

ABSTRACT

Music has always been a rich source of inspiration to create new mystic worlds in the minds of people all around the world. It has served as means of communication and social bonding. Country music has played a significant role in the lives and minds of the people who live in the South of the USA.

Country music describes the Southern way of life and becomes a reflection of the Southern mentality. It helps its listeners create their own romantic and idealized vision of the place. I have called this vision the “Imaginary South”. The aim of this dissertation is to provide examples of how this vision is reflected in country music lyrics. The focus of my dissertation is to show how country music represents southern ideals in its lyrics. I also want to emphasize how these ideals, together with the “Southern state of mind”, influence the themes that are most popular in country lyrics.

I focus my attention on showing how country music represents Southern ideals and how these values influence the process of song-writing. I provide the history of country music and its connections with the history of the South of the USA. I have divided the scope of my research into seven analytical chapters.

Chapter One presents the introductory process of searching for the subject and the scope of my research. It is also a brief presentation of selected reference material, studies, books, and researches by authors I quote and refer to in my dissertation.

Chapter Two becomes a thorough examination of the tools of musicological analysis. It also explains the chemistry of our brain when we listen to music and other neurological aspects connected with the “musical mind” and the “musical brain.”

Chapter Three presents the history of country music, its roots and origins. It is a substantial exemplification of country’s evolution, its substyles, instrumental and vocal techniques. It also presents the most important artists in the history of country music.

The Fourth Chapter serves as an illustration for the themes of family, growing up and work, present in country music lyrics. I present a deep insight into the role of family, the relationship between parents and children and other important spheres of living in the South.

Chapter Five analyzes lyrics that deal with love-related themes. The songs are broken into parts in order to identify a variety of poetic tools used to create them. I also provide their in-depth content analysis.