Merle Haggard produced a duet album "Pancho & Lefty" which scored in the country single chart. Nelson sang many successful songs written by Kris Kristofferson and Steve Fromholz and his covers were more popular than the original versions.¹⁸² In 1982 Nelson released another 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

¹⁷⁶ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 375.

¹⁷⁷ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 5527-8.

¹⁷⁸ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 232.

¹⁷⁹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 5190-5434.

¹⁸⁰ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 233.

¹⁸¹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 417.

¹⁸² Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 328.

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.”¹⁸³ 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” and became a part of a band. The second part included Johnny Cash and Kristofferson. The band altogether was given the name *The Highwaymen*. Their all-star world tour accomplished positive feedback and they sold millions of records.¹⁸⁴

Conversely to his commercial success, Nelson’s personal life was in ruins. Nelson’s affair with Annie came to light so when Connie learned about them, she moved away from Willie. Another bad news for Nelson was that his daughter Paula Carlene had to undergo a drug treatment. Paula was seventeen and she was Nelson’s only child with completed high school.¹⁸⁵ 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 also advertised this album on television.¹⁸⁶ Although his profit covered all debt to the Internal Revenue Service, he is, even nowadays a target of comical commentaries 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.¹⁸⁷ In 1993, Willie Nelson was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame.¹⁸⁸ In addition, Nelson was awarded prizes of the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame, native son of The State of Texas and Living Legend Award.¹⁸⁹ Apparently, Nelson’s country music activity brought him success similar to Johnny Cash’s.

¹⁸³ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 180.

¹⁸⁴ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 81.

¹⁸⁵ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 6380-6403.

¹⁸⁶ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 6747.

¹⁸⁷ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 305.

¹⁸⁸ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 376.

¹⁸⁹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 441.

3.3.1 Summary

Willie Hugh Nelson belongs, without doubt into the team of top 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 has been given a gift of music, which set off his country career. His music character is represented by the fact that he has never been afraid to tackle anything. His fans like his writing and singing talent. His biggest career achievements root from the outlaw country era, as he has topped music charts and sold more than a million albums all over the United States. However, there is not only the bright side of him; his reputation has suffered due to his love affairs, compulsive behaviour and unpaid invoices. Nelson as a musician, songwriter, producer, actor and activist not only brought some of the greatest evergreens to country music, he also linked American popular music 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 echo the outlaw image. Although Nelson's work also includes traditional country themes similar to Johnny Cash's, he represents the next evolutionary step in country music formation during the twentieth century. His music profile is supplemented by the analysis of the following songs: "Jimmy's Road," "On the Road Again" and "Seven Spanish Angels." The analysed songs are extracts from complete lyrics that can be found also in the Appendix. Possible incorrectness was eliminated by listening to the original songs.

3.4.1 "Jimmy's Road" 1965

One of the songs which were not commercially successful is "Jimmy's Road." It was recorded in 1965 and released on the album *Naked Willie*. The song is very specific because it is Willie Nelson's reaction to the Vietnam War and it also represents the hippie movement culture of this period. Nelson was called a mouthpiece of Nashville, the "first hippie commune", not only due to his drugs addiction but mainly for his creative and accurate lyrics reflecting the philosophy of hippies.¹⁹⁰

In general, country music has always been patriotic and non-protest, except when it had an anti-war overtone. However, the country music between 1960 and 1975

¹⁹⁰ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 3078-3236.

did not reflect only the popular culture but was also a political and social commentary. Such songs challenged authorities and also represented the voice of working men. Nelson wrote the discussed song for two reasons: as mentioned above, it was a general protest against the Vietnam War but there was also a personal reason. He wrote it when his friend, the musician David Zettner was drafted into the army.

Nelson himself comments the lyrics in the following way: “I never thought he needed to be in a war, He was far removed from a soldier who wanted to go out and kill somebody or hurt somebody. Being out there wasn’t right. [...] David had never held a gun before. He was a pacifist.”¹⁹¹ As the quote suggests, the increased liberalism was transferred into country themes, highlighting anti-war opinions, political opinions of middle-working class (which was the mainstream country music audience), and last but not least personal reasons of interpreters. Furthermore, the story comprises Nelson’s opinion on the war itself and the lyrics is aimed on the death of innocent man and acquaintance respectively.¹⁹² Virtually, it can also denote a utopian dream about a peaceful world, a fantasy that hippies implied in their philosophy.

This is Jimmy's road where Jimmy liked to **play** a

This is Jimmy's grass where Jimmy liked to **lay** around a

This is Jimmy's tree where Jimmy liked to **climb** b

But Jimmy went to war and something changed his **mind**¹⁹³ b

The song consists of five stanzas each having two short verses only. It uses end rhyme with a simple aabb scheme, the instrumentation includes non-electric guitar accompanied by Nelson’s vocals.

¹⁹¹ Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, 3119.

¹⁹² Andrew Grant Jackson, *1965: The Most Revolutionary Year in Music* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2015), 131.

¹⁹³ Willie Nelson, *The Facts of Life: and Other Dirty Jokes* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003), 146.

3.4.2 “On the Road Again” 1980

During the 1980s country music was accessible through Nashville channels. The audience had a taste for both commercial and traditional songs.¹⁹⁴ “On the Road Again” represents an intersection between these two. The song was released on the album *Honeysuckle Rose* in 1980. Nelson was asked to write a song for a movie with the same name and he later starred in it. Nelson adds: “They wanted a song. It was to be a touring song, or one about people traveling all over the country making music.”¹⁹⁵ In other words, the song was written on demand for commercial purposes. Such songs were not exceptional and despite the unpleasant reviews on the movie it helped Nelson to get greater audience because the song became one of the greatest road anthems in the country music history.¹⁹⁶ The theme depicts times in American country culture when white cowboys’ hats were replaced by black ones, symbolizing urban way of living and perceiving the music. The horsebacks were replaced by trucks and long journeys and being on the road was not only common for American audience but also for country interprets. The song portrays the crucial way country performers made money – by doing tours and live performances.

As the title suggests, the lyrics support the country tradition, portraying ordinary people as best friends who are popular and prosperous and they also possess a good fortune. The theme also portrays the personal freedom and life fulfilment of country musicians who are bound together. Furthermore, it shows the wanderlust of the American nation and exploring of the undiscovered places. It is safe to say that the theme of this song directly mirrors the trends and advances of modern Americans in the 1980s pointing to prospering music and film industries and popularity of crossover hits based on corporate publishing.¹⁹⁷ The instrumentation is not very complicated and it embraces just a solo singer accompanied by acoustic guitar and harmonica.

The song is organized into four stanzas, two of which serve as a refrains. When observing the rhyme, scheme aaba is clearly recognizable. Furthermore, lines (1), (2) and (4) include an epistrophe. For complete lyrics, see the Appendix.

¹⁹⁴ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 125.

¹⁹⁵ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 236.

¹⁹⁶ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 9.

¹⁹⁷ Nelson, *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*, 9.

On the road again	a
Just can't wait to get on the road again	a
The life I love is making music with my friends	b
And I cant wait to get on the road again ¹⁹⁸	a

3.4.3 “Seven Spanish Angels” 1984

The first song performed by Willie Nelson in 1984 is “Seven Spanish Angels.” The song comes from Ray Charles’ album *Friendship*, where these two interpreters recorded the song as a duet. The song became an immense country single occupying the number one position and staying on the charts for unbelievable twenty-seven weeks from 1984 to 1985.¹⁹⁹

“Seven Spanish Angels” is a duet which has a character of honky-tonk singing. Willie Nelson and Ray Charles accompany their vocals by gentle piano tunes. In fact, piano has been an integral part of country music, even though it was used sporadically in the 1980s. More importantly, the duet is accompanied by electric bass guitar as the use of electric instruments became popular in the 1980s. I think that the song links both traditional and modern instrumentation into one whole. The main theme of the song is bravery shown on both male and female characters. On the one hand, we can observe the image of an outlaw trying to challenge the authority despite knowing that his chances are minimal and on the other hand, we can see a female character facing the cruel fate that can be avoided. The outcome of protagonists’ deliberate actions is fatal.

The lyrics portray the story of a Mexican outlaw and his girlfriend who are trying to escape a group of armed lawmen that represent the authority. The couple does not want to be returned to Texas and when the lawmen seize them, the resistance is shown when the male protagonist wants to commence a gunfire. However, before the gunfire starts, the couple spiritually prepares themselves for death. When the outlaw fires a bullet against the soldiers, he is killed instantly. His girlfriend then prays and confesses that she is no longer able to live without her companion and when attempting to return the fire she is stricken by the same fate. I think that the song distorts the typical outlaw image and shows a romantic story instead. In comparison to Johnny

¹⁹⁸ Nelson, *The Facts of Life: and Other Dirty Jokes* 8.

¹⁹⁹ Opdyke, *Willie Nelson Sings America!*, 334.

Cash's outlaw songs, "Seven Spanish Angels" uses a more appropriate language and tries to appeal to female audience too. The end of the song is open for the listeners' own interpretation.

The song consists of six stanzas and the chorus which is repeated three times. Its poetic structure is powered by a simple rhyme scheme aabb in stanzas and abcbdeae scheme in the chorus.

He looked down into her brown eyes and said, Say a prayer for **me** a

She threw her arms around him whispered, God will keep us **free** a

They could hear the riders comin' he said, This is my last **fight** b

If they take me back to Texas they won't take me back **alive**²⁰⁰ b

There were seven Spanish **angels** a

At the altar of the sun b

They were prayin' for the **lovers** c

In the valley of the gun b

When the battle stopped and the smoke cleared d

There was thunder from the throne e

And seven Spanish angels a

Took another angel home²⁰¹ e

²⁰⁰ "Seven Spanish Angels Lyrics," *Willie Nelson Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/seven-spanish-angels-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

²⁰¹ "Seven Spanish Angels Lyrics," *Willie Nelson Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/seven-spanish-angels-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

3.5 Shania Twain

Shania Twain was born as Eileen Regina Edwards Timmins in Ontario, Canada on August 28, 1965²⁰² - 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. Musical instruments fascinated her and she had a strong desire to create music even as early as at the age of seven.²⁰³ 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 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.²⁰⁴

This statement, which portrays Eileen's beginnings, 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. When she was in her late teens, she liked to sing 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 until the bar stopped serving drinks. She grew up really quick and she joined the adult world guided

²⁰² Shania Twain, *From This Moment On*. (New York: Atria Books, 2011) Kindle edition, 196.

²⁰³ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 200-373.

²⁰⁴ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 414-416.

by her parents.²⁰⁵ 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 or singing at concerts as a guest. Her first song was called “Just Like the Storybooks” and it was about lost love. To help her get recognized, her mother 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.²⁰⁶ There she could experience what it means to be in a country music show in Canada. She was introduced as Ellie Twain and she sang “Walk On By” by Leroy Van Dyke.²⁰⁷ Without doubt, being invited to a 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 arrange her performance on 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 which included songs from the commercial Top 40. Consequently, the band got noticed at local bars where they performed country, rock, and rock & roll style. Twain soon became the key member, which allowed her to leave the guitar behind 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.²⁰⁸ 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 started 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

²⁰⁵ Dallas Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*. (Québec: ECW Press, 1998), 39.

²⁰⁶ Robin Eggar, *Shania Twain: The Biography*. (New York: Pocket Books, 2005), 43.

²⁰⁷ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 55.

²⁰⁸ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 2386-2415.

Foundation, where she performed with Toronto Symphony Orchestra.²⁰⁹ Her performance was not without flaws and therefore Eileen decided to stay rather within country music.

Unfortunately, in November 1987 Eileen received bad news. Her parents had a tragic car accident and they both died. This news virtually changed Eileen's life. She became the breadwinner for her siblings so she had to come back home to take care of the family business and simply to survive. Another bad news was that Kim left her when she needed moral support the most.²¹⁰ 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 the 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."²¹¹ As a matter of fact, the whole family had to move to Ontario where Eileen could support them more easily.

During the Deerhurst 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 had to record a demo if she wanted to build a professional career. Therefore, she asked her colleagues to record her early works at a primitive homemade music studio. Moreover, Mary Bailey arranged for her an appointment with Nashville music manager Richard Frank, who was willing to listen to her records. As a result, Eileen gained a contract with Mercury Nashville Records label.²¹² 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 right 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 Mercury Nashville Records 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 to record songs of already famous musicians, which was not to

²⁰⁹ James Hale, "Shania Twain," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²¹⁰ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 26.

²¹¹ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 157.

²¹² Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 171.

her liking, but it was a routine for all newcomers to Nashville. Soon, Eileen started to record her own album. She was working with an older musician, a Nashville independent producer and song writer Norro Wilson who was in love with her voice.²¹³ Her debut album was called “Shania Twain” and it was released in April 1992.²¹⁴ In the meantime, Eileen changed her first name to Shania to honour the Ojibwa origin of her stepfather.²¹⁵ 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 apart from audio records. A Canadian Steven Goldman directed her first video, and he also taught her how to perform in front of the camera and how to synchronize her lips with the video. Their common effort, together with careful clothes selection led into Miami Beach where she recorded single “What Made You Say That.” 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.²¹⁶ 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 another one. This time the director was Sean Penn who was enthusiastic enough to help her with “Dance with the One That Brought You.” Although 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 mentioned above, Penn helped Shania to get noticed publicly and subsequently he also arranged her meeting with Robert John “Mutt” Lange, a London-based music producer who had been writing songs for artists such as AC/DC, Bryan Adams or Def Leppard.²¹⁷ 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 a whole album. The popularity of her first album was fading away, so she needed to record a new one as soon as possible. After a couple of weeks Shania came back to Nashville, where she

²¹³ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 171.

²¹⁴ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3548.

²¹⁵ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²¹⁶ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3665- 3687.

²¹⁷ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 163.

performed the songs that were written in collaboration with Mutt. It was successful and so Mutt later helped Shania with the release of her next album: “The Woman in Me” in 1995. Their professional relationship turned into a personal one and after six months the happy couple got married. 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 like “Any Man of Mine”, “(If You’re Not in It for Love) I’m Outta Here!” and “Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?”²¹⁸ The album was received with mixed critical feelings but still occupying the 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.”²¹⁹ 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 a gigantic hit that ended up nine times platinum and was on the top of the chart for 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.²²⁰ In fact, Shania supplied what American country scene was missing and her songs affected not only the older audience but the young as well. In addition, her first commercial album generated a promising career.

In 1996 Shania started to build her own professional image. She did the majority of promotional jobs herself, including meet and greet, music videos and photo shoots. When a successful album is released, artists normally go on a tour. Shania avoided going on tours because she was afraid that people could get fed up of hearing her. Instead of going on a tour, she decided to work on her next album.²²¹ 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.

²¹⁸ Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*, 553.

²¹⁹ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 204.

²²⁰ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 433.

²²¹ Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way*, 106.

[...] I was alone in this mess with seemingly no way out.²²² In comparison to Willie Nelson or Johnny Cash, Shania Twain has never used any drugs or alcohol and her approach to music and fans has been very serious. In 1996, “The Woman in Me” won the Grammy Award for Best Country Album and Album of the Year at the Country Music Awards.²²³ Apparently, her devotion to music made her even more concerned about the wellbeing of her audience.

The following year, Shania released the crossover album “Come On Over”. This album was a result of the co-operation of Mutt and Shania’s new manager John Landau, who was famous for his guiding of Bruce Springsteen. Because Shania refused to go on a tour with the first album, she 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 a 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.”²²⁴ 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 a perfect experience. Her first show was in 1998 at Sadbury Community Arena at her birth place.²²⁵ 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.”²²⁶ Before long, she was given the nickname “The Madonna of Country.”²²⁷ 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”²²⁸. 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

²²² Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4302-4257.

²²³ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4337.

²²⁴ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 204.

²²⁵ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4608.

²²⁶ Malone, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, 433.

²²⁷ Stuart A. Kallen, *The History of Country Music (The music library)*. (California: Lucent Books, 2002), 94.

²²⁸ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 205.

for the whole summer.²²⁹ 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.²³⁰ 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 the successful tour, Shania and her husband moved to Swiss Riviera where she gave birth to her son Eja.²³¹ Later, she started to work on her next recording “Up!” This album was also co-produced by her husband and the new manager Peter Mensch. The CD had different musical arrangements as Shania decided not to focus only on one music genre. Late 2002 the album “Up!” was released, having three different versions. The European version was a mixture of pop and country style, whereas the American market was able to get two CDs, one of them was recorded in country style and the second one in pop style.²³² And again, we can see that Shania was profiting from her helpful co-operation with experienced people and of course, her indisputable talent. The first single on the album “I’m Gonna Getcha” was an instant hit.²³³ Other 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 as the Country Recording of the Year and got the Fan Choice Award, among others.²³⁴ 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.

As there are always two sides of a coin, apart from her success on stage, Twain experienced a painful divorce with her husband.²³⁵ In addition, her new album was delayed due to dysphonia; she suddenly suffered from the inability to sing. Fortunately, she overcame the vocal chords disorder and she remarried in 2011 to Frederic Nicolas Thiébaud.²³⁶ Besides her music career, Eileen Twain has shone on TV screen on *Good*

²²⁹ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4616.

²³⁰ Kallen, *The History of Country Music (The music library)*, 97.

²³¹ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4716.

²³² James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²³³ Carlin, *Country (American Popular Music)*, 205.

²³⁴ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

²³⁵ Shania Twain, *From This Moment On*. (New York: Atria Books, 2011) Kindle edition, 5285.

²³⁶ James Hale, “Shania Twain,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified March 4, 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/shania-twain>.

Morning America, for example. She supports various charity organizations like *Shania Kids Can*, which is a foundation for unprivileged children.²³⁷ The year 2015 symbolizes Shania's 49th birthday and also her "Rock This Country Tour."²³⁸ After eleven years, she has decided to go on a tour gain, 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 into the country music a fresh style by incorporating rock and pop and enhanced woman's confidence.

3.6 Shania Twain: song analysis

Undoubtedly, before the 1990s, women in country music were seen rather sporadically. Shania Twain and her contemporaries helped to modify country music themes which were at the beginning of the twentieth century preoccupied with male's heroism and macho talk. Whiteley adds: "[...] gender codes in country music are so rigidly patriarchal, presenting the active male and passive female as the norm, that drawing attention to uncertainties in those codes denaturalizes them."²³⁹ With the arrival of Shania Twain on the scene, country music themes in the 1990s started to weaken male dominion and the content of lyrics began to focus more on female perspective and women's issues which had been long time ignored. The three selected songs: "Man, I Feel Like a Woman," "If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!" and "That Don't Impress Me Much" represent such themes, as they try to appeal to country audience. All selected lyrics were listened to in order to prove the correctness of the song in the songbook.

3.6.1 "Man, I Feel Like a Woman" 1997

Using a new subgenre – country pop, Shania's songs often portray contrast themes touching feminism. This song was released on the album *Come on Over* in 1997. The album includes songs that fall into two categories, romantic and related directly to female audience. The whole album is also breaking the traditional country

²³⁷ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 6121.

²³⁸ "Shania Twain Announces Farewell Tour," *Abc News*, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/shania-twain-announces-farewell-tour/story?id=29378517>.

²³⁹ Edwards, *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*, 66.

music stereotypes with respect to the instrumentation. The album mixes traditional honky-tonk genre with pop and rock image. The overall success was achieved by its aiming on the new female audience and thanks to this, ten million copies were sold. Evidently, the anthem “Man, I Feel Like a Woman” painted Twain as a feminist crusader who starts the song with the invitation: “let’s go girls”.²⁴⁰

In the song, Twain tries to empower the female audience by stating that being a woman is an advantage and amusement. Furthermore, the speaker of the song represents a woman who encourages her female audience to completely ignore prescribed female roles in social etiquette. There we can see the difference in position of woman in the culture in the twentieth century. While Johnny Cash showed strict gender roles in favour of man, Twain cancels his traditional ode to masculinity by showing that women are also a part of country culture.

As for the content, Twain portrays an American rural, working-class persona who is assertive and shows her femininity. Through the conversational terms, the speaker tries to eschew the basic ideology that women do not belong to country music or their issues should not be dealt with publicly.²⁴¹ The song supports the theory that there was always a double standard for women in country music. Therefore, the main protagonist tries to emancipate from male hegemony but at the same time, the song can give a delirious impression.

No inhibitions make no conditions	aa
Get a little outta line	b
I ain’t gonna act politically correct	c
I only wanna have a good time ²⁴²	b

Kristine McCusker adds: “In her neo-feminist country-pop hit, “Man! I Feel Like a Woman,” [Twain] is amplifying its gender-bending title, the song quickly became an anthem for girls’ nights out and a celebration of independence in seeking entertainment.”²⁴³ As the quote suggests, the song found its audience almost instantly.

²⁴⁰ Dwayne E. Pickels, *Shania Twain* (New York: Chelsea House Publications, 2012) Kindle edition, 367.

²⁴¹ Charles Wolfe and James Akenson, *Country Music Goes to War* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 187.

²⁴² Shania Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*. (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 50.

²⁴³ McCusker, *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music*, 147.

As for the visual aspect, the song is comprised of seven stanzas, three of which are refrains. In addition, lines (1), (3), (4) and (6) include anaphora. When looking at the rhymes, the lines combine two kinds of rhymes- an end rhyme and an internal rhyme. The instrumentation represents the modern shift in popular country music during the 1990s. Shania Twain’s vocals are accompanied by fully electric instruments such as two guitars, electric fiddle and piano keyboard. Moreover, the song has a faster tempo, uses synthesized sound and electric beats.²⁴⁴ When listening to the song it is clear that the instrumentation represents a modern trend as the traditional acoustic instruments are replaced by fully electric ones.

Oh, oh, oh , go totally crazy , forget I'm a lady (false rhyme)	aa
Men's shirts, short skirts	bb
Oh, oh, oh , really go wild yeah, doin' it in style	cc
Oh, oh, oh , get in the action , feel the attraction	dd
Color my hair , do what I dare	ee
Oh, oh, oh , I want to be free yeah, to feel the way I feel	ff
Man! I feel like a woman! ²⁴⁵	fg

3.6.2 “If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!” 1997

“If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!” also comes from the album *Come on Over* which can be referred to as the best-selling female album, reaching worldwide sales of thirty-four million copies. As the title may suggest, the song belongs to the realm of “country songs focused on the hypocrisy of judging women one way and men another especially regarding sex and independence where a woman lets her man (and others) know she is no shrinking violet.”²⁴⁶ In fact, this song challenges the social status of women as sexual objects and while Shania Twain claims that she did not restrict her songs only to female listeners, the song generally portrays how ladies should be approached and treated by men.

The speaker of the song represents a female voice attempting to pass a message about sexual consent. Virtually, this topic is touched because traditional country women

²⁴⁴ “Come On Over,” *Rolling Stone*, accessed March 11, 2015.

http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/shaniatwain/albums/album/124004/review/6067853/come_on_over.

²⁴⁵ Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 50.

²⁴⁶ Cusic, *Discovering Country Music*, 97.

could have been referred to as having low intelligence, to be easily fooled or manipulated for men’s sexual advances. Fortunately, the country roads brought lyrics that revolve around sexual assaults in which the victims were mostly women.²⁴⁷ The lyrics speak for battered women and shows that the 1990s’ country music themes brought topics that try to encourage the popular culture to respect women’s rights. Robin Eggar adds: “[“If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!”] is about respecting women’s personal space and is a definite slap in the face at gropers-something [Twain] had personal experience with back at school.”²⁴⁸ The song celebrates women who are no longer immediate sexual objects and also gives a mock-moral lesson that is refreshing and clearly appealing to the listeners.

Let me let you in on a secret	a
How to treat a woman right	ab
If you're looking for a place in her heart	b
It ain't gonna happen overnight ²⁴⁹	b
If you want to get to know her	a
Really get inside her mind	ab
If you want to move in closer	a
Take it slow, yeah take your time ²⁵⁰	b

The song is comprised of four stanzas, two of which are refrains. Twain is also working with various rhyme structures. When observing rhymes, we can see that Twain uses internal and end rhyme. The play with rhymes together with uneven length of lines enhances the poetic impression of the song. Twain’s synthesized vocals are

²⁴⁷ “Sexism In Unexpected Places: An Analysis of Country Music Lyrics,” *Caravel*, accessed March 10, 2015.

²⁴⁸ Robin Eggar, *Shania Twain: The Biography* (New York: Gallery Books, 2005), 257.

²⁴⁹ “If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask! Lyrics,” *Shania Twain Lyrics*, accessed May 15, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/if-you-wanna-touch-her-ask-lyrics-shania-twain.html>.

²⁵⁰ “If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask! Lyrics,” *Shania Twain Lyrics*, accessed May 15, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/if-you-wanna-touch-her-ask-lyrics-shania-twain.html>.

accompanied by electric guitar riff,²⁵¹ electronic keyboard and electric drum kit. These instruments enhance the pop country genre image.

3.6.3 “That Don't Impress Me Much” 1998

Another country pop hit “That Don't Impress Me Much” was too released on Twain's third studio record album - *Come On Over* in December 1998.²⁵² The song was penned by Robert Lange and it became the bestselling country album of the 1990s not only due to its music quality but mainly thanks to tracks that especially female audience liked a lot.

Shania Twain explains the birth 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.²⁵³ Despite a seemingly simple event, the song offers a deeper sense.

The lyrics of the song are directed straightforwardly to female audience and it tries to inspire women and encourage them to express themselves. Again the song is dealing with the theme of feminism and with the attitude that women should be independent. Empowering female attitude is not expressed through revenge or violence but rather through humorous and straightforward turns of phrases that the lyrics evoke in the listener. Twain teases men who are self-important and arrogant.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, we can hear the imprint of amusement in the song when Twain uses a reference to Brad Pitt. Here the song tries to suggest that the key factor for women in finding a partner is not his physical beauty, even if they find the “Hollywood star du jour”, rather the intellectual qualities are preferred.

²⁵¹ A short, recognizable melodic phrase used repeatedly in a piece of music.

²⁵² Twain, *From This Moment On*, 4741

²⁵³ Twain, *From This Moment On*, 3240-1.

²⁵⁴ Linda Austern and Inna Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 333.

That don't impress me much	a
You think you're cool but have you got the touch?	a
Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright	b
But that won't keep me warm on the long, cold, lonely night	b
That don't impress me much ²⁵⁵	a

The song consists of six stanzas of five or six lines, three of which are refrains. Shania Twain is working with the end rhyme with the scheme aabba. The music instrumentation is a mixture of electric and acoustic instruments including: electric guitar, electric bass, pedal steel and additional acoustic guitar. The country pop style is empowered by Twain's vocals and synthesized voice effects.

²⁵⁵ Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 35.

4 Conclusion

The main purpose of my master thesis based on theoretical knowledge and song analyses 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.

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

Soon, their music spread out to other parts of the country. 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. Country music could get new three-dimensional shape due to its multipurpose character. In fact, 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 the country music genre.

The subchapter 2.1 portrays the golden era of country music. The demand for recording increased and the music market was growing at an enormous speed. The vast majority of recordings then were made in Nashville. This city guaranteed popularity for the 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 this 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 the country style. Special credit belongs to Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson who reinvigorated the country style trends.

The third chapter belongs to the analyses of selected songs which helped me to portray how country themes have developed. The beginning of the twentieth century, represented by Johnny Cash, shows traces of conservative and traditional approach to country music. The two aspects are content of the lyrics and music instrumentation. In fact, Cash and his contemporaries were plain country musicians representing rural working class society, playing on traditional acoustic instruments related to this genre. The beginning of the twentieth century is designated by themes of women's departure and subjects of architecture or particular geographical places. Another typical topic seen both in the American post-war culture and in the lyrics is the use of illegal substances. Furthermore, country music of the beginning of the twentieth century can be characterized as a male related thing. As the practical part proves, this period showed stereotypical gender roles, which can be found in number of male musicians as masculinity penetrated into lyrics. It is safe to say that women were either a source of issues or longing for the opposite sex. In addition, the commercial trend started to change the way how country music was both produced and received.

The middle period of my research between years 1960s and 1980s belongs to Willie Nelson and it partially overlaps Cash's period. Although his songs covered similar topics dealing with love and working on land, his later songs mirror increased liberalism and growing dissatisfaction of the American population with the Vietnam War. Blue-collar audience supported not only the wave of anti-war sentiment but also the outlaw image represented by Nelson and his contemporaries. Country music themes of this period drew on everything that was away from the traditional country image. The crossover hits filled up all jukeboxes due to the popularity of Nashville. Country music changed from unassuming to commercial as well. Consequently, the overall atmosphere could be reflected in the outlaw country hits that dealt with drugs, sex and rock 'n' roll. Another country songs of the given period were used in the film industry which was

also popular. Willie Nelson started to combine acoustic and electric music instruments, which represents certain milestone in country music development.

While the majority of Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson's songs were preoccupied with masculinity, Shania Twain started to portray women as a core of her interest. Virtually, Twain represents a relatively recent trend, she found her way into American country music despite her Canadian stigmatization. Thanks to her focus on the female audience she has become a star. The themes of her songs cover the female perspective of things and her lyrics put emphasis on female issues. Her voice speaks for gender dichotomy and emancipation. Her outstanding career has disproved arguments that country music is male related. Not only did she inspire female audience but her audio visual performance influenced a new generation of female country singers. During the 1990s, she drew on pop country genre which uses fully electric instruments and this helped her to attract a new audience and set a new standard for country music.

Overall, country music has tended to be very conservative. Its traditional themes are still occurring but there have been new subjects added that contributed to the balance in terms of gender roles. Musicians shifted from acoustic to electric instruments or use a combination of both. It is safe to say that cultural development in the United States has formed the resulting country themes and the music as such.

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 artists dealt with in this thesis are not too far behind Cash in terms of their contribution to the country style. Songs created by Shania Twain symbolise 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 vysielať 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 vysielať nebolo v tom čase tak rozšírené ako rádio. Vďaka tomu ostalo rádiové vysielať 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 dovedol 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.

Analýza vybraných piesní ukázala, že country hudba, ktorá bola na začiatku päťdesiatych rokov veľmi konzervatívna zmenila svoju podobu a obsah country piesní sa menil v závislosti na dynamike americkej kultúry. Piesne sa spočiatku zaoberali témami ako sú stratená láska či opis určitých geografických miest. Neskôr nasledovali témy, v ktorých autori otvorene spievali o drogách a iných ilegálnych látkach. V country repertoári šesťdesiatych rokov nechýbali ani piesne proti vojne vo Vietname. Tak ako sa postupne menil obsah piesní, tak aj akustické hudobné nástroje začali byť postupne nahradené elektrickými, nie je to však pravidlo. Prelom osemdesiatych a deväťdesiatych rokov priniesla country hudba ženskú a feministickú perspektívu, ktorá nielen že upútala nové obecnstvo, ale inšpirovala mnoho ďalších súčasných country speváčok.

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 z 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.

Bibliography

- Austern, Linda and Inna Naroditskaya. *Music of the Sirens*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Cantwell, Robert. *Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Carlin, Richard. *Country (American Popular Music)*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005.
- Ching, Barbara. *Wrong's What I Do Best: Hard Country Music and Contemporary Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Clarke, Donald. *The Rise and Fall of Popular Music*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Crispin, Nick. *Johnny Cash 1932-2003: Memorial Songbook*. Louisiana: Wise Publications, 2003.
- Cusic, Don. *Discovering Country Music*. California: Greenwood Press, 2008.
- Dorrell, Philip. *What Is Music?: Solving a Scientific Mystery*. Raleigh: Lulu.com, 2005.
- Edwards, Leigh. *Johnny Cash and the Paradox of American Identity (Profiles in Popular Music)*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Eggar, Robin. *Shania Twain: The Biography*. New York: Pocket Books, 2005.
- Green, Lucy. *A Way Ahead for Music Education*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013. Kindle edition.
- Hamm, Charles. *Yesterdays: Popular Song In America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983.
- Hilburn, Robert. *Johnny Cash: The Life*. London: Little Brown and Company, 2013. Kindle edition.
- Jackson, Grant Andrew. *1965: The Most Revolutionary Year in Music*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2015.
- Jensen, Joli. *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998. Kindle edition.
- Jones, Loyal. *Country Music Humorists And Comedians*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Kallen, A. Stuart, *The History of Country Music (The music library)*. California: Lucent Books, 2002.
- Kingsbury, Paul. *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

- Lornell, Kip. *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States (American Made Music)*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.
- Malone, C. Bill. *Country Music, U.S.A.*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- McCusker, M. Kristine and Diane Pecknold. *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2004.
- Nelson, Willie. *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*. New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2013.
- Nelson, Willie. *The Facts of Life: and Other Dirty Jokes*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003.
- Nicholls, David. *The Cambridge History of American Music (The Cambridge History of Music)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Opdyke, Steven. *Willie Nelson Sings America!* Texas: Eakin Press, 1998.
- Patoski, Nick Joe. *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008. Kindle edition.
- Pickels, E. Dwayne. *Shania Twain*. New York: Chelsea House Publications, 2012. Kindle edition.
- Příbylová, Irena. *Minstrelové s černou tváří*. Náměšti nad Oslavou: MěKS print, 2009.
- Randall, Alice. *My Country Roots: The Ultimate MP3 Guide to America's Original Outsider Music*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Rosenberg, V. Neil. *Bluegrass: A History (Music in American Life)*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Scott, Richard. *Chord Progressions For Songwriters*. Indiana: iUniverse, 2003.
- Streissguth, Michael. *Johnny Cash: The Biography*. Boston: Da Capo Press Inc., 2006.
- Twain, Shania. *From This Moment On*. New York: Atria Books, 2011. Kindle edition.
- Twain, Shania. *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005.
- Veselý, Karel. *Hudba ohně: radikální černá hudba od jazzu po hip hop a dale*. Praha: Bigboss, 2010.
- Watson, Derek. *Wordsworth Dictionary of Musical Quotations*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1994.
- Willett, Edward. *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black*. New York: Enslow Publishers, 2010.
- Williams, Dallas. *Shania Twain: On My Way*. Québec: ECW Press, 1998.
- Wolfe, Charles and James Akenson. *Country Music Goes to War*. Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

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

Electronic sources:

“A Boy Named Sue Lyrics.” *Johnny Cash Lyrics*. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-boy-named-sue-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

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

“Cocaine Blues Lyrics.” *Johnny Cash Lyrics*. Accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/cocaine-blues-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

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

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

“If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask! Lyrics.” *Shania Twain Lyrics*. Accessed May 15, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/if-you-wanna-touch-her-ask-lyrics-shania-twain.html>.

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

“Seven Spanish Angels Lyrics.” *Willie Nelson Lyrics*. Accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/seven-spanish-angels-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

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

Chuck, Eddy. “Come On Over.” *Rolling Stone*. Accessed March 11, 2015. http://www.rollingstone.com/artists/shaniatwain/albums/album/124004/review/6067853/come_on_over.

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

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

Rogers, Anna. “Sexism In Unexpected Places: An Analysis of Country Music Lyrics.” *Caravel*. Accessed March 10, 2015. <http://caravel.sc.edu/2013/09/sexism-in-unexpected-places-an-analysis-of-country-music-lyrics>.

Appendix

“Big River”

Now I taught the weeping willow how to cry
And I showed the clouds how to cover up a clear blue sky
And the tears that I cried for that woman are going to flood you Big River
Then I'm going to sit right here until I die

I met her accidentally in St. Paul (Minnesota)
And it tore me up every time I heard her drawl, Southern drawl
Then I heard my dream was back Downstream cavorting in Davenport
And I followed you, Big River, when you called

Then you took me to St. Louis later on (down the river)
A freighter said she's been here but she's gone, boy, she's gone
I found her trail in Memphis, but she just walked up the block
She raised a few eyebrows and then she went on down alone

Now, won't you batter down by Baton Rouge, River Queen, roll it on
Take that woman on down to New Orleans, New Orleans
Go on, I've had enough; dump my blues down in the gulf
She loves you, Big River, more than me²⁵⁶

“Cocaine Blues“

Early one mornin' while makin' the rounds
I took a shot of cocaine and I shot my woman down
I went right home and I went to bed
I stuck that lovin' .44 beneath my head

Got up next mornin' and I grabbed that gun
Took a shot of cocaine and away I run
Made a good run but I run too slow
They overtook me down in Juarez, Mexico

Late in the hot joints takin' the pills
In walked the sheriff from Jericho Hill
He said Willy Lee your name is not Jack Brown
You're the dirty heck that shot your woman down

Said yes, oh yes my name is Willy Lee
If you've got a warrant just a-read it to me
Shot her down because she made me slow
I thought I was her daddy but she had five more

When I was arrested I was dressed in black
They put me on a train and they took me back

²⁵⁶ Streissguth, *Johnny Cash: The Biography*, 114.

Had no friend for to go my bail
They slapped my dried up carcass in that county jail

Early next mornin' bout a half past nine
I spied the sheriff coming down the line
Up then he coughed as he cleared his throat
He said, "Come on you dirty heck into that district court"

Into the courtroom my trial began
Where I was handled by twelve honest men
Just before the jury started out
I saw that little judge commence to look about

In about five minutes in walked the man
Holding the verdict in his right hand
The verdict read in the first degree
I hollered, "Lawdy Lawdy, have mercy on me"

The judge he smiled as he picked up his pen
99 years in the Folsom pen
99 years underneath that ground
I can't forget the day I shot that bad bitch down

Come on you've gotta listen unto me
Lay off that whiskey and let that cocaine be²⁵⁷

"A Boy Named Sue"

My daddy left home when I was three
And he didn't leave much to ma and me
Just this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze.
Now, I don't blame him cause he run and hid
But the meanest thing that he ever did
Was before he left, he went and named me "Sue."

Well, he must o' thought that is quite a joke
And it got a lot of laughs from a' lots of folk,
It seems I had to fight my whole life through.
Some gal would giggle and I'd get red
And some guy'd laugh and I'd bust his head,
I tell ya, life ain't easy for a boy named "Sue."

Well, I grew up quick and I grew up mean,
My fist got hard and my wits got keen,
I'd roam from town to town to hide my shame.
But I made a vow to the moon and stars

²⁵⁷ "Cocaine Blues Lyrics," *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/cocaine-blues-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

That I'd search the honky-tonks and bars
And kill that man who gave me that awful name.

Well, it was Gatlinburg in mid-July
And I just hit town and my throat was dry,
I thought I'd stop and have myself a brew.
At an old saloon on a street of mud,
There at a table, dealing stud,
Sat the dirty, mangy dog that named me "Sue."

Well, I knew that snake was my own sweet dad
From a worn-out picture that my mother'd had,
And I knew that scar on his cheek and his evil eye.
He was big and bent and gray and old,
And I looked at him and my blood ran cold
And I said: "My name is 'Sue!' How do you do!
Now your gonna die!!"

Well, I hit him hard right between the eyes
And he went down, but to my surprise,
He come up with a knife and cut off a piece of my ear.
But I busted a chair right across his teeth
And we crashed through the wall and into the street
Kicking and a' gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer.

I tell ya, I've fought tougher men
But I really can't remember when,
He kicked like a mule and he bit like a crocodile.
I heard him laugh and then I heard him cuss,
He went for his gun and I pulled mine first,
He stood there lookin' at me and I saw him smile.

And he said: "Son, this world is rough
And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough
And I knew I wouldn't be there to help ya along.
So I give ya that name and I said goodbye
I knew you'd have to get tough or die
And it's the name that helped to make you strong."

He said: "Now you just fought one hell of a fight
And I know you hate me, and you got the right
To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do.
But ya ought to thank me, before I die,
For the gravel in ya guts and the spit in ya eye
Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you "Sue.""

I got all choked up and I threw down my gun
And I called him my pa, and he called me his son,
And I came away with a different point of view.
And I think about him, now and then,

Every time I try and every time I win,
And if I ever have a son, I think I'm gonna name him
Bill or George! Anything but Sue! I still hate that name!²⁵⁸

Jimmy's Road

This is Jimmy's road where Jimmy liked to play
This is Jimmy's grass where Jimmy liked to lay around

This is Jimmy's tree where Jimmy liked to climb
But Jimmy went to war and something changed his mind

This is the battle ground where Jimmy learned to kill
Now Jimmy has a trade and Jimmy knows it well too well

This is Jimmy's grave where Jimmy's body lies
When a soldier falls Jimmy's body dies and dies

Well this is Jimmy's road where Jimmy likes to play
This is Jimmy's grass where Jimmy likes to lay around²⁵⁹

“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

²⁵⁸ “A Boy Named Sue Lyrics,” *Johnny Cash Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015,
<http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-boy-named-sue-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>.

²⁵⁹ Willie Nelson, *The Facts of Life: and Other Dirty Jokes* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003), 146.

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 again²⁶⁰

“Seven Spanish Angels”

He looked down into her brown eyes
Said, " Say a prayer for me."
She threw her arms around him
Whispered, "God will keep us free."
They could hear the riders comin
He said, "This is my last fight
If they take me back to Texas
They won't take me back alive."

There were seven Spanish Angels
At the alter of the Sun
They were prayin' for the lovers
In the valley of the gun
When the battle stopped
And the smoke cleared
There was thunder from the throne
And seven Spanish angels
Took another angel home

She reached down and picked the gun up
That lay smokin in his hand
She said, "Father please forgive me
I can't make it without my man."
And she knew the gun was empty
And she knew she couldn't win
Her final prayer was answered
When the rifles fired again

There were seven Spanish Angels
At the alter of the Sun
They were prayin' for the lovers
In the valley of the gun
When the battle stopped
And the smoke cleared
There was thunder from the throne

²⁶⁰ Nelson, *The Facts of Life: and Other Dirty Jokes* 8.

And seven Spanish angels
Took another angel home²⁶¹

“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)

²⁶¹ “Seven Spanish Angels Lyrics,” *Willie Nelson Lyrics*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.metrolyrics.com/seven-spanish-angels-lyrics-willie-nelson.html>.

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 woman²⁶²

If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!

Let me let you in on a secret
How to treat a woman right
If you're looking for a place in her heart
It ain't going to happen overnight

First you gotta learn to listen
To understand her deepest thoughts
She needs to know you can be friends
Before she'll give you all she's got

If you start from the heart
You'll see love is going to play it's part

If you want to get to know her
Really get inside her mind
If you want to move in closer
Take it slow, yeah take your time
You must start from the heart and then...
If you want to touch her
Really want to touch her
If you want to touch her, ask!

A little physical attraction
Romantic, old-fashioned charm
And a lot of love and tenderness
Is going to get you into her arms

²⁶² Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 50.

“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!²⁶³

²⁶³ Twain, *Shania Twain - Greatest Hits Songbook*, 35.

Annotation

Author: Martin Hujčák

Faculty: Faculty of Arts

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: American country music of the second half of the twentieth century

Supervisor: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.

Number of pages: 95

Number of characters: 175 248

Number of Appendices: 1

Number of References: 52

Key words: American country music, American culture, young generation, outlaw, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Shania Twain.

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 theoretical knowledge about the 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 that focuses on a particular musician is followed by an analysis of three representative songs. The outcome is summarized in the conclusion.

Anotácia

Autor: Martin Hujčák

Názov fakulty: Filozofická fakulta

Názov katedry: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Názov práce: Americká country hudba druhej poloviny 20. storočia

Vedúci práce: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.

Počet strán: 95

Počet znakov: 175 248

Počet príloh: 1

Počet titulov použitej literatúry: 52

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 troch vybraných piesní. Všetky zistenia sú zhrnuté v závere práce.