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“With Grateful Heart My Thanks I Bring”¹

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¹ *Hymn Time* <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/w/i/t/withgrat.htm>

Abbreviations

*Ballad Index – BI*²

Song Index – SI

² <http://www.fresnostate.edu/folklore/BalladIndexTOC.html>

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1. Introduction

“[...] I found myself for the first time in my life in a community in which singing was as common and almost as universal a practice as speaking” – *Cecil Sharp on the Appalachian Community* (Sharp, cited in Davis 103).

In 1916, Cecil Sharp traveled to the Appalachian Mountains to find remains of British folk culture, which early Anglo-Celtic settlers took with them to the mountainous region of the South, and he was successful (Davis 103). Sharp found what he was looking for but ignored, like many other folklorists of the time, that Appalachian music was neither static nor pure. Although the music performed in the Appalachian Mountains preserved British elements, it was influenced by a wide cultural blend of people, reaching from Afro-Americans to Mexicans (Malone & Neal 4ff). But even if Sharp may have overlooked some central aspects of Appalachian music, he was well aware of the area's unique musicality that exists until today. And although the area and its music have undergone several changes since Cecil Sharp's journey to the region in 1916, music still represents an essential element of the Appalachian culture and southern life.

The central role of music in Appalachia and in the South of the United States is also reflected in the region's literature, which often works with the device of musical references. Two southern writers who masterly integrate music into their works set in their native areas are Lee Smith and Eudora Welty. Lee Smith, who was born in Grundy, a town located in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia, is deeply concerned with the development and the perception of her region, which is expressed in her fiction (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>). Eudora Welty, who originates from Jackson, Mississippi, is not an Appalachian citizen; however, as a Jackson native Welty was well aware of the life in the mountainous region of Mississippi, which is, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission, located approximately 90 miles from her home (http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/Mississippi.asp). Additionally, Welty's mother came from West Virginia, where Welty spent many summers as a child, which made her well familiar with mountain culture. Therefore, both authors represent particularly suitable examples for examining southern literature's musicality (Marrs 1; Smith, cited in Ramos 160).

More precisely, this diploma thesis analyses the role and development of music in southern society as mirrored in 20th century fiction, based on Lee Smith's *Oral History*

(1983) and *The Devil's Dream* (1992), both set in the mountains of Virginia, as well as on Eudora Welty's *Losing Battles* (1970), set in the hill country of Mississippi. The aim is to gain insights into the effects created through the integration of musical references and how they influence the novels' atmospheres. Additionally, due to the fact that both authors deal with historic settings, Lee Smith chronicling the historical development of the region and its music for approximately one hundred years, and Eudora Welty creating a picture of the area during the 1930s, this diploma thesis compares the novels' fictional historical representations with the actual developments this genre underwent, to establish clarity about the accuracy of the novels' historic depictions. Finally, a main concern of this diploma thesis is to examine the song contents, lyrics and historical backgrounds in relation to the novels' plots and musical scenes in order to come to a conclusion about the symbolical function of songs, serving as devices that carry meaning to emphasize certain elements of the texts.

2. Appalachia

2.1. Geography: Where is Appalachia?

“I grew up on the side of Clinch Mountain with the beauties and the music of the woods the sweet song of the bright bubbling fountain and the warble of the birds I understood.”³

“Where is Appalachia? The answer to this question may seem obvious to the casual observer, but as most scholars of the region know it is not without controversy” (Manzo 47ff, cited in Cooper 457). In their book *Appalachia: A Regional Geography; Land, People and Development*, Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack explain that it is a challenging task to develop a regionalization which pleases a great number of people. This derives from the fact that “a region is a mental construct” and varies due to its constructor’s purpose (Raitz & Ulack 9). They state that, “[i]n a sense, regions do not have truth – they only have utility” (Raitz & Ulack 9). This is also true for Appalachia, an area that possesses numerous aspects that serve as a basis for the region’s varied regionalization models. “Appalachia has been variously described as a region of mountains, coal mining, poverty, unique culture, tourism, welfarism, isolation, and subsistence agriculture. Any of these characteristics, or others, could be used to define the Appalachian region” (Raitz & Ulack 11).

The authors try to give an overview of important regionalization models made over the course of time. Some attempts presented by them are physical geographic, others are sociocultural, governmental or cognitive (Raitz & Ulack 11ff). At the beginning they note that the earliest attempts of regionalization, created in the United States, depended on “[n]atural vegetation, climatic patterns, and especially physiography [...]” (Raitz & Ulack 11).

That Appalachia is often defined on the basis of its physiography is not at all surprising, given that it has a high relief relative to the areas surrounding it. Indeed, this high relief has been an effective barrier to historic migrations and according to many writers has been responsible in part for some of the region’s less desirable characteristics like “isolation, poverty, and a retarded civilization.” (Semple Churchill 71, cited in Raitz & Ulack 11)

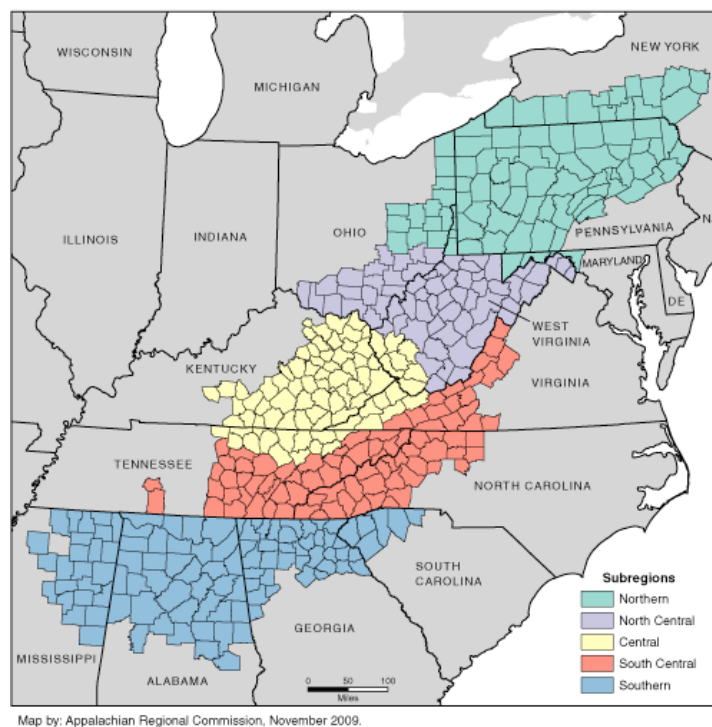
³ “In the Shadow of Clinch Mountain” by the Carter Family taken from http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/carter-family-songs/in_the_shadow_of_clinch_mountain.htm

From the 16th century until the Civil War, Appalachia was only a name for the “physiographic mountain system” (Walls 56ff, cited in Raitz & Ulack 11). However, at the end of the 19th century, this started to change and Appalachia was increasingly seen as “distinctive social, cultural, and economic region” (Raitz & Ulack 11). To gain a better understanding of the Appalachian region’s geography two different approaches of regionalization, one physical-geographic and the other one governmental and economical are presented.

Raitz and Ulack state that a well-known attempt of “physical regionalization” was made by Nevin Fenneman. It was first debated in 1913 and later published in his works *Physiography of the Western United States* 1931 and *Physiography of the Eastern United States* 1938 (Fenneman, cited in Raitz & Ulack 14). “ [...] Fenneman’s geomorphic regions of the United States are defined by existing differences in topography and elevation as affected by the three control factors of structure, process and stage.” His Appalachian Highlands consist of six provinces that spread “[...] from the Gulf Coastal Plain to the St. Lawrence River (including the Adirondacks and New England) and from the Atlantic Coastal Plain west to the central Lowland.” This region is shaped by its mountains and relief, however, all of the provinces are not alike they all have their own characteristics and multiplicity. The four most prominent provinces are the Piedmont, the Blue Ridge, the Ridge and Valley and the Appalachian Plateaus (Raitz & Ulack 14).

The second attempt displayed is according to Raitz and Ulack (23) the most current political attempt of regionalization. In 1965 the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was created, which “is a federal state partnership that works for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia” (<http://www.arc.gov/>). The ARC regionalization seems to be guided by the Appalachian mountain’s physiography but also considers other features of the area since the economy is an important factor. Although the ARC recognized the area’s uniformity, they created three different subregions “[...] each with distinctive income, population, and employment characteristics and thus with distinctive development needs,” the Northern, Central and Southern Appalachia (Appalachian Regional Commission 10ff, cited in Raitz & Ulack 24). However, in 2009 “ARC revised the classification [...] by dividing the Region into smaller parts for greater analytical detail and by using current economic and transportation data” (http://www.arc.gov/research/MapsofAppalachia.asp?MAP_ID=31).

Figure 1 ARC Map of Appalachia



(http://www.arc.gov/research/MapsofAppalachia.asp?MAP_ID=31)

David Whisnant once said that, “Appalachia’s boundaries have been drawn so many times that it is futile to look for a ‘correct’ definition of the region” (Whisnant 134, cited in Raitz & Ulack 29). And this is true, the Appalachian region is a broad and varied area and many attempts to capture it have already been made. Furthermore, the diversity of the region is also reflected in the purposes guiding the regionalization process, which can be physical geographic, sociocultural, governmental or cognitive (Raitz & Ulack 11ff). The broad range of slightly different regionalizations makes it difficult to draw the one and only correct boundary for Appalachia. Therefore, I believe that one has to decide which map of Appalachia suits one’s purpose best and pick one according to that.

This paper is concerned with three places in the Appalachian Mountains. One is set in the hill country of Northeast Mississippi, and the others are set in hollows in the Virginian mountains. All three of them belong, according to the ARC map to Appalachia, however, to different parts of it, as the north-eastern part of Mississippi is entirely marked as Southern Appalachia and the western part of Virginia is marked as Southern Central and Central Appalachia the closer it comes to the Kentucky border. Nevertheless, other regionalizations as Fennemen’s exclude Mississippi completely from the Appalachian Mountains. Though some regionalizations may argue that North-Eastern Mississippi is

not part of the Appalachian Mountains, my analysis of *Oral History*, *The Devil's Dream* and *Losing Battles* will prove that, although the places are located in different subregions and, therefore, display different features, they also have a lot in common which can be seen in the detailed analysis of the books.

2.2. History: Appalachian Settlement

*"Jack went a-sailing with trouble on his mind, to leave his native country and his darling dear behind. Sing ree sing low, so fare you well my dear."*⁴

In *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, which was presented in 1893 at the conference of the American Historical Association, Frederick Jackson Turner put forward a new theory, namely the essential role of the American frontier during "the development of American civilization" (Bartlett 620).

Indeed the American frontier, which symbolizes the border that was drawn between occupied land used for agriculture and uninhabited wild land, is a crucial part of the settlement process in the North American South and therefore of great relevance in examining its history (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/american-english/frontier?q=frontier>).

The southern frontier began with Jamestown and the beginnings of Virginia and spread northward into Maryland and southward along the coast eventually to embrace North and South Carolina, Georgia, and north Florida. Pioneers from the southern coastal spilled over the Appalachians into Tennessee and Kentucky. (Bartlett 621)

Great parts of Appalachia were Native American territory at the time of European colonization in the early 1600s (Raitz & Ulack 87). "The first recorded explorations into the Southern Appalachians were by fur traders associated with the Englishman Abraham Wood" (Darke 27). The fur trade that brought Europeans and Native Americans into contact, seemed to be an attractive business for both parties. However, most of the Native Americans loathed the traders for the reason that they were ruthless tradesman who did not hesitate to make them drunk before business and were to blame for many alcohol addictions (Darke 28ff). Finally, "[w]hen hostilities erupted into war between the French

⁴No.55 "Jack Went A-Sailing" sung by Mrs. Gentry at Hot Springs, N. C., Aug. 26, 1916, cited in Sharp Cecil's *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* taken from <http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/english-folk-songs/southern-appalachians%20-%200289.htm>

and the British in the 1750s, [the] English fur trade west of the Appalachian mountains collapsed” (Darke 32). In 1754 the French and Indian War left the British in charge of the Appalachian area, who “forbade all white settlement beyond the Appalachian Front,” which made the Native Americans feel secure (Raitz & Ulack 90). However, this safety ended when the British domination came to a halt after the American Revolution in 1776, in which the Native Americans supported the British Empire. “The British could offer them only little protection [...] and the American forces repaid the Cherokee’s [sic] political ambivalence by destroying more than fifty of their towns” (Dykeman & Stokely 37, cited in Raitz & Ulack 90). Additionally, the location of gold on territory occupied by Native Americans, “in northern Georgia in 1829”, initiated the Georgia legislature to pass laws that made it easier to seize native land without the possibility to protest, and led later on to the removal of the Native Americans from the area (Raitz & Ulack 91). Nevertheless, Darke claims that the Appalachian frontier showed already signs of change prior to the American Revolution. He states that

[d]uring these middle decades of the eighteenth century, the Appalachian frontier changed drastically. The interest of the Europeans, particularly the British, became increasingly concerned with land title. This was manifest first with the growing interest of speculators in large western claims, then by numerous yeoman-settlers who began to occupy the more fertile fringe areas of the mountains. As the area attracted more settlers, the forest began to change. Small acreages were cleared, and the mountain valleys began to move toward a predominately yeoman-farm economy and away from the Indian-dominated forest-fur economy. (32ff)

A significant shift of interests took place already before the American Revolution which continued afterwards. The Europeans and New Englanders saw the potential of the Western land, the possibility to make money on it, to populate and cultivate it. Yet this was not an easy proposition since the area was occupied by Native Americans.

According to Raitz and Ulack the Native Americans’ existence in the Appalachian Mountains could have had an influence on the settlement process. Nevertheless, other reasons contributed to it as well. Land was often not efficiently surveyed and recorded, only a small number of safe property and titles existed and acreage prices were high (92).

Before the American Revolution, British development firms usually owned the licenses to territory at the king’s convenience. A method that was applied in Virginia, by such a firm, is the “Head Right” model, which means that families were given 50 acres per person if they could afford the transfer costs. However, after the English lost their

influence, the land division in the West was the Americans' responsibility (Raitz & Ulack 92).

Later, in the 1770s, firms were developed that bought Native American grounds and established the foundation for planned towns and settlements on it. However, such procedures were infrequent and frequently terrestrial arrangements were more informal, made by individual persons (Raitz & Ulack 92). Following the American Revolution and the victory over the Iroquois, the number of planned resettlements of New Englanders into Appalachia New York rose. Especially appealing to migrants was the possibility to get hold of officially assessed property with well-defined borders (Billington 255, cited in Raitz & Ulack 92ff). Nevertheless, the unregulated sales of land led to problems like "speculation and land-price inflation," therefore, an effort of regulation was made by forbidding the purchase of more than 300 acre per person. However, this regulation was useless when more European settlers arrived, who mostly disobeyed this order (Raitz & Ulack 93). "Many of the new arrivals were poor and could not afford to buy land. They passed through the settled communities in the southeastern counties to the backcountry, where the squatted on vacant land" (Raitz & Ulack 93).

The uncertain titles of the bountiful ground in the Ridge and Valley and the high costs on the securely licensed property in Pennsylvania brought many settlers to the South. In the counties of Virginia lots of land was granted to soldiers who fought in the French Indian - and the Revolutionary Wars and assigned and sold to speculators. However, this system was rather uncontrolled and chaotic, immigrants inhabited untitled territory and speculators often traded property that belonged to soldiers. Most of the territorial boundaries were not clear and not persistent, furthermore, maps used for the process of land division were often incorrect. Conflicts over land holdings led to legal actions which caused the movement of "illegal" settlers to other grounds, as for example the frontier. Appalachian migrants often displayed the behavior of leaving their farmland once they had cultivated it for a couple of years. This kind of behavior may have been influenced by the fact that many Appalachians were forced to abandon their properties due to lawsuits against them and the Appalachians' inner need for individualism and freedom (Raitz & Ulack 93ff). Additionally, "[i]t is also probable that the 'freedom and democracy' that settlers sought on the open frontier implied either clear land titles or the right to squat on unclaimed land as much as it suggested behavioral license" (Raitz & Ulack 94).

In conclusion one may stress the fact that the settlement in the Appalachian Mountains has a long and complicated history, which is marked by its Native American origin, the banishment of Native Americans, wars and the land hunger of the European and North American citizens. Furthermore, the region's high relief and its exceptional environmental features are reasons for the delay of settlement in the area. These special circumstances attracted certain kinds of inhabitants whereas they rejected others. All of these aspects caused by human interference or geographic conditions are responsible for the unique course of Appalachia's history.

2.3. Settlers: Their Culture and Traditions

*"The hard-working miner, his dangers are great, so many while mining have met their sad fate, while doing their duty as all miners do, shut out from the daylight and darling ones too."*⁵

As diverse as Appalachia's environmental features are are its immigrants, and therefore the cultures displayed in the region. "Each of the three coastal culture hearths was basically English in character, but by 1720 Germans and Scotch-Irish began to arrive. They were joined by Welsh, French Huguenots, Irish, Swiss, and other north Europeans" (Raitz & Ulack 113). The new colonies offered a "liberal leadership" which seemed promising to those who wanted to leave their homes because of intolerance towards their denominations. On their quest for freedom and for little meddling in personal and professional matters they came to Pennsylvania and to a certain extent spread westwards (Raitz & Ulack 115).

According to Raitz and Ulack "[b]y the second decade of the nineteenth century, the major national groups in Appalachia continued to be English, Scotch-Irish and German with smaller numbers of Welsh, French and other northern European groups" (125). Problems in Europe and the need of "miners and industrial workers," particularly in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, influenced the immigration process. Presumable reasons for the high Irish involvement in this movement are that "economic stress in Ireland had encouraged outmigration by the 1820s, but when the potato famines of the 1840s prevented even subsistence farming, the Irish began immigrating to America in

⁵ "The hard-Working Miner" sung by James Howard, cited in John A. Lomax's *American Ballads and Folk Songs* taken from <http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/american-ballads-and-folk-songs/american-ballads-&-folk-songs%20-%200537.htm>

large numbers” (Raitz & Ulack 126). During this period the Irish emigrants often wanted to escape the hunger and the hopeless situation in Ireland and were drawn to the coal mines in the Appalachian region. Although the perspective of work seemed promising, life and work in the mountains were hard and led to other problems (Raitz & Ulack 126). “Occupational hardship and the miserable living conditions of the dingy homes provided by the coal companies broke men’s spirits, and high levels of alcoholism threatened family cohesiveness” (Raitz & Ulack 126). Though the Irish formed a big group in Appalachia, they had hardly any political rights and their living conditions did not improve. This led to the foundation of the Molly Maguires, an Irish vigilance committee (Raitz & Ulack 126). “The growing militancy of the Irish and the murders and terrorists activities of the Mollies led the coal owners to look elsewhere for more-docile and more-pliant miners” (Raitz & Ulack 126). This caused the move of Eastern and Southern Europeans into this region between 1880 and 1920. However, living conditions remained hard and working in the mines was dangerous, which cost many miners’ lives. In the 1920s, during the coal depression, many Eastern Europeans left the Appalachian mining towns, but many of their descendants stayed in Appalachia and still live side by side with their Irish neighbors (Raitz & Ulack 126ff).

Since Appalachia had a broad range of immigrants from various European countries, it is difficult to pinpoint where exactly all their traditions come from. Raitz and Ulack comment on that matter,

Many of the cultural elements that eventually were to diffuse into Appalachia were Indian, English, German, or Scotch-Irish. Because the Germans and Scotch-Irish often outnumber other European groups and adopted those artifacts and practices that best suited their frontier situation, they became the principal carriers of innovation into the region. (117)

Some traditions which the immigrants took with them were religion, the practice of distilling alcohol, speech habits and folk-music.

Concerning religion, the New World offered an extraordinary context. Many settlers took their religion with them and often nationality and denomination coincided (Raitz & Ulack 130). “The English came from Nonconformist (Puritan) roots, and the Scotch-Irish, similarly, were Presbyterians. The Germans included Reformed, Lutheran, and Moravian church members as well as radical sectarians such as Dunkers and Mennonites” (Albanese 1275). Moreover, the Appalachian Mountains with their isolated valleys and hollows provided surroundings in which a unique “religious expression” could develop (Albanese 1275). Albanese states that the Appalachian religion is rooted in

paradox since “[t]here were love and preference for the natural world and, at the same time, awe at the inscrutable and largely Calvinist (and unnatural) God who controlled life” (1275). Influenced by these attitudes, Presbyterian churches developed soon in the Appalachian region, followed by the establishment of Baptism, Methodism, the Christian Church and Pentecostalism (Albanese 1275). Even nowadays, most of the Appalachian towns still display a wide selection of different churches (Raitz & Ulack 130ff).

Scotland and Ireland are the home of the “white whiskey”, which represented a traditional way of making money and was seen as the “water of life” (Raitz & Ulack 140). “When these people migrated to America and made their way to the frontier, they brought the taste for spirits and knowledge of its manufacture with them” (Raitz & Ulack 140). To nearly all mountain communities belonged a member who produced whisky to make his income, which the federal government identified “as a source of revenue” (Raitz & Ulack 140). “In the 1790s, [...] a federal liquor excise tax was levied,” which led to a rebellion (Raitz & Ulack 140). The farmers refused to pay and fought the revenue officers. These laws contributed to the fact that some farmers moved deeper into the mountains so that no officers could find and tax them (Raitz & Ulack 140). “Illicit distilling persisted and flourished in the South largely for economic reasons: corn liquor brought higher prices than did the unprocessed vegetable; it was readily marketable; it assured a steady income in the poorly developed, economically unstable region; [...]” (Foy 696ff).

Regarding the southern speech habits, Michael Montgomery wrote that, “[f]ew traits identify southerners as readily as their speech. For better or for worse, the way that southerners use the language is often noticed first by non-southerners and draws the most comment from them” (761). Southerners are often recognized through their dialect. The dialect spoken in the Ozark Mountains and in Appalachia is called *Mountain English* and can be split up into *Ozark English* and *Appalachian English* (Blanton 777). According to Bathany Dumas, Mountain English “[differs] from other dialects in its choice of words, its pronunciation of words, its meaning of words and phrases, and its use of grammatical structures” (74). Mountain English is often described as an “old-fashioned” variety that makes use of “colorful figures of speech”. Romanticization and stereotypes have often led to the impression that the dialect is frozen as some people claim that it sounds like “Elizabethan and Shakespearean English”, that early settlers from Great Britain, spoke in Appalachia (Blanton 777). “But Mountain English is, in fact, no more frozen than any

other variety of American English; all varieties retain archaisms, as well exhibit features in various stages of change” (Blanton 777).

Finally, and for this paper most essentially, the Appalachian immigrants brought with them the tradition of making music. Once referred to as hillbilly music, country music has its roots in “folksongs, ballads, dances and instrumental pieces” that Anglo-Celtic immigrants took with them to North America (Malone & Neal 1ff). Therefore, in the past this kind of music was often perceived as unique. The Appalachian Mountains seemed to be an exotic area, which was frozen in time and where “Elizabethan folkways” of early settlers were sustained. This also related to the music of this region, it was seen as the music of a disappearing culture and, therefore, people felt an urge to preserve it (Malone *Encyclopedia* 987ff). However, this kind of music was often falsely perceived as “ancient” and “frozen” by many people. As soon as the lives of these early settlers changed, the music modified as well. Song texts were transformed to reflect their new lives and circumstances (Malone & Neal 4).

All in all, Appalachian traditions have to be seen “in the context of historic migrations patterns that brought people of diverse backgrounds into a place of extraordinary environmental variety” (Raitz & Ulack 143). The people immigrating to Appalachia had to face a unique situation. They were far away from home, often alone because they left family and friends back home, and they were confronted with a new land that was very different from what they had been used to. The mountains were a rough area where the people had to face a wild nature that was partly barren and difficult to farm and, therefore, not really profitable. These factors, the hard jobs and working conditions, the region’s isolation and the later coal depression, contributed to the region’s poverty and hardship for which the Appalachian mountains are known. The challenging conditions people lived in created the need for a community that stood together and helped each other out in tough times. Sharing each other’s traditions and creating a new unique culture in the mountains was definitely one way of forming such a group.

3. Music

“For his love of ‘Kerry dancing,’ sweet the Irish poet sings; But to me far more entrancing, as returned on memory’s wings, are the dances and the luncheons in the

cabins long ago, and the way we shook the puncheons to the strains of Old Jim Crow.”⁶

Country music is not only popular in the United States of America, but it is well known and admired all around the world (Malone & Neal 1). Twentieth century country musicians, like Johnny Mercer, Hoagy Carmichael, Allen Toussaint, Tom T. Hall, Dolly Parton and many more, are a good example for the worldwide success of this kind of music (Malone *Encyclopedia* 985). However, before the success of this music started and this musical style had a worldwide fan community, it was only practiced by people in the South of the USA, to be more precise in the Appalachian Mountains, which can be seen as the birthplace of American country music.

3.1. Folk Background

*“Whar hae ye been a’ day, My boy Tammy? Whar hae ye been a’ day, My boy Tammy?
I’ve been by burn and flow’ry brae, Meadow green and mountain grey, Courting o’ this
young thing Just come frae her mammy.”*⁷

*“Where have you been all the day, my boy Willie? Where have you been all the day,
Willie, won’t you tell me now? I have been all the day courtin’ of a lady gay. But she is
too young to be taken from her mother.”*⁸

*“Oh where have you been, Billy Boy, Billy Boy? Oh where have you been, charming
Billy? I have been to seek a wife, she’s the joy of my life, She’s a young thing and cannot
leave her mother.”*⁹

These stanzas are three versions of the same song, namely *Billy Boy*, which appeared presumably in the 19th century in England and was originally called *My Boy Tammy*, *Charming William* or *Willie Lad* (<http://www.contemplator.com/england/billyeng.html>). Looking at the content and the question answer format of the three stanzas it becomes

⁶ “Dancing in the Old Time”, cited in William Lightfoot Visscher’s *Bluegrass Ballads* taken from <http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/bluegrass-ballads/bluegrass-ballads%20-%200148.htm>

⁷ “My Boy Tammy” (Scottish Version) from Hector MacNeill, cited in Sir George Douglas’ *The Book of Scottish Poetry* taken from http://literaryballadarchive.com/PDF/MacNeill_5_My_Bonny_Tam.pdf

⁸ “Billy Boy” (English Version), cited in Burl Ives’ *The Burl Ives Song Book* taken from <http://www.contemplator.com/england/billyeng.html>

⁹ “Billy Boy” (American Version), cited in Hal Leonard Corp.’s *Golden Encyclopedia of Folk Music* taken from <http://www.contemplator.com/america/billyboy.html>

clear that these are versions of the same song even though the wording is different (Meredith 177). The songs' phrasing already suggests a chronological order which can also be related to their origin. So how did these forms come to exist?

The geographer George Carney stresses the role of immigration in examining the spread of "musical phenomena" ; the reason therefore is that humans take their "cultural traits" with them no matter where they go (Carney 5, cited in Meredith 170). This is also what happened to the songs presented above. Immigrants transported their traditions to the new world but as their lives changed their music did as well. This means that this kind of music was not as "ancient" and "frozen" as it was perceived by many people. It transformed as soon as the lives of these early settlers did. Frequently, this happened by modifying song texts to make them more appropriate to their current environment (Malone & Neal 4).

The ballads were modified locally, evolving by a sort of specification process, in isolation and far from their common ancestor. It is fascinating to consider how ballads could survive in the heritage of a people unconnected to its source for two centuries or more and retain enough of the original form to be recognised and classified. The answer may lie in their usefulness and relevance to ongoing cultural needs. (Stock, cited in Meredith 175)

Probably the practicality of this tradition combined with the isolation of the mountains led to the ballad's permanent appearance in the Appalachian region. When settlers moved to the mountains, the area's geography and mountainous character separated them from the costal cities and other settlers, which made communication between them difficult. Under these circumstances the expansion of fresh cultural impacts was hindered and familiar traditions were reinforced (Meredith 174). Additionally, this kind of music fulfills cultural needs as it offers a form of amusement, at social events or private gatherings, or it has a religious purpose, at services or other religious events as christenings, funerals and many more. Sharing these traditions connected the Appalachian settler and helped them to create the region's social identity (Hogg & Vaughan 123) or an Appalachian collective self, "[which] differentiates 'us' from 'them'" (Brewer and Gardner, cited in Hogg & Vaughan 125). To conclude, the mountains solitude and the humans' cultural requirements favored the continuous existence of balladry in the Appalachian region (Meredith 174ff).

Since a large percentage of the Appalachian citizens were "uneducated and illiterate," ballads were passed on from generation to generation in the oral tradition until

the 18th and 19th centuries when they were collected and put into writing by “folkloric scholars” (Meredith 178).

One of the first scholars who wrote and published five groundbreaking works on balladry, entitled *The English and Scottish Ballads* (1882-1898), was the Harvard professor Francis James Child. He collected numerous ballads and retraced their roots through many centuries and various countries (Meredith 169). The reward for Child’s extensive studies is that “[...] the traditional ballads are now known to musicologist and folklorists simply as “ ‘Child Ballads’ and are referred to as Child No. 1, No. 2, and so on” (Meredith 169). Approximately forty years later Child was succeeded by two other folklorists, John Lomax, who produced *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (1910), and Cecil Sharp, who published *Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians* (1917) (Malone *Writing* 385). Malone and Neal state that Sharp made the “first attempt” to collect the “musical notation as well as the lyrics” of Appalachian folksongs (27). At the time these scholars were active, the music was not planned for the stage and mostly unknown to community outsiders. Mountain vocalists sang in a “high, lonesome voice” similar to the tune of a fiddle, in an inconspicuous way. Rather than performing in public, they sang their songs, about personal stories or “traditional tales,” in a private circle of friends, family members or only for themselves (Langrall 38). However, Child as well as Lomax and Sharp overlooked main elements of this music (Meredith 169ff, Malone *Writing* 385, Malone & Neal 27). For instance, bawdy elements of cowboy music (Lomax), and religious, instrumental music and dance tunes (Sharp) (Malone *Writing* 385, Malone & Neal 27). Malone and Neal state on that matter

An understanding of southern rural music was hampered by the reluctance of both folk scholars and high-art exponents to see it as it really was: that is, a thoroughly hybrid form of music which shared Old World and American traits, and which revealed itself as both a commercial and a folk expression. More important it was difficult for such observers to see southern rural culture as it really existed: a culture that was neither static nor pure. (Malone & Neal 27)

Although the settlers maintained the cultural tradition of balladry, the ballads were modified and adapted to their new circumstances of life. Settlers from different nations and various cultural backgrounds came in contact in the Appalachian region. These people exchanged songs and melodies among other things and created a new type of music that was typical and unique for this rural area (Malone & Neal 4).

British at its the core, but overlain and intermingled with the musical contributions of other ethnic and racial groups who inhabited the vast southern region. [...]

British migrants came in contact with other peoples, whom they often fought, traded, and worked with, made love to, and sang and danced with: the Germans of the Great Valley of Virginia; the Indians of the backcountry; Spanish, French, and mixed-breed elements in the Mississippi Valley; the Mexicans of South Texas; and, of course, blacks everywhere. [...] Of all southern ethnic groups, none has played a more important role in providing songs and styles for the white country musician than that forced migrant from Africa, the black. (Malone & Neal 4)

Although country music is often perceived as one of the greatest examples of “pure white” American music, it adopted lots of elements from Afro-American music. People belonging to white southern communities who would never socially intermingle with Afro-Americans gladly took over their musical styles and genres as “the spirituals, the blues, ragtime, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and a whole host of dance steps, vocal shadings, and instrumental techniques” (Malone & Neal 5). The guitar and the blues style, supposedly, came into the mountainous area with Afro-American workers who the road led deeper and deeper into the Appalachian ridges. Country musicians like Dock Boggs, Frank Hutchison and Dick Justice are good examples for musicians whose performance was inspired by this cultural blend, because they “[...] performed both songs and styles which they learned from local black musicians” (Malone & Neal 5).

This demonstrates that not even the Appalachian Mountains were resistant to these influences (Malone & Neal 5). Malone and Neal comment on this saying that, “[n]o southern area [...] has ever been totally isolated from the world at large” (Malone & Neal 5). According to them innovations that happened in the rest of the United States were also noticed in the South; nevertheless, the region transformed at a slow pace and regularly with relatively strong opposition compared to other areas. Finally, it has to be mentioned that according to Malone and Neal

[f]olk isolation was never complete. [...] [Because] [s]carcely a rural community in the decades before 1920 remained unvisited at one time or another by some kind of peripatetic agent of the world outside who brought news, business, religion, education, or amusement. (Malone & Neal 5)

Such agents often came from cities, therefore, the country areas and their music were not as purely rural as they were often perceived. Frequent forms of bringing urban tunes to the rural regions were traveling shows as circuses or the even more popular medicine shows. The medicine show included a doctor selling patent medicine and entertainers, who played instruments, sang and told jokes to amuse the audience. For many country musicians these shows were a chance to gain “show business experience,” and this was the start for their “professional careers”. These shows were the first “commercial outlet

for country musicians [...]” (Malone & Neal 6). Another way of introducing the countryside to city culture, even more usual, was the mobility of country women and men. It is a conflicting bond that links the country people to the city. On the one hand the urban places were known as “centers of vice” and “lost innocence” but, on the other, the youth longed for their benefits, a chance to find work and to break free from the country life and its obligations, and finally a place of fun and entertainment. For the connection of the countryside and the towns the railroad played an influential part. This form of transport offered new kinds of work, unrelated to agriculture; it enabled people to flee from undesired obligations and gave them the chance leave for more promising destinations (Malone & Neal 7ff).

No one can document the number of people who have lain awake in quiet and darkened farmhouses listening to the lonesome wail of a distant freight train or have seen it belching smoke as it thundered down the mountainside and longed for the exciting world that the iron monster seemed to symbolize. (Malone & Neal 8)

Another essential factor in the South’s musical development was religion. Country music developed in a community in which religion was ubiquitous. The church members were influenced by their denominations in many areas of their lives. The musical biography of many rural southerners was linked to their churches, they acquired singing skills, attitudes and ideologies there; therefore, this even shaped their non-religious way of making music. Southern religious music of the past passed through a variety of changes and influences over the centuries which all contributed to the way country music appears today. During the colonial times psalms were sung in Protestant American churches; the American Revolution changed this practice and hymns and British Methodist tunes entered the competition with spiritual American vocalists (Malone & Neal 10ff). Certain features of camp meeting melodies can still be found in country music as “[s]imple, singable melodies and song texts characterized by choruses, refrains, and repetitive phrases [...]” (Malone & Neal 11). From approximately 1850 to 1900 southern religious music came from all kinds of sources, “traditional British hymnody, [...] American revivalism, [...] anonymous folk composers, [...] Negro sources, and, most important, from the gospel composers of post–Civil War America” (Malone & Neal 11ff). Additionally, the renaissance of the Holiness-Pentecostal movement around 1900 supported the music’s “folkness.” “Pentecostalism was a genuine folk religious movement, with mostly untrained, itinerant ministers who preached to poor people like themselves” (Malone & Neal 13). Pentecostal vocalists and musicians were offered more

independence concerning singing and instrumental choices compared to other religious congregations. “[...] Pentecostal singers tended to be freewheeling in style, with open-throated, expressive voices. Instrumentally, they were even liberated” (Malone & Neal 13).

The music that developed under this broad range of influences, religious or worldly, is the traditional country music the United States are known for today. All the developments and influences this kind of music has undergone led to the fact that a great variety of manifold songs existed in the 1920s when the music’s commercialization process started (Malone & Neal 14).

At the core of country repertory, however, was the store of traditional songs, both British and American. Love songs, children’s songs, nonsense songs, and even a few bawdy songs [...]. Many of the traditional items were ballads; [...]. [However] Southerners gradually forgot the ballads of their ancestors, but they did not soon abandon the ballad form. They adopted songs from other regions such as the cowboy ballads, political assassination songs [...] and they also composed their own. Train wrecks, murders, mountain feuds, fires, mine disasters, labor disputes, bad men, lovers’ quarrels, war experience were only a few of the topics that appealed to the ballad makers. (14ff)

To sum up, American country music is the result of a long and manifold developing process in which immigration, geographical factors and the intermixture of different cultures and nationalities play an essential role. Under these unique circumstances a hybrid form of music emerged in the Appalachian Mountains that managed to spread all over the world and fascinate a broad range of different people.

3.2. Early Period of Commercialism

*It was on one winter day from my home I went away
Far away from friends and home I longed to roam
But tonight I'm lone and sad just a little homesick lad
And I'm longing for my old Virginia home
I'm a lad from old Virginia bravely knocking my way back home
To that cabin home in the mountains never more let me roam.*¹⁰

The term “hillbilly” presumably first appeared in the *New York Journal* on April 23rd, 1900 characterizing a southern mountaineer as follows, “A Hill-Billy is a free and untrammelled white citizen of Alabama, who lives in the hills, has no means to speak of,

¹⁰ “My old Virginia Home” by the Carter Family taken from http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/carter-family-songs/my_old_virginia_home.htm

dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him” (Oermann 11). Only in 1925 would this term come to describe a new type of sound that emerged in the music industry, namely the “commercial country music of the South” (Malone & Neal 39, Oermann 11). The origin of this usage probably goes back to January 15, 1925 when a string band of mountaineers started recording in New York. These men from the Appalachian region were called “Hill Billies” by the music producer Ralph Peer and hence were the initial musicians to be labeled like this on a phonograph record. Nevertheless, not all the band members felt comfortable with the chosen name, which was degrading in their eyes. But this attitude changed as time passed and they witnessed how the term came to be used for the whole genre of country music (Malone & Neal 39ff). Undoubtedly, the word “hillbilly” and its connoted stereotype has triggered diverse attitudes towards it since its creation, therefore, “[i]t would be embraced as a description of style, then rejected as an insult, then embraced again as America rounded the corner of another century” (Oermann 11).

“Population density” and effortless approachability are two of the main reasons why the music business was city-directed at the time before the First World War. Of course, the music industry was also present in rural regions, but nevertheless, the people’s musical tastes were not considered, instead an effort was made to assimilate them to the city’s favors. Although “folk and rural” pieces existed, they were performed by urban musicians and not by country ones because producers assumed that city consumers would be turned off by the music’s “raw country sound.” However, the occurrence of a new communication technology, namely the radio, managed to change these thoughts and overcome the “southern rural isolation” (Malone & Neal 31ff).

Along with the automobile, the phenomenon that has exerted perhaps the most profound urbanizing influence upon rural areas is the radio, a device that in the 1920’s temporarily stifled the growth of the phonograph industry and brought a welcome measure of entertainment and information to the rural population. [...]. Social observers recognized immediately that the radio would revolutionize rural existence. It did that, while transforming American popular taste as a whole. (Malone & Neal 32)

The radio has had an immense impact on its listeners. Oermann quotes in his book several southern country music legends who stress the importance of this device for their personal lives and moreover for the South (37).

“The first radio was like heaven broadcasting into my house,” recalls Johnny Cash. “It was like there was a world outside there of space and mystery and beauty that I couldn’t have ever imagined.”

“The radio was my only way of finding out what was out there beyond the cotton fields of home,” says Charley Pride.

“It was this wonderful thing,” says Dolly Parton, “a world beyond Smokey Mountains. And boy, I lived inside that radio. You know that song [Lionel Cartwright] wrote called “[sic] I Watched It All on My Radio”[sic]? We did! We used to sit and watch the radio. I have never yet seen a movie or a television show that could compare with my imagination of listenin’ to the radio and all those great old shows.” (Oermann 37ff)

In addition, the radio did not only have an effect on its listeners, it widely influenced country music as a whole, its circulation, popularity and commercialization. Oermann comments on this matter that, “[i]t [the radio] was also the thing that turned hillbilly music into an entertainment industry” (38). This statement connects the emergence of the radio not only to changes in the South; additionally, it makes it the carrier of early country music commercialization. The radio did not just offer listeners the possibility to metaphorically leave home, it also enabled musicians to do the same and use it for their purposes. “Rural musicians saw in radio the first real opportunity to build a broad and ever-widening audience outside their home locals” (Malone & Neal 32).

Atlanta was the cradle of commercial country music (Peterson 12). “The first high-powered radio station in the South, and possibly the first to feature country music, was WSB in Atlanta” (Malone & Neal 33). All this started in March 1922 with WSB’s first broadcast, which was followed in September by the first performance of John Carson on air, who was familiar because of his appearances in “fiddle contests and political campaigns” (Malone & Neal 33). After this event a range of different rural musicians followed Carson. These broadcasting sessions continued about one year until the first “recording expeditions” made their way to Atlanta on the quest for rural performers (Malone & Neal 33). Peterson declares that in June, 1923 the first “hillbilly” records were produced by Fiddlin’ John Carson in Atlanta, who proved to the producers the potential of this unexplored music branch (5). However, Malone and Neal claim that the issue of the first recording country musician is still under discussion. For them the two performers who can presumably claim the title the most are Eck Robertson from Texas and Henry Gilliland from Oklahoma; both are also known because of their participation in fiddle contests (35).

WSB, belonging to the *Atlantic Journal*, was a pioneer in broadcasting country melodies and at the beginning of the twenties radio stations in all places in the South and

Midwest followed its example (Malone & Neal 33). Furthermore, Malone and Neal claim that Fort Worth's radio station WBAP had an essential part in the history of country music by producing presumably the premier or at least one of the earliest radio barn dances in the U.S. preceding "[...] WLS (Chicago) *National Barn Dance*, and [...] WSM (Nashville) *Grand Ole Opry*" (33). Oermann, on the other hand, suggests that WLS brought the first radio barn dance show to North America. The barn dance show featured "[...] square dancers, homey announcers, sentimental 'heart' singers, string bands, barbershop quartets, rube comics, cowboy crooners, and the like, knit together in a weekly repertory company" (Oermann 38ff). With this long list of acts *The National Barn Dance* tried to reach its declared aim that was as one broadcaster describes it that, "[t]his program is to be sincere, friendly, and informal, planned to remind, you folks of the good fun and fellowship of the barn warmings, the husking bees, and the square dances in our farm communities of yesteryear and even today" (Oermann 39). According to Malone and Neal, the directors of these early shows played an important role because they were the first participants in commercial music business that recognized the musical interests of the countryside (34).

The radio's occurrence, however, influenced the sale figures of the recording industry. During 1927 and 1932 their numbers dwindled down to "one-fortieth" of their peak period. Responsible for this trend were new advantages the radio seemed to offer as continuing entertainment and better quality. But not only did the loss to the radio affect the record production's quest for fresh sale areas and attracted them to the rural regions, some phonographic managers saw the area's potential already before (34). Malone and Neal comment on this matter as follows,

This recognition came first as a result of the new-found buying habits of American blacks in the post – World War I period. Lured by wartime prosperity and fleeing a century or more of racial oppression, blacks by the thousands migrated to northern urban centers in pursuit of employment in shipyards and mills. (34)

Mamie Smith, an Afro-American vaudeville vocalist, started recording in 1920. The popularity of her music, especially the single "Crazy Blues", triggered an upswing for another genre, the blues. The new music branch made record production firms notice that Afro-Americans had an interest in tunes recorded by other Afro-Americans. This led to music expeditions to the southern region to find such talents. Moreover, on journeys like this the foundation for "the hillbilly recording industry" was laid (Malone & Neal 34ff).

“The recording of early hillbilly talent was, in part, accidental and unexpected; it was also partly a byproduct of the black talent” (Malone & Neal 35).

As already mentioned before, the term hillbilly implies various stereotypes as this name was applied to the music these prejudices about the South were also related to its music. “Like the South itself, hillbilly music suffered and profited from the conflicting set of images held by Americans that ranged from stability and enchantment to decadence and cultural degeneration” (Malone & Neal 42). Lots of Americans connected the music to negative images of the South as “Ku Kluxism, Prohibition, sharecropping, racial violence, and religious bigotry,” others, however, favorably saw the region as place that sustains the country’s transition, holding on to “traditional values and orthodox religion” (Malone & Neal 42). According, to Malone and Neal it will be never completely clear which part this music took in the southern revival campaigns of the twenties. They state, “We simply do not know who the audience was, or why it was attracted to the music” (42). The firms producing the music and sponsors probably considered the amount of consumers was the highest among “conservative southerners” ; they inferred that the music symbolized a way of local “cultural expression”. But questions as how far the music spread northwards and why northerners and southerners listened to it remain open (Malone & Neal 42).

Only a little bit more is known about the artists of this music. “The early hillbilly musicians, for the most part, were folk performers who stood in transition between the traditional milieu that had nourished them and the large popular arena which beckoned” (Malone & Neal 43). Their way of performance was strongly connected to their cultural heritage. The southern communities they grew up in influenced their ideals and musical sense, therefore, their music derives from their neighborhood and families. The first commercial country musicians worked as “textile mill workers, coal miners, farmers, railroad men [...]” and many more; they were common workers who found the time to make music on the side. They built their community of fans among other locals and were most of the time only known in their regions, only a few of them moved around for musical purposes for example with medicine shows (Malone & Neal 43).

Concerning the songs that were performed by hillbilly musicians Malone and Neal state that, “[t]he music was ‘traditional,’ for the most part, but very little of it came over ‘on the boats’ in the forms in which it was presented in the 1920’s” (Malone & Neal 44). Initially, almost all the tunes’ origins of the time were unknown and without a name. Often the songs were passed down from generation to generation and were well known in

communities North and South, perhaps appreciated as a relic of a community that was more simplistic than the one developing in the twenties. Practically all artists adapted their songs, regardless if they were aware of it or not, texts and tunes slipped their minds and names were changed. However, hardly any of them were concerned with saving their rights until 1927 when A.P. Carter from The Carter Family appeared on the scene and started composing (Malone & Neal 44ff).

In the 1920s societies' great interest in rusticity was recognized by radio and record contractors. With this knowledge and their influential positions they often pushed artists into rural stereotypes which were troubling for some performers (Malone & Neal 51).

Often the images projected by the promoters coincided with the desires and self-conceptions of the musicians; there were hillbillies who were pleased to have the opportunity to perform and who had no pretensions of being anything other than hillbillies. But there were others who resisted the rube stereotype and who chafed at the limitations placed on their art. Above all, the hillbilly musicians were ambivalent about their status, and would become increasingly so as the decades passed. Therefore, we find within the string bands, and among the hillbilly musicians in general, a confusion about who they were and what they wanted to be. (Malone & Neal 51)

In conclusion, the South did not seem to be of any importance for the music business until the emergence of the radio brought a wind of change to the country. The new technology did not just have an impact on its listeners, it was to transform the entire music business. But not only the radio contributed to the music producers' interest in southern music. The First World War established a new market among the Afro-American population, on the quest for new talents in the South producers incidentally encountered hillbilly music. Radio and record companies noticed an affection for the countryside and rural values among the nation's population. Nostalgia could be one reason that triggered this fascination but the real reason that attracted people North and South to this music is unclear. However, certain is that this public interest shaped the genre's appearance entirely.

3.3. The following Years: All Things to All People

*She's a little ol' cowgirl from out Texas way countin' the nights 'til the fiddler plays workin' all week just doin' her thing she likes punchin' doggies but she loves to swing.*¹¹

The recording of the first hillbilly music in the 1920s was only the beginning of the long success story of country music that continues up to the present. During its long presence in the entertainment industry country music went through a great number of assimilations and modifications that reflected the circumstances and needs of varied periods and their different historical backgrounds. Country music survived the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the following war years of the Second World War, which contributed to its national growth and led to the “Boom Period”, 1946 to 1953 (Malone & Neal xff). Until today country music has undergone a great number of changes. The music's developments are reflected in each period's musical style and artist appearances. However, it would by far excel the scope of this paper to chronicle all these events, therefore, the disquisition of the following stages of country music has been limited.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s a “rediscovery and consequent romanticization of ‘the folk’ ” took place. “Southern farmers and workers, ‘ill clad, ill housed, and ill nourished,’ commanded the attention of social workers, politicians, artists and intellectuals, reformers, radicals, and folklorists” (Malone & Neal 128). Again, this led to the urge of retaining these people's cultural traditions. Music was a common form of dealing with the Depression's issues, therefore, a great wealth of ballads about these times exists. “Every struggling social group had its balladeers [...]” (Malone & Neal 129). This southern music also spread up North with northern supporters (Malone & Neal 130). Surprising, however, is that although the people faced hard times during the Depression, “ [...] the music [country music] not only survived but expanded” (Malone & Neal 93). According to Malone and Neal the recording business did not suffer as much as other areas, though, they had to arrange enormous restructurings. Although hillbilly music sales were comparably little at the time, the marginal recording cost made this music still production worthy. Presumably hillbilly musicians favored their status as “recording artists” and therefore did not mind if there was no payment involved (Malone & Neal 94ff). Moreover, in the 1930s hillbilly music's production seemed to move “from the Southeast to the Southwest”. Many new artists came from California, Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. “New performers were more influenced by ‘western’ styles, that is, by cowboy songs, ersatz and real, and by the eclectic, ‘hot dance’ music that

¹¹ “Little Ol' Cowgirl” by The Dixie Chicks taken from
http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/country-lyrics001/003593dixie_chicks-little_ol'_cowgirl.htm

evolved in southwestern dance halls” (Malone & Neal 95). This change can be related to the “popular culture of escapism” of the time. Malone and Neal argue that, “Country music audiences sought [...] escape or cathartic release through western swing dance music, cowboy songs, gospel music, and parlor songs of old-fashioned love and morality” (131).

By the end of the thirties, country music, in its myriad forms and impulses had not survived the ravages of hard times but had broadened its horizons and moved well beyond the boundaries of its original regional identity. The music, though, had changed substantially since it took shape as an industry in the early twenties. [...] And while the musicians of the Southeast and the Deep South were perpetuating certain styles and modifying others, musical winds were blowing in from the southwest – particularly from Texas – which would have far reaching and dynamic effects upon the future course of the music. (Malone & Neal 135)

The western influences brought also a change in style to the hillbilly music business. “The romantic concept of the West, shared by most Americans, has a history virtually as old as the nation itself” (Malone & Neal 138). Consequently, this means that the image of “the West and the cowboy” had been already glorified before their Hollywood and television era (Malone & Neal 138). Nevertheless, Hollywood played an important role in promoting western style musicians. Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, was responsible “for a distinct genre of filmmaking up to the early 1950s” (Malone *Encyclopedia* 989). During this period the cowboy image in country music gained more and more popularity. Malone and Neal state on that matter,

[t]he emergence of the western image in country music was probably inevitable; throughout the twentieth century the cowboy has been the object of unparalleled romantic adulation and interest. Given the pejorative connections that clung to farming and rural life, the adoption of cowboy clothing and western themes was a logical step for the country singer. (137)

This trend came from western states like California, Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana (Malone & Neal 137). Inspired by Autry and his “western” music many hillbilly musicians, who did not favor this expression, were fascinated by the western image, adopted it and soon came to see it as their own. Thus, the term western was also used for southern rural music (Malone & Neal 145).

The hillbilly often seemed close to breaking under the combined weight of depressed agricultural prices and the march of industrialization into the rural hinterlands. The dominant images alternated between the sullen, displaced farmer and the comedic buffoon. At its best, the music created in this caldron of despair

was vital and richly varied. In stark contrast, the cowboy, always serious, alone, and unfettered by communal responsibilities, seemed to grow in stature. (Peterson 81)

In the late 1930s the number of southwestern musicians rose sharply but by the late 1940s “[...] the honky-tonk and dance-hall inspired styles of the Southwest had found receptive audiences all over the nation” (Malone & Neal 174).

The Second World War triggered a relocation of the North American population. “[...] During the war year southerners moved often and in great numbers to contiguous cities in their own region [...], and to industrial-defense centers all over the United States [...].” (Malone & Neal 177). As the war led to a blending of all different kinds of people and the margin of their lives widened, country music’s “character and popularity” changed as well (Malone & Neal 177). For example, “the jukebox boom” of the 40s arose from the troops’ needs for low-budged amusement (Malone & Neal 182). Furthermore, Malone and Neal state on that matter that, “[c]ountry music was transported all over the United States by servicemen and women who listened to the professional singers and by those who formed their own amateur bands. And, ultimately, the music was carried around the world” (182ff).

After the war period the “golden age” of country music, 1946 to 1953, followed. “Later decades would bring greater material reward to country musicians, but no period would experience a happier fusion of ‘traditional’ sounds and commercial burgeoning than did the immediate post war era” (Malone & Neal 199). Wartime limitations behind them, North American citizens looked for “stability” in commodities; consequently the country’s economy changed to domesticity. These transitions affected the music industry beneficially and are the basis for this successful period. The people were looking for amusement, which the music business offered and this time they were prepared to make purchases (Malone & Neal 199).

However, the “Boom Period” was not the last era of change for country music. Many different branches and sounds emerged during country music’s existence, from the more commercial pop music sound to the “back to the roots” bluegrass tunes (Malone & Neal xff). Over the course of time there have been ups and downs in country music’s sale figures, which have to be seen within their historic contexts. Evidence that suggests this is that at the turn of the 21st century, when America faced terrorist assaults and economic problems country music gained a new audience, people who listened to country because of “its conservative, family-oriented, and patriotic lyrics and its nostalgic characteristics [...]” (Malone & Neal 467). The great interest from all different kinds of people led to the

music's commercialization, which led to changes in the performance, clothing, instruments, performance location and audience.

The heightened commercialization of these decades, along with the consequent competition among musicians, encouraged major stylistic innovation that have ever since been part of the nation's music. [...] Much of the music now bearing the "country" label has little relationship to southern, rural, or working-class life, but instead is aimed at middle-class urban listeners who presumably have little regional or class identification". (Malone *Encyclopedia* 990ff)

Furthermore, Malone and Neal comment on the topic that,

[t]he country music industry has discovered that its best interests lie in the distribution of a package with clouded identity, possessing no regional traits. The industry has striven to present a music that is all things to all people: middle-of-the-road and "American," but also southern, working-class, and occasionally youth-oriented and even rebellious in tone. (369)

Nevertheless, Malone and Neal conclude that the main listeners of country, nowadays, are still inhabitants from "the American South, the rural Midwest, and working-class communities of the West," who can still relate to the music's "traditional values and specific themes" (495).

To sum up, hillbilly or country music has undergone a great transformation. The development from the English ballad to contemporary country music was a massive step and a result of several historical circumstances as well as expanded media coverage like radio and filmmaking.

4. Authors and Texts

4.1. *Oral History and The Devil's Dream*

4.1.1. *Lee Smith – Biography*

" 'Writing comes out of a lived life,' James Still said once in an interview [with the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* on the 16th of May 1993]" (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/athome.php>). Still is a southern author who successfully wrote about the region. He proved to Lee Smith that one had not to be widely traveled and far away from home to have stories to tell. James Still made Lee Smith realize that she could stay in Appalachia and write about what she knew best, namely, her region and her people.

And after her [Lee Smith's] discovery of James Still, Smith began listening even more intently to the stories told in Grundy, taping them and writing them down. She coaxed her mother to retell tales from the past that she might have forgotten, talked to her father about ghost stories and legends of the region, and prompted her Aunt Kate to tell her [Kate's] version of the truth. (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/athome.php>)

For Lee Smith, writing has to do with who you are and where you come from and, therefore, is something biographical. Consequently, Smith's novels are deeply rooted in her Appalachian heritage. Her fifth and seventh novels, *Oral History* and *The Devil's Dream*, are also set in the region. The novels capture the Appalachian life and its development over the course of time by telling two family histories. By following the narratives of different members of the Cantrell (*Oral History*) and the Bailey family (*The Devil's Dream*) over almost a century a sense of the region is gained. For this reason, it is essential to provide the author's central biographical data before analyzing her novels (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/athome.php>).

Lee Smith was born in 1944 in the Appalachian Mountains of Southwestern Virginia, in the small coal-mining town Grundy, as the daughter of Ernest Smith, a Grundy native who owned a dime store, and Virginia Smith, a college graduate who came to town to teach in the local school (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>). Therefore, Lee Smith knows both perspectives of living in an Appalachian small town, the one of a native and insider and the other of a foreigner and outsider. Smith grew up in a family of great storytellers and, hence, soon became one herself.

[...] I grew up in the midst of people just talking and talking and talking and telling these stories. My Uncle Vern, who was in the legislature, was a famous storyteller, as were others, including my dad. It was very local. I mean, my mother could make a story out of anything; she'd go to the grocery store and come home with a story. (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>)

Since she was a little girl, Lee Smith has been interested in all kinds of stories, especially in the regional ones. As long as Smith remembers, she wanted to become an author, she even started writing her first stories at the early age of nine or ten. After attending St. Catherine high school in Richmond, Virginia, she studied at Hollins College in Roanoke. In 1966, in her senior year at Hollins, her literary career started (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/athome.php>; <http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>).

She submitted an early draft of a coming-of-age novel to a Book-of-the-Month Club contest and was awarded one of twelve fellowships. Two years later, that

novel, *The Last Day the Dog Bushes Bloomed* (Harper & Row, 1968), became Smith's first published work of fiction. (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>)

After her graduation, Smith married, the teacher and poet James Seay, gave birth to two boys and worked for newspapers, but found only little time to follow her writing career. Lee Smith taught at a high school in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and at the North Carolina State University in Raleigh. In 1981, Smith got divorced and, in 1985, she married the journalist Hal Crowther (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/athome.php>).

Finally, it has to be said that, “since 1968, she [Lee Smith] has published eleven novels, as well as three collections of short stories, and has received many writing awards” (<http://www.leesmith.com/bios/bio.php>). Although she had great success nationwide, “[...] Smith has not strayed far from her roots”, as she still lives in the same region whose people she gave a literary voice and which she describes so masterly (http://www.leesmith.com/works/leesmith_writermag_0409.pdf).

4.1.2. Lee Smith's *Oral History*: Plot and Narratology

Lee Smith's fifth work, *Oral History*, is also set in Appalachia. The novel shows, through several 1st-person and a few 3rd-person narratives, the presence of insiders and outsiders in the Appalachian community by chronicling the Cantrells' family history and the region's development over the course of time.

More precisely, *Oral History* consists of ten 1st-person and six 3rd-person narratives. Two of these six 3rd-person narratives belong to the frame narrative that begins and ends the novel. Furthermore, the first part of the frame narrative includes a short 1st-person narrative of the character Jennifer Bingham entitled *Impressions*. The frame narrative is set in the present, approximately in the 1980s; it starts when Jennifer, the granddaughter of Dory Cantrell and Richard Burlage, who was raised by outsiders to the Appalachian culture (her father and stepmother) after the death of her mother, comes to visit her “family” (Little Luther Wade and Ora Mae, their son and his family) to write about their haunted cabin in Hoot Owl Holler for her oral history project.

Following the frame narrative and Jennifer's impressions, the novel contains four parts. Part one narrates Almarine Cantrell's story through two 1st-and three 3rd-person narratives. The first part of the novel is set after 1876, the year of Almarine's birth. Granny Younger, the midwife, tells the reader about Almarine and his family, how he came to inherit his land, how he went courting, how he got involved with Red Emmy, who was supposedly a witch that laid a curse on the Cantrell family, and how he later

married and became a father. The following two 3rd-person narratives focus on Almarine and his first wife Pricey Jane, telling the tragic story of her and their first son Eli's death, which left Almarine alone with their baby daughter Dory. After this, Rose Hibbitts, also an Appalachian insider, narrates (1st-person) how she moves in with Almarine after his wife's death to take care of the family. Rose finds it really hard to stay with the emotionally disturbed and bitter Almarine, nevertheless she admits that she hoped to become more than Almarine's caretaker. As Almarine's brother's widow Vashti Cantrell appears with her daughter Ora Mae and takes over Rose's role, Rose furiously leaves and invents the story of the Cantrell family curse by telling her mother that Almarine wanted to marry her but she turned him down because there is a curse on the whole hollow. The first part ends with a 3rd-person narrative at the burying-ground that describes Pricey Jane and Eli's funeral. In conclusion, it has to be mentioned that the two 1st-person narrations by Granny Younger and Rose Hibbitts play a crucial role in the first part of the novel because both women are community insiders and believe in Appalachian mysteries like witches, which gives the reader an insight into these legends. Granny Younger as a healer tells the reader a lot about superstitions and traditions she practices, therefore her narration of the witch tale is embroidered with mysteries. As Rose Hibbitts is part of the superstitious mountain community as well, with her mother succeeding Granny Younger as a healer, she believes in those mysteries too. Additionally, other narrators imply that she suffers from a mental disorder, which might also influence her perception. This and the fact that she was hurt by Almarine's rejection raise questions about the veracity of her narration. Nevertheless, Granny Younger's bond to nature and mystical elements and Rose Hibbitts' blurred and embittered perception make the creation of the curse comprehensible and plausible to the reader.

The entire second part of the novel is devoted to Richard Burlage's journal (1st-person), which is set in 1923. Richard, a community outsider from Richmond, comes to the mountains to teach in the local school and soon engages in a whirlwind love affair with Dory Cantrell. Since Richard is an educated city man, his narration is very different from the others. Richard narrates in Standard English, whereas Granny Younger and Rose Hibbitts' narrations are told in Appalachian English dialect. Furthermore, he often comments on how fascinated he is by mountain nature and the purity of the people, which is very different from what he is used to. Although Richard seems to have a deep affection for Dory, mountain culture and environment, he often appears to feel superior to the mountaineers. At the end of the chapter, complicated circumstances and interferences

by Ora Mae, Dory's stepsister, make Richard leave without Dory, unknowing that she is bearing his twins. To sum up, Richard Burlage's journal offers an outsider's view on the community, commenting on their habits and traditions and showing his attitudes towards them but also chronicling his love affair with Dory and his feelings for her.

Part three of the novel consists of five 1st-person narratives and one 3rd-person narrative. After Richard returns to Richmond, multiple narrators describe what happens to Dory who is now pregnant, unmarried and alone. The first narration by Little Luther Wade, a community insider who is presented as a typical mountain musician, is placed right after Richard left. In his narration Little Luther Wade confesses that he had always been in love with Dory and that he is planning to marry her although she is pregnant with another man's child. The second narration by Mrs. Ludie Davenport shows that although the hollow's curse was invented a long time ago, superstitious mountain folk still believe in it, relating Dory's situation and other misfortunes of the Cantrells to the curse. The following 3rd-person narrative entitled *At the Smith Hotel* focuses on a conversation between two lovers, Justine Poole, the hotel owner and community insider, and Aldous Rife, a university-educated, elderly Methodist minister who was a circuit rider in his youth. As Aldous has lived among the community members already for thirty years, he understands both points-of-view, namely the one from a community insider and that of an outsider. In his discussion with Justine he tries to make her understand that a Cantrell family curse does not exist. He explains that the living conditions in the mountains are hard and that bad things happen to all the people living there. The next narratives are told by Jink Cantrell and Ora Mae Cantrell, Dory's half-brother and stepsister. Both of them comment on Dory's situation and on their private matters. Ora Mae, for example, tells about her love affair with Parrot Blankenship. Ora Mae's narration tells the reader a lot about her self-perception. Her attitudes towards Dory, the whole Cantrell family and the role she believes to play in the story give the reader crucial information on her character. Jink Cantrell's narration is language-wise very interesting because as a young boy he attended Richard Burlage's class. Being educated by a community outsider influences the way he speaks and Standard English intervenes with his Appalachian English dialect. Therefore, he starts to correct himself during his narration. Finally, the chapter ends with a journal entry by Richard Burlage in the 1st-person, who returns to the mountains in 1934 to produce a collection of Appalachian photos. This is the time of the Depression and he describes how the area has changed and suffers under these circumstances. When

Richard drives by Dory's house and sees her twins, he is unaware that they are his children and remarks that these lovely girls do not belong in such a harsh environment.

The final and fourth part has two narratives, one in the 1st-person and another one, a 3rd-person, frame narrative that ends the novel. The 1st-person narrative is told by Sally, the daughter of Dory Cantrell and Little Luther Wade. Sally was born in 1926. At the time of her narration she is already a grandmother, which places her narration approximately sometime in the 1970s or 80s. Sally describes her family history to her husband Roy. She tells him how she and her siblings grew up together and what they did with their lives, how her mother Dory suffered from depression and killed herself, and how her father afterwards married Dory's stepsister Ora Mae, how she underwent a difficult period in her life, married for the first time and had children and finally, she tells him about her sister Pearl (Jennifer's mother). She explains how Pearl was always different from them, how she married and had Jennifer. Furthermore, Sally discloses that Pearl had an affair with one of her high school students, which got her fired and divorced, and brought her back to the cabin in Hoot Owl Holler where she died from birth complications. Additionally, it is revealed that one month after Pearl's death, Ora Mae's son Billy, who suffered from a nervous break-down, was shot by Pearl's high school boy in his rocking chair. Sally's narration is very different from the others of community insiders; one can clearly see that she displays fewer features of Mountain English and is not as superstitious as former narrators, as, for example, Granny Younger. The book ends with the frame narrative of Jennifer again. In the end, Jennifer is confused by her "family's" behavior. The fact that she does not know anything about her mother's death, the family's history and that she is not really related by blood to any of the people present contributes to this. First confused and frightened by their behavior, she explains to herself that they do not know better because they are primitive people, like an early tribe, just living in a modern time. Finally, a summary about the different characters' futures is given, which tells the reader that Ora Mae and Little Luther Wade's son Almarine will turn the haunted cabin in Hoot Owl Holler into the theme park called *Ghostland*.

To conclude, Lee Smith manages to use literary dialect effectively and thereby offers the reader plenty of additional information about the different narrators. Only by reading a short excerpt of a narration, the educational degree (educated/uneducated), origin (Appalachia/Elsewhere) and also the period in which the narrator lived (19th century/20th century) become clear. Additionally, Smith's technique of using multiple narrators enables the reader to see the happenings from various angles and learn more

about the different characters, their self perception and external perception, which immediately call into question the reliability of the narration.

4.1.3. Lee Smith's *The Devil's Dream*: Plot and Narratology

Lee Smith's seventh novel, *The Devil's Dream*, chronicles the family history of the Baileys, a singing family living in the Virginian mountains, for over one hundred years. Similar to her earlier novel, *Oral History*, Smith chose various 1st- and 3rd-person narrators to tell the story of country music in the United States. Thus, the Bailey family serves as an example for musical development over the course of time, describing the music's way from the Appalachian Mountains to the spotlights all over America (Ramos 161).

Another similarity to *Oral History* can be found in the novel's structure. Again, the novel begins and ends with a frame narrative and is divided into five parts. All in all, the novel consists of eighteen 1st-person narratives. However, seven of them are told by the same narrator, which means that one entire part of the book is given to one person's perspective. As opposed to this, the novel's number of 3rd-person narrators is relatively small, including only five 3rd-person narrations. Different from *Oral History*, *The Devil's Dream's* 1st-person narrators consist entirely of Bailey family members and other community insiders (neighbors and in-laws), omitting the outsiders' perspectives on the region, which was an essential feature of *Oral History*.

The novel begins with the first part of the frame narrative, which is set in the 1970s, "the golden age" of country music (Ramos 162). An anonymous first-person narrator observes the happenings in the Opryland Hotel, a place that attracts lots of country music stars. While the narrator comments on the hotel's appearance and on country music in general, he/she spots a country music celebrity, called Katie Cocker. Katie is one of the bright stars of country music, she has been in the business for a long time and has undergone lots of changes parallel to her music. The narrator listens to Katie's interview. The star talks about her new album, which she is going to record with her singing family and that she has finally realized the importance of her roots. This confession ends the first frame narrative and starts the first part of the novel, which narrates the story of Katie's roots.

The first part of the novel relates the tragic story of Katie's great-great-grandparents. This part is narrated by their neighbor Old Man Ira Keen (1st-person). He recalls the ancient story because he has written a song about the stern preacher and his

beautiful and musical wife. In 1833 or 34 Moses Bailey, a strict Baptist preacher who waited his whole life desperately for a sign from God, eventually married Kate Malone, a girl from a fun-loving family of fiddlers. Due to his religion, Moses forbade the fiddle in his house, as he associated its sound with the devil's laughter. However, Kate and the children disobeyed his rules and secretly made music whenever Moses was not at home. One time Moses came back home unexpectedly and overheard their devilish tune. In a blaze of anger he beat them all as punishment, which made his children flee in the woods where his eldest boy fell off a cliff and died. Moses never forgave himself for the death of his beloved son. After this incident nothing was ever the same. Moses died early from pneumonia, Kate suffered from a mental disorder and her family took away their children. Although these incidents happened a long time ago and their home is empty now, Old Man Ira Keen can still hear ghostly fiddling from their cabin. The next narrative is a 3rd-person narration of the life of Moses and Kate's youngest son, Ezekiel Bailey, after his mother's family took him in. Ezekiel was a quiet and modest child. After he left the Bailey cabin, his life changed drastically and he was surrounded by music, which Ezekiel loved. Once, when Ezekiel was already a grown-up man, he walked home drunk and seemingly received a sign from God, which made him very religious. This experience caused him to give up music for religion. Shortly after this, he moved into the house of his old, childless preacher to assist him and his wife. In 1880, when Ezekiel was 39 years old, the preacher told him to get married and found him a wife (Nonnie Hulett). The third narration is told by Zinnia Hulett (1st-person), Nonnie's older sister. Zinnia tells the story of her spoiled sister's life and how she eventually ended up marrying Ezekiel Bailey because she was carrying another man's child. The older sister comments on how hard her life with Nonnie was, since her birth had taken their mother's life and Zinnia had to take care of everything. Additionally, her sister's admired beauty and beautiful voice gave Zinnia many reasons for jealousy. These impressions but also comments from other narrators make Zinnia appear very biased, which makes the reader question the reliability of her narration. The final narration of the first part is a 3rd-person narrative entitled "Nonnie and the Big Talker." This part tells the story of Nonnie and Ezekiel's life together. The narration describes their happy years together, how they fell in love and had six children, which kept Nonnie busy, giving her no time to dream about how talented and beautiful she was. However, when she was less occupied, Nonnie started to regret her life with Ezekiel, and she left him and the children to travel as a singer with a medicine show. To summarize, the first part of the novel presents the role music played in the lives

of the early mountain inhabitants. This opposes music with religion, two of the area's essential cultural traits. It offers various examples of how the different families related to music and religion back then, contrasting two extremes, the Baileys and the Malones. Additionally, the novel claims that the people's musicality and religiousness are, like genetic material, passed on for generations. The two 1st-person narrators make important comments on the role of music as Old Man Ira Keen suggests the narrative character of ballads, writing a ballad about Kate's story, and Zinnia Hulett disapprovingly comments on her sister's talent but explains how much attention she got for it. However, it has to be mentioned that although both characters give the reader an insight into the region's different attitudes towards music, their narrations do not seem to be entirely reliable since Old Man Ira Keen's love for Kate Malone was one-sided and Zinnia Hulett was jealous of her little sister.

1st-person narrations dominate the second part of the novel. The whole section consists of four 1st-person narrations of Bailey family members and one 3rd-person narration entitled "The Bristol Session." Whereas the first part of the novel deals with the folk background of country music, mentioning old ballads and hymns and addressing the role of music in the mountains at the end of the 19th century, the second part focuses on music's transition from folk roots to early commercialization. The first evidence of change is already given at the end of the first part, when the medicine show is described. Medicine shows offered the first possibility for many artists to reach a wider audience, away from the hollows and villages they grew up in. Nonnie took this chance, although it meant deserting her husband and children. In the second part of the novel, the music develops further as the Bailey family has their first local concerts, the first radios are introduced and the Grassy Branch Girls' first record is recorded in the Bristol session. The first two narratives of the second part are told by R.C. and Lizzie Bailey, two of Ezekiel and Nonnie's children. Both narrators tell how the family coped with their mother's disappearance. R.C. was deeply disappointed by his mother, additionally the discovery that he is not Ezekiel's son but the result of an illegitimate affair his mother had with a Melungeon¹² man, destroys his confidence in women, and leads to his disappearance from Grassy Branch for four years, drowning his sorrow in alcohol. Lizzie was ten when her mother left and was, as a result, pushed in the mother role far too early. These circumstances demanded too much from the little girl and left her in deep sorrow.

¹² "[...] Daddy told us about the Melungeons, that is a race of people which nobody knows where they came from, with real pale light eyes, and dark skin, and frizzy hair like sheep's wool" (Smith *Devil's* 58).

Although her living conditions improved when R.C. returned and brought his wife Lucie Queen to Grassy Branch, Lizzie was traumatized, always experiencing family life as oppressive. Later, Lizzie left Grassy Branch to become a nurse; she died in France from “romantic fever”¹³. During their narrations both characters’ love of music becomes evident, especially Lizzie’s description of R.C. constitutes him as a very talented musician, who plays the fiddle and takes to the banjo right away, and as a gifted businessman. Also his wife Lucie is described as very enterprising and musical, therefore their musical success is no surprise to Lizzie. The third 1st-person narration is told by R.C. Bailey, again. He narrates how his brother Durwood, who also makes music with the Bailey family, brings Tampa Rainette to the family. Although R. C. believes that Tampa, who is older than Durwood and has already a 16-year-old daughter, Virgie, is not an appropriate choice for his brother, her amazing voice gives R. C. the idea of a sister act¹⁴. The fourth and last 1st-person narration of the chapter is by Alice Bailey, Durwood and Tampa’s daughter. Alice tells how her father, her younger sister and she went to Uncle R.C.’s house, who had the first radio in the area, to listen to Grand Ole Opry. Her narration is a precise description of what they heard that night and how fascinating it was for them. Smith’s depiction of the radio show and the appearance of the radio in the region seem to be exact historical descriptions. Finally, the last narration “The Bristol Session” (3rd-person) tells the story of the Grassy Branch Girls’ (Lucie, Tampa, Virgie and R.C.) first recording. Thereby, Lee Smith included many historical facts about the hillbilly recording industry. All in all, the second chapter of the novel presents the Baileys as a perfect example of a singing mountain family due to the great number of musical family members, their musical background and the talented patriarch R.C.. In addition to that, a precise description of the starting point of country music’s commercialization is given, including names, dates and conditions.

The third part of the novel consists of two 1st-person narrations and centers around Rose Annie Bailey Rush’s life, R.C. and Lucie’s sixth child. Her parents got Rose Annie quite late; this is why she is the same age as Durwood’s granddaughter Katie Cocker. Music-wise, the narration deals with the early commercialization and the public appearances of the Grassy Branch Girls, which left Rose Annie and the other children (her cousin Katie, Durwood and Tampa’s grandchild, and Georgia and Johnny, Tampa’s

¹³“Actually, he [Lee Smith’s friend Martha Sue Owen’s father] had rheumatic fever as a child, but we thought it was called ‘romantic fever’ ” (Smith *Conversations* 104).

¹⁴A sister act is a music group that consist almost entirely of women possessing a certain degree of kinship.

grandchildren from her eldest illegitimate daughter Virgie) often alone at home, but also deals with the music of the last community gatherings during Rose Annie's childhood and the children's own musical appearances. Furthermore, the Depression, which brought the Grassy Branch Girls' success to an end, is mentioned. In the following years of the second narration, when Rose Annie is an adult, country music has developed into a successful and popular genre. The first narration in the third part is told by Rose Annie herself. She tells about her life in Grassy Branch and her romance with Johnny Rainette, Virgie's son, who grew up with her. The two teenagers' love is not accepted by Rose Annie's protective family, who believes that Johnny is a troublemaker and not well-suited for their precious girl. Consequently, when their affair is uncovered and Rose Annie awaits an illegitimate child, the two are separated. Although Rose Annie returns to Grassy Branch and makes a fresh start, marries and has children, she cannot get over Johnny. The loss of Johnny and their child seems to be responsible for Rose Annie's mental problems (depressions, schizophrenia) although she had already exhibited a disposition for these illnesses during her childhood. The second 1st-person narration is by Tammy Adele Burnette, Rose Annie's employee. Tammy tells more about Rose Annie's mental troubles and about the day they heard Johnny sing on the radio together in their store, which led to Rose Annie's leaving. These two narrations again contribute to the Bailey family's musical appearance, in creating another musical generation with their own tragic background story. The Bailey children Rose Annie, Katie, Georgia and Johnny represent a new era of musicians, who emerged out of the old times but who were to live in a completely different time later and therefore make very different music.

Similar to the novel's third part, its fourth part is rather short, consisting of one 3rd-person and two 1st-person narrations. The fourth part starts with a 3rd-person narration of Johnny Rainette also called "Blackjack Johnny Rains," who gives a concert in a bar. Johnny is a one-hit-wonder who can make a living with his music. However, his alcohol and drug addiction as well as trouble with the law and women, make him appear broken and unreliable. Johnny seems to correspond to the image of the rockabilly, bad boy, country musician. The second narration is a 1st-person narration by Mrs. Gladys Rush, Rose Annie's former mother-in-law. She tells how Rose Annie ran off with Blackjack Johnny Rains and left her husband and children to be with her childhood sweetheart and how they became the king and queen of country music. Mrs. Gladys Rush is fascinated by country music and its celebrities; this is also why she enjoyed it so much to take her grandchildren to their mother's fancy new mansion for a visit. In Mrs. Rush's narration,

the reader becomes aware of country music's later commercialization and the hype surrounding this kind of music. Additionally, Mrs. Rush who is nosy and interested in the life of the stars, spots trouble in paradise when Johnny disappears during their visits and refers the reader to newspaper articles, stating that Rose Annie and Johnny have marital problems. The final and third narration is told by Rose Annie and is entitled "Blue Christmas, 1959." The narration seems to be an excerpt of a conversation in which only Rose Annie's part is given. The reader can only guess which questions are asked and to whom she is talking by interpreting and relying on her comments. Her statements are very fragmentary and she mixes past and present events confusingly. During this part, the reader becomes aware that Rose Annie, who always seemed to have mental problems, was finally broken by her life with Johnny, who did not stop his bad boy behavior. In the extract, Rose Annie talks to a police officer, she seems to be unaware of what happened, but in the end confesses that "her little girl" (who only exists in her imagination) saved her from Johnny's bad behavior, bringing her a gun to shoot him. The novel's fourth part is deeply rooted in the music's commercialization, it contrasts the glamorous life of the rich and famous with the backside of the medal as gossip, alcohol and drug abuse.

The last chapter (fifth part) of *The Devil's Dream* entitled "Katie Cocker Tells It Like It Is" is entirely committed to one 1st-person narrator. In seven sections, Katie Cocker narrates the story of her life and how she developed from a little mountain girl, who sang in church, to one of the bright country stars in Nashville, who sings at Grand Ole Opry. Katie has undergone various changes since she entered the music business. In her beginnings she played a silly hillbilly girl in an all girl comedy act, then she became a honky-tonk angel, followed by a Californian country-pop singer's image, which was replaced by her appearances as a good country wife. Finally, when her third husband's death leaves her in an identity crisis, she realizes that none of these images were her decision and that she has always been guided by a manager, a husband or a lover. Most of the time, the men in her life embodied several of these functions. In the end, Katie overcomes her crisis, finding religion, and decides to record a family album with her singing kin from the mountains. To sum up, Katie's narrative accurately chronicles the genre's development and its changes. Additionally, she contrasts the genre's high values like family and religion with some of the business' risks as alcohol and drug abuse, violence and a life on the road. Finally, Katie's turn to religion and her roots bring her back to the novel's beginning in the commercialized surroundings of the Opryland Hotel.

The novel ends with the frame narrative (3rd-person), which describes the Bailey family reunion in the Opryland Hotel. It becomes obvious how displaced the old Bailey family is in this milieu by the description of their arrival. Rose Annie arrives from prison accompanied by guards, Alice looks down upon all of them because of her religious beliefs, Little Virginia and her boyfriend even find the walk through the hotel too exhausting and the almost hundred-year-old Tampa, who is pushed around in a wheelchair, can not grasp the situation. Their reunion takes place under the motto “time is money,” very contrary to former times when these people used to be and sing together although they had less. The scene reaches its peak when Mamma Tampa tells the story of the preacher son and his fiddling wife in front of the fireplace of the hotel. None of them is aware that this is the founding story of the Bailey family and not just an old legend. This scene creates the impression that the oral tradition of the mountains has been transported to the commercialized Opryland Hotel in Nashville, similar to the singing, which was moved from private stir-offs and porch evenings to a studio where the family sings for money.

To conclude, Lee Smith’s technique of integrating multiple narrators has the same effect as it has in *Oral History*, to illuminate events from various angles and perspectives. This gives the readers a deeper understanding of the situation and enables them to develop their own opinions on events. Furthermore, the author’s usage of literary dialect represents the text’s extension over a broad time span as the speaking habits change over the course of time. Yet, *The Devil’s Dream* distinguishes itself clearly from *Oral History* as it presents only narrations from community insiders. Since the outsiders’ perspective is omitted in *The Devil’s Dream*, the novel seems to pay more attention to the region’s development over the course of time and how its people’s attitudes towards music and religion changed over the generations.

4.2. Losing Battles

4.2.1. Eudora Welty – Biography

Eudora Welty’s name belongs without doubt to the list of notable southern writers and her work definitely plays an essential role in examining the region’s literary past. Welty’s novels and stories can be seen in the context of *regionalism* and *local color*, similar to the works of many other significant southern writers such as William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Thomas Wolfe, Flannery O’Conner and Walker Percy, just to name a few.

Although there are variations within the genres and interpretations of them have differed over the course of time, the common ground is that all these writers' literary works are deeply rooted in the region and in their southern heritage (Rowe 867ff). Rowe states that,

[a]lthough the terms *regionalism* and *local color* are sometimes used interchangeable, regionalism generally has broader connotations. Whereas local color is often applied to a specific literary mode that flourished in the late 19th century, regionalism implies a recognition from the colonial period to the present of differences among specific areas of the country. Additionally, regionalism refers to an intellectual movement encompassing regional consciousness beginning in the 1930s (Rowe 867).

Although local color writing appeared in other areas as well, like New England and the Midwest, the Southern way had distinctive virtues and managed to give a glimpse of this complex and paradox region (Rowe 867). Eudora Welty, as a Mississippi native who lived in the region her whole life, possessed the skills to do this brilliantly; she draws the readers into her work and provides them with an unique picture of her region. This can be clearly seen in her novel *Losing Battles*, which was published in 1970, and is set in the hill country of Northeast Mississippi. The novel tells the story of a family reunion in the 1930s during the time of the Depression. Since the author's work is connected to her heritage and the area she comes from it is essential to give some of her central biographical data before analyzing her work.

Eudora Welty was born in Jackson, Mississippi in 1909 as the daughter of Christian Webb Welty from Ohio and Chestina Andrews Welty from West Virginia. She and her two younger brothers Edward Jefferson Welty and Walter Andrews Welty grew up in a "close-knit and loving family" (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>, Marrs 1). Christian and Chestina, proud and loving parents, offered their three children a life in a protected environment (Marrs 2ff). This sheltered family life definitely had a great influence on Eudora Welty. Suzanne Marrs states in Welty's biography that, "[t]he closeness of family life was something Eudora treasured" (Marrs 3). Additionally, the fact that Eudora was raised in literature-friendly surroundings contributed to her attitude towards the written word (Marrs 2). Furthermore, Marrs mentions that, "[n]ourished by such a background, Welty became perhaps the most distinguished graduate of the Jackson Public School system" (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>). This background was also the cornerstone for Welty's academic career that led her over the Mississippi borders. After she attended Davis Elementary School and graduated from Jackson's Central High School, she started her academic career at Mississippi State College for Women in

Columbus, got her bachelor degree at the University of Wisconsin and finally completed her studies at Columbia University School of Business (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>).

As Eudora in her twenties and early thirties recalled her youth, she would realize that her childhood had been a complex one indeed. The loving family had at times proved oppressive in its protectiveness, the cohesive white community destructive in its insistence upon a racial divide and upon conventionality, her own parents models both of social standards and of rebellion from them. Her college years away from home – first in Columbus, Mississippi, then in Madison and New York – would give her the distance from which to assess a sheltered past and the courage to move beyond the self-consciously clever or openly derivative poems and stories of her youth. A writing life lay before her. (Marrs 34)

Both aspects, her sheltered family life in Mississippi and her university education away from her home state influenced Eudora Welty's works. Although Eudora enjoyed her life in New York and she planned to look for a job and to carry on her studies in the city, tragic reasons brought her back to Mississippi in 1931 when her father died of a serious illness (Marrs 35). Though Welty had dreamed to become a writer from early on, she was not ready to express "her deepest concerns [in her] fiction" yet and therefore did not publish any of her stories. Consequently, the chances to earn a living with writing were little, which led Welty to other occupational fields (Marrs 36ff, 41ff).

After her college years, Welty worked at WJDX radio station, wrote society columns for the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*, and served as a Junior Publicity Agent for the Works Progress Administration. During these years, she took many photographs, and in 1936 and 1937 they were exhibited in New York; but they were not published as she had wished (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>).

"Despite attempts to establish herself as a photographer, Eudora's first love was fiction, and fiction she continued to write" (Marrs 43). In 1936, Welty published her first short story "Death of a Traveling Salesman," five years later she published her first collection of short stories, *A Curtain of Green*. Before 1955 she kept on writing and publishing, she traveled to Europe and integrated her experiences in her work. During these fourteen years Eudora Welty wrote seven unique books; however, her productive years came to a sudden end with the illnesses and deaths of her mother and brothers (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>, Marrs 321). Marrs states on this that, "[p]ersonal tragedies forced her [Welty] to put writing on the back burner for more than a decade. Then in 1970 she graced the publishing world with *Losing Battles* [...]" (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>). Eudora Welty's successful return to the publishing

scene was followed by other releases of written works as well as photography books, TV appearances and awards. “Welty received 38 honorary doctorate degrees and more than 40 major literary awards during her lifetime” (<http://eudorawelty.org/life-works/career-highlights/>). These awards are the reward for “her own high standards, standards that made her a literary celebrity”. Because of these high ideals the author did not finish any literary work during her last thirty years although she regularly wrote throughout the time. “After a short illness and as the result of cardio-pulmonary failure, Eudora Welty died on 23 July 2001, in Jackson, Mississippi, her lifelong home, where she is buried” (<http://eudorawelty.org/biography/>, <http://eudorawelty.org/life-works/career-highlights/>).

4.2.2. Eudora Welty’s *Losing Battles*: Plot and Narratology

Eudora Welty’s eighth book, *Losing Battles*, is set in the hill country of northeastern Mississippi during two summer days in 1930, when a local family celebrates their matriarch’s ninetieth birthday with a reunion. The novel is divided into 6 parts of 3rd-person omniscient narration, with one section of 3rd-person limited narration placed at the end of the fifth part, devoted to the thoughts and perception of Vaughn Renfro. *Losing Battles*’ narrations are embroidered with direct speech of family and community members. Akin IV, Linn and Marrs comment on this matter as follows:

[...] nowhere is speech more vividly rendered than in *Losing Battles* (1970). This novel about a family reunion consists almost wholly of stories told by the family members. The Vaughns and Beechams and Renfros retell old stories, they add new stories that will be retold at future reunions, and everyone participates in the telling – Percy with his “thready” voice, Etoyle who “embroiders”, Aunt Beck with her “mourning dove’s” voice, everyone. The sound of these voices draws the reader into *Losing Battles* and makes him part of the family reunion. The oral tradition of the South seems to live in the written word (Akin IV, Linn & Marrs 900).

The Beechams, Renfros, their community members and guests celebrate the South’s oral tradition during eating, laughing, crying and singing. The reunion offers a platform for all the different stories that are told during the family’s gathering, with all the family members developing and contributing to the storyline. All of *Losing Battles*’ happenings create a picture of a Mississippi family during hard times. Welty’s detailed description of sounds, voices, persons, places and situations is full of skillfully used metaphors that enable the readers to hear and see everything before their inner eyes, feeling like secret participators of the reunion.

The first part of the novel creates the setting of the story. The reader is introduced to the Renfro family, Granny Vaughn and all the other family members that come from every part of Boone County to celebrate her birthday. Aunt Cleo, the new wife of Uncle Noah Webster Beecham, from South Mississippi plays a central role. As a new family member and an outsider to the region, Aunt Cleo encourages the family to tell her the story of Jack Jordan Renfro, whom the whole reunion joyfully expects to return from the state pen today. The family members narrate why Jack got arrested, describe his court trial, explain how he came home to marry his teacher before he went to prison and tell what happened since he had been away. Additionally, further characters are introduced such as absent family members (Auntie Fay, Uncle Homer Champion, etc.), community insiders (Aycock Comfort, Brother Bethune, Willy Trimble, etc.), and family enemies (Curly Stovall, Judge Moody, etc.). Information about the various narrators is gained by the description of their voices and their comments on diverse topics. At the end of the first part, Jack returns home and is showered with news. He discovers that his grandfather and his stud died and his truck was sold to his enemy during his absence. Furthermore, he sees his baby daughter for the first time. The information that his enemy Judge Moody is in the county and that he himself offered him help unaware of his identity, shocks Jack and the whole reunion. Dismayed over the news, Jack, his wife Gloria and their baby Lady May set off to look for the judge and revenge on the roads of Boone County.

The second part of the novel starts with the description of Jack, Gloria and Lady May's journey from the Renfro homestead to Banner Top from where Jack plans to watch out for Judge Moody's car. Detailed descriptions of their way and the surrounding environment accompany Jack and Gloria's conversations and their relationship starts taking shape. For the first time, since Jack's return, the two characters are alone, away from his family; therefore they can discuss private topics. On Banner Top Jack's best friend Aycock Comfort, who has been in prison with him, joins the three on the lookout for the judge. Following a series of unfortunate events, Lady May tumbles on the road just when the judge's car comes along and Gloria jumps in front of it to save her. Irritated by all the people on the road (Gloria, Lady May, Jack and Aycock), the judge comes off the road and drives up Banner Top. After the accident, the judge and his wife get out of the car to make sure nobody got hurt but forget to secure the car properly, which slips off Banner Top and is only held back by a hickory sign underneath it and Aycock's weight on the backseat. This incident places the car on the very edge of Banner Top with a cedar tree behind it, unable to move back or forth. The fact that Judge Moody saved Jack's wife

and child, by avoiding a collision changes Jack's intentions. Consequently, Jack makes it his quest to get the Moodys' car back on the road so they can continue their trip. Jack undertakes various attempts but either they are prevented by Mrs. Moody who fears for her car, or by Gloria who worries about her husband. Other unsuccessful securing efforts force the Moodys to join the reunion and spend the night at the Renfros' house. Before inviting the Moodys, Jack reveals his identity to the judge. Several other community and family members are represented during the saving process. They offer their advice, support and vehicles or drive past the incident. Additionally, the news of the death of Miss Julia Mortimer, who was Gloria's mentor, spreads. Gloria owes Miss Mortimer very much, nevertheless, Miss Julia's rejection of her and Jack's wedding brought their friendship to an end. Julia Mortimer, the old school teacher of Banner, had taken care of the orphan girl (Gloria) and enabled her to get an education as a teacher. All in all, the second part of the novel reveals important information about Gloria and Jack, their relationship and attitudes towards Banner and Jack's family. Moreover, an insight into other community in- and outsiders and family members is gained. Their ways of approaching the problem and comments on the situation distinguish the different characters from each other.

The supper and the presentation of the family history are in the center of the third part of the novel. Most of the family history is told by Brother Bethune, the preacher who takes Grandpa Vaughn's place at the reunion. In addition, the family members are awarded titles such as "the thinnest" or "the oldest" and are forgiven their sins by him. The family observes Brother Bethune's performance critically, expecting disappointment as he cannot fit into Grandpa Vaughn's steps. Furthermore, an important part of Brother Bethune's speech is about forgiving Jack, which seems to be complicated because firstly, Jack is not present at the beginning, and secondly, the family has precise expectations that Brother Bethune cannot fulfill. Moreover, the attendance of Mr. and Mrs. Moody generates tensions. During the feast and the cheerful togetherness, the family shares numerous stories from the past and present. Despite Judge Moody's presence, Jack tells about his escape from prison which shocks, amuses and astonishes his listeners. Additionally, they describe what happened to the Moodys' car, tell the story of Jack's truck, wallow in the past when Granny's family history is given and are touched by the story of their parents' death. To conclude, the third part of the novel seems to fulfill the purpose of giving more background information about the family as their history and attitudes towards their land and situation are stated.

The fourth part starts out with Jack leaving the location and the appearance of Mr. Willy Trimble who brings the news of the death of Miss Julia Mortimer to the reunion. From this moment on all stories center around her. It seems like everybody attending the reunion can share a Julia Mortimer story, since she was the Banner schoolteacher for many years and was therefore, responsible for the education of all the Beecham siblings and their spouses. The leading storytellers of the fourth part are Gloria and Aunt Lexie who both had a different relationship with the former teacher. Gloria was Miss Julia's "mentee". However, Miss Julia's hopes that Gloria would succeed her as teacher of Banner school were destroyed when Gloria announced her marriage intention to her. Aunt Lexie Renfro, formerly inspired by Julia Mortimer, became a nurse after her teaching career failed. She describes their life together, in particular, their daily fights and tyrannies. The topic shifts when Gloria explains that Miss Julia told her to find out who she was before marrying Jack Renfro. Suddenly the entire reunion engages in wild speculations about Gloria's heritage. Finally, Granny Vaughn offers evidence that Gloria might be the child of Rachel Sojourner and Sam Dale Beecham, the deceased youngest Beecham brother, which would make her Jack's cousin. This rumor causes yelps of delight among the Beechams but it devastates Gloria. Furthermore, the intentions that brought Judge Moody to Banner are revealed when Miss Julia Mortimer's last will is displayed. Judge Moody, also a former pupil of Miss Julia and now her lawyer and friend, stayed in the county due to her wishes. Miss Julia summoned him to Alliance for legal advice. The fourth part of the novel addresses several prevailing stereotypes about the region. The area's backwardness is expressed in Miss Julia's wish for progress to which she wanted to contribute by providing a good education for the county's inhabitants. The different comments of the various reunion members expose their attitudes towards Miss Julia's wish and education in general. Furthermore, the lack of legal documents to prove Gloria's ancestry, which causes the need to investigate it via oral tradition, raises other issues, incest being only one of them.

The night falls at the beginning of the fifth part, which brings Jack back to the reunion. After Jack is reunited with them he is informed of all that has happened while he has been away. He hears that Judge Moody and Miss Julia Mortimer were old friends and that Gloria may be his cousin. In addition, Gloria complains to him about how she has been treated by his family. The only part that dismays Jack is how Julia Mortimer had to spend her life. The news about his possible relatedness to Gloria makes him

happy, not understanding the issue's seriousness. Judge Moody tries to convince the reunion of the significance of the topic and that a blood relationship between Jack and Gloria could have serious consequences. The fifth part of *Losing Battles* contrasts the oral tradition of the reunion with judicial evidence of Judge Moody. The discussion comes to the conclusion that, although a blood relation may be possible, there is no evidence to prove it. Furthermore, the reunion wallows in memories of former times and people, which urges Uncle Nathan to make a confession. When all of them join their hands and leave for home or go to bed, the narration mode changes. During nighttime, when the reunion sleeps safe and sound, Vaughn Renfro's point of view is given with a 3rd-person limited narration. Vaughn's thoughts on the situation allow us to infer how he feels about his life, his family and the role he plays in it. Additionally, Vaughn reveals a very different attitude from the rest of his family. Vaughn perceives Jack, as opposed to the other reunion participants who celebrate him, not as a hero. Furthermore, Vaughn's fondness for school differs from the others' skepticism concerning education and schooling.

The sixth part of *Losing Battles* takes place the next morning, once the reunion has come to an end. After Gloria and Jack wake up, they hear at the breakfast table that Mr. and Mrs. Judge Moody are already on their way to Banner Top to rescue their car. Safety measures need to be taken soon because the rain and Mr. Renfro's well-intentioned support with dynamite, uprooting the tree during the night, made the car's situation even more precarious. Therefore, Jack leaves in a hurry to assist Judge Moody and his wife. Gloria and Miss Beulah follow Jack to keep an eye on him. The rescue team that gathers on Banner Top consists of the Moodys, Jack, Gloria, Miss Beulah and Curly Stovall who brings his sister Ora and his truck. Jack supervises the whole rescuing process; he ties the car onto Curly's truck and instructs him precisely how to pull it back, enabling Aycock to escape from the car. However, after the car's engine dies because it has run out of gas, both cars are pulled forward again and Mrs. Moody's Buick drives over Banner Top. Jack, Gloria, Miss Beulah and the Moodys form a human chain and hold on to the two vehicles. Eventually, the rope between the truck and the Buick rips and it goes down Banner Top, taking Jack and Gloria with it into the uprooted tree. Fortunately, none of them are hurt and all of them are ready to bring the car back to Banner to be repaired, and attend the funeral of Miss Julia Mortimer. With the help of Jack's little brother Vaughn, who came by with a bus and a rope on his way to school, Jack, Gloria, the Moodys, Curly and Ora Stovall get on the way to Banner in

a adventurous caravan consisting of the schoolbus, the truck, the Buick and two mules to function as brakes. It is self-evident that Jack feels obligated to pick up all of Banner's school children on their way. Finally, they arrive in Banner just in time for school. When Jack's younger sister Ella Fay joins the group and reveals her intention to marry Curly; Jack and Curly's fight starts all over, leaving Jack unconscious, losing his shirttail and his truck a second time. Jack awakens just in time to fix the Moodys' car for the funeral and to get them on their way home. Jack is not aggrieved by his losses. He concentrates on the positive forces in his life such as his family, wife and child and offers the Moodys his help without hesitation. In the end, Jack and Gloria walk through the cemetery on the way to Miss Julia's funeral, passing all the people's graves, who the reunion has brought back to life in their narrations of the previous night. The sixth and last part of *Losing Battles* shows the Renfro family's life after the reunion, presenting Jack's heroic rescue of the Moodys' car and giving an outlook on all of them in the future. (Will Ella Fay really marry Curly? Will Curly and Jack's fight continue? Will Gloria and Jack live on their own and have more children?). Gloria and Jack are surrounded by the past, present and future at the cemetery. This shows again that, although the past is an important element for the Beechams and Renfros, their lives are rooted in the present and they are all concerned about their future.

To conclude, *Losing Battles*' celebration of the South's oral tradition is clearly evident in all six parts of the novel. Eudora Welty's descriptions of the environment, the characters and their voices, which never stop narrating throughout the novel, are so lively that they enable the reader to gain an accurate picture of the reunion. Additionally, the different characters' comments empower the reader to gain an insight into the nature of the various participants.

5. Textual Analysis

Prior to an in-depth analysis of each book, it needs to be mentioned that music and literature are two arts that share a long mutual history of similarity and opposition. Therefore, their history needs to be explained beforehand.

Mousike was the term that categorized poetry, music and dance in ancient Greece. This word reflected the attitude of the Greeks towards these arts and their perceived union, which stands in contrast to separated perception of "music and poetic language" in the West occident (Prieto 1). According to Eric Prieto, the author of *Listening in: Music*,

Mind and the Modernist Narrative, “the unity of the various performance arts” exists in cultures with strong oral traditions. Prieto uses the example of ancient Greece to demonstrate the drifting apart of the two arts. Furthermore, he claims that the increasing importance and circulation of the written word offered a different form of storing “cultural memory” and therefore, limited the requirement for “oral performance” (Prieto 1).

Lee Smith and Eudora Welty are both authors who skillfully integrate music into their literary works by supporting their storylines with musical contributions, creating a connection between these two arts. Music is a central element in *Oral History*, *The Devil’s Dream* and *Losing Battles*, where it is used to imply underlying meaning and to provide the reader with additional information. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to investigate the ways in which music is presented in the three novels. Moreover, the paper raises the question if the ballads and songs featured in the texts were deliberately chosen to give some scenes new meaning and create a certain atmosphere. Hence, it is necessary to examine all the ballads and songs concerning their plot, meaning and history. Sources used for this investigation were *The Traditional Ballad Index: An Annotated Bibliography of the Folk Songs of the English-Speaking World Version 3.2* by Robert B. Waltz and David G. Engle, offered via California State University Fresno’s Folklore webpage, the *Max Hunter’s Song Collection* which is “is an archive of almost 1600 Ozark Mountain folk songs, recorded between 1956 and 1976” provided by the Missouri State University’s webpage, the *Dr. W. Amos Abrams Field Recordings Collection* found in the Appalachian State University’s Digital Collection, and the websites *hymntime.com* and *hymnary.org* which both offer a large corpus of religious music (www.fresnostate.edu/folklore, www.maxhunter.missouristate.edu, <http://contentdm.library.appstate.edu/docapp/abrams/>, <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/>, <http://www.hymnary.org/>). References to all these sources will be provided in the *Song Index* at the end of the paper. With the help of these tools, this paper tries to disentangle the relationship between music and literature in order to come to a conclusion about the role of music in the three analyzed works.

5.1. *Oral History* – Lee Smith

5.1.1. *Historical Correctness*

A very significant aspect of *Oral History* is that the text deals with narratives set in different periods. The novel covers more than one hundred years of family history and therefore captures the transformation of music over the course of time. Lee Smith refers in the *author's note* to books she found “invaluable” in her investigations of Appalachian history. Consequently it is self-evident that the author is well-informed about the area's musical development. By exhibiting historical correctness in her novel she manages to create authenticity and inform the reader about the region's musical past. Furthermore, the historical accuracy shown enables readers, who are already aware of the region's music and its development, to gain additional information on characters and plot through the connoted meaning of songs and instruments and their histories, such as, for example, the song heritage (British or American) and occurrence of instruments.

5.1.1.1. Modification

The historical accuracy of Smith's texts can also be seen in her musical presentations. Smith chooses descendants of Irish and English settlers as characters for her novel and demonstrates how the changes in their environment are reflected by their music (cf. above section 3.1.). Since the Appalachian Mountains' environment was very different from what settlers were used to, their music was bound to change as well. Song texts were transformed to reflect their new lives and circumstances, which can be clearly seen in the following quote from *Oral History*.

Granny Younger

Old Joe Johnson sings,
Rattlesnake, oh rattlesnake, What makes your teeth so white? I've laid in the
bottom all my life An'I ain't done nuthin' but bite bite bite. I ain't done nuthin'
but bite. (Smith *Oral* 31ff)

Joe Johnson sings about the rattlesnake, which is very common in the South of North America whereas it does not exist in England, Scotland and Ireland. This is a clear sign that the music reflected the settlers' new lives and environment, the *BI* supports this claim by stating that this song is only found in the United States (cf. *SI* Rattlesnake). Various forms of adaptation are also evident in other ballads presented in the novel.

Granny Younger

Old Joe done Shady Grove and Cumberland Gap and then he done Cindy. *I been to the East and I been to the West, I been to the jaybird's altar. But the prettiest gal I ever seed was Jimmy Sherlock's daughter.* Now that don't make no sense. And oftentimes, courting don't neither. (Smith *Oral* 32)

Pricey Jane

In some of the songs, love was described as a game, with dosey-do and curtsy and funny responses. In others it was like a sickness. Pricey Jane remembered the song about the two sisters and one of them had drowned herself in a mill-pond, out of love. It was like a sickness unto death. (Smith *Oral* 68ff)

Almarine

"Jack of diamonds, jack of diamonds, I knowed you of old. You done robbed my pockets of silver and gold," Luther sang out in the morning. [...]. Luther's voice goes along in his mind. *Jack of diamonds, jack of diamonds, I knowed you so well, you lost me my woman and done sent my soul to hell.* (Smith *Oral* 77ff)

Some sources presume that *Shady Grove* originated in the melody of *Matty Groves*, a variation of *Child Ballad # 81, Little Musgrave and Lady Bernard* (<http://mbmonday.blogspot.co.at/>). *Little Musgrave and Lady Bernard* and *Matty Groves* both tell the story of a married lady who casts an eye on a young boy who therefore gets killed by her husband, the lord, whereas most versions of *Shady Grove* are about a beautiful girl. In some of the versions archaisms are used, which mark their derivation from different periods (cf. *SI Shady Grove*). If *Shady Grove's* origin can be really traced back to *Child Ballad # 81*, which is not entirely evident, then this song represents the usage of an English ballad's melody to create a new song that seems to reflect the settlers' new culture better. A ballad about lords and ladies, who did not exist in the Appalachian Mountains, was transformed into a love song that seems much more appropriate. The *BI*, however, does not confirm the relationship between *Shady Grove* and *Child Ballad #81*; it rather suggests floating verses between *Shady Grove* and the Irish song *Mary from Dungloe*, which deals with the separation of two lovers between Ireland and America (cf. *SI Shady Grove*). Despite the different speculations it is certain that this song has a long history that can be related to settlers of European heritage.

The next song mentioned is *Cumberland Gap*. Since the song's title is taken from an American location, namely a pass in the Appalachian Mountains that settlers used when traveling westwards, its American heritage seems obvious (www.nps.gov/cuga/index.htm). This song, which addresses the settlement of America, clearly proves the creation of new songs that relate to topics that were relevant to the settlers. Although *Cumberland Gap's* American origin is obvious, the *BI* notes that its tune is taken from *Child Ballad # 210 Bonnie George Campbell*, which is about a horse

ride from which the horse returns alone. Though, the two songs have the same melody, their lyrics are very different, which might be caused by the lyrics' places of creation. According to the *BI*, the first chronicled recording of *Cumberland Gap* dates back to 1924; Lee Smith, however, introduces the song earlier in her novel (cf. *SI Cumberland Gap*). The editors comment on this that the earliest date is, "[t]he [...] date at which we could *verify*, from print or manuscript, that the ballad was in circulation; obviously this is subject to correction" (<http://www.fresnostate.edu/folklore>). Therefore, it could be argued that the ballad was orally spread but not documented before 1924.

In Pricey Jane's section the song *Two Sisters*, which is also often called *The Two Sisters*, is mentioned. *Two Sisters* was also collected by Francis Child and is often referred to as *Child Ballad # 10*. The ballad deals with the tragic story of two sisters, the younger of whom is courted by a knight and later killed by her jealous older sister. The end differs among the various versions (Meredith 175). According to Meredith, *Two Sisters* is a ballad that perfectly presents the regional variations. "There are supernatural elements in versions of this ballad found in England, Scotland, Iceland, Scandinavia, Poland, Estonia, Germany and Spain. In the American version, the supernatural element is found rarely, out of scores of versions" (Niles, cited in Meredith 175). Meredith comments on this that, "American versions of the ballads are deeply influenced by Puritanism and religious fundamentalism that deny the supernatural" (Meredith 176). Because of this modification that took place within North America, *Two Sisters* provides a good example of a regional variation due to beliefs, which changed among the settlers because of adaptation or the possibility to act them out differently. Pricey Jane's comment about *Two Sisters* infers that in her version, the sister drowns herself as opposed to being pushed in by sister, which is also a sign of regional variation (cf. *SI Two Sisters*).

Jack of Diamonds, also known as *Rye Whiskey*, is presented in Almarine's part. Both songs have in some versions exchanged some verses with *Wagoner's Lad* or with *The Cuckoo*. Although *Jack of Diamonds*, *Rye Whiskey* and *Wagoner's Lad* originated in Appalachia, according to the *BI*, they can all be traced back, at least partially, to *The Cuckoo* song which can be found in England, Scotland and Ireland. Therefore, this song is also an example that new ballads used to borrow the music and lyrics from older ones and the song can consequently be seen as partial modifications (cf. *SI Jack of Diamonds*).

To conclude, *Oral History* offers various examples of modified Appalachian songs, some are related to old melodies (*Cumberland Gap*) or took over already existing

verses (*Jack of Diamonds*) while other songs are almost the same tunes slightly adapted to new beliefs (*Two Sisters*) or completely new creations (*Rattlesnake*). Lee Smith definitely observed historical correctness with the music she integrated in her novel by presenting various songs stressing the English heritage of the Appalachian settlers, as for example, the famous *Child Ballads* (#10 *Two Sisters* and #84 *Barbary Allen*) but also by showing that the music changed due to environmental and social influences on the settlers' lives on the new continent. Through integrating traditional Appalachian songs (*Rattlesnake*, *Rye Whiskey*) or compositions by her characters (*Dory's Song*, *Buried Alive*) in her novel Lee Smith presents a mixture of all these types of songs (Smith *Oral* 69, 281, 31, 77, 199, 288). This varied musical material creates the effect that although the songs changed several times and new creations were continuously added, the people of Appalachia have managed to hold on to some basic features of their old ballads until the present.

5.1.1.2. Multiculturalism

As already mentioned in chapter 2.3., a great percentage of the Appalachian settlers were Irish, who left for America for various reasons, among them their denomination. The Irish were one of the main carriers of culture and tradition in the area, which may have influenced Lee Smith's choice of ancestors for the novel. In making Almarine's parents Irish, the author selected one of the core influencers of the region's traditions (cf. above section 2.2. & 2.3.). The following extract displays how Lee Smith integrated Irish ancestry, the people's journey and emigration reasons at the beginning of her novel to create an historical accurate frame. "Charles Vance Cantrell was Irish or so he said at one time. [...] He come by ship, he said, and then by wagon, and they was religion mixed up in it someway, but of course you couldn't never prove it by Van Cantrell" (Smith *Oral* 19).

Although the Irish were an influential group, it is multiculturalism that contributed the most to the creation of a new Appalachian culture that stood on its own (cf. above section 2.2. & 2.3.). Lee Smith created a wide range of different characters of diverse ancestry who all intermingle in her novel. The broad variety of people that interact with each other shows the impact they had on one another. Additionally, Lee Smith's technique of 1st-person narration enables the reader to get an insight into how these characters perceived each other and their different backgrounds.

At the beginning of *Oral History*, Granny Younger comments on the region's settlement, "And they's folks all over Snowman – Ratliffs, Presleys, Ashes, Stacys, and Skeens. There's moren I know including lately them foreigners come in with the lumber trade" (Smith *Oral* 27). Her quote proves that foreigners came to work for the Appalachian lumber companies; these people settled down on Snowman Mountain and clearly interacted with their neighbors.

Other characters that represent the cultural blend of the Appalachian region are Pricey Jane Cantrell and Vashti Cantrell, Almarine's first and second wives. Pricey Jane comes from Matewan, West Virginia, however, all the people refer to her as gypsy-gal because of her dark appearance, her golden earrings and her form of arrival (Smith *Oral* 55ff). Vashti Cantrell is Native American, she was married to Almarine's brother and brings her daughter Ora Mae with her to the community. Both of these women were married to Almarine Cantrell and by sharing a life and having children together their cultural traits must have intermixed and are supposedly carried on by their children. Although Pricey Jane and Vashti come from outside, they are integrated in the community and become insiders, and therefore they have an influence on the communities' traditions including music.

Both women are very much judged by their appearance by the community insiders; nevertheless, both of them are accepted in the community (Smith *Oral* 56, 212, 91ff, 224). A quote by Granny Younger states that Pricey Jane is not more a foreigner than all other people belonging to the community, presumably referring to the fact that all of them are settlers or settlers' descendants (Smith *Oral* 62). Concerning Vashti's status, the quotes from her son Jink demonstrate that his mother is always working with the men, and that she and the healer are the only women that are around when the men sing bawdy songs, which might refer to the healers and her special status and shows that Vashti is a well-respected community member (Smith *Oral* 224, 228).

To sum up, multiculturalism plays an important role in *Oral History*. Throughout the novel people of different regions and with different backgrounds are presented. Some of them are integrated in the community (Pricey Jane, Vashti, Ora Mae, Aldous Rife, Parrot Blankenship), others have some influence on them (Richard Burlage). Although direct musical exchange is never described in the novel, the representation of these characters is essential for the novel's accurate historical depiction. The integration of these people shows that the region has never been completely cut off from any foreign influence, which is one reason for the music's modification, and additionally, these

characters enable the reader to have various perspectives on the presented musical forms (cf. above section 3.1.).

5.1.1.3. Musical Instruments

Historical correctness is also found in the novel's presentation of musical instruments. By selecting the appropriate instruments according to time, background and the social status of the character, Lee Smith enables the reader to gain additional information on her characters. However, it is essential to have some knowledge about the musical development of the area in order to be aware of these connotations.

The instrument that was widely used was the fiddle, an instrument that the early Celtic settlers brought with them. Banjos, tambourines and bones often accompanied it, for instance, in string bands. The fiddle and guitar were also a popular combination, however, the guitar appeared very late in the mountains. The guitar represented a "polite upper-class instrument" that came to the mountains not until the First World War. Another instrument that was used for this musical style, was the piano, but since it was rather expensive it was only bought when money was available. The most common combination of instruments in country music were the fiddle and the five string banjo, but, also the dulcimer, a settlers' instrument, was "widely desired" since the folk music revival in the 1950s (Malone & Neal 23ff).

The use of these instruments is also demonstrated in *Oral History*. The novel perfectly chronicles the use of these instruments according to the periods depicted. Joe Johnson, who lives in Granny Younger's times, uses the fiddle, which is one of the settlers' instruments. The Perkins family, whose father, the local superintendent of schools, is associated by Richard with the upper class, plays the piano. Little Luther Wade, who makes music around the time Richard Burlage comes to town 1923, uses the guitar, which only came to the mountains about the time of the First World War. Later on, when Jennifer comes to visit the same Little Luther Wade, approximately in the 1990s, plays the dulcimer, which has become fashionable again in the folk music revival (Malone & Neal 23ff).

Frame

Little Luther grabs up his dulcimer and starts in on the cabbage-head song which, sure enough, Jennifer has never heard, and after a while she is joining in on the chorus. (Smith *Oral* 12)

Granny Younger

So when old Joe Johnson takes out his fiddle, you know who Almarine takes by the hand, and you see how sassy she is. (Smith *Oral* 31)

Richard Burlage

His [Mr. Perkins, the local superintendent of schools] large wife, Ruella, gives piano lessons at their home and directs the local choir. (Smith *Oral* 136)

Camilla played “We Three Kings of Orient Are” in a rousing manner upon the piano; “Whoo! Whoo!” Mr. Perkins laughed at some joke which I must have made, I cannot now remember. (Smith *Oral* 181)

Little Luther Wade

I went back and got in the truck and got my guitar and made up this song, my fingers was too cold to pick, but anyway I made up this song. (Smith *Oral* 199)

Sally

Pappy taught him to play the guitar when he was not but six. (Smith *Oral* 309)

To sum up, the instruments the characters play during the different periods give away plenty of additional information about them without having any further knowledge. It becomes clear that Camilla Perkins comes from a wealthier family, otherwise they could not have afforded a piano, or that Little Luther Wade is constructed as a “stereotypical” mountain musician by playing the dulcimer, an old traditional settlers’ instrument in the nineties.

5.1.1.4. Commercialization

As described earlier in chapter 3 entitled *Music*, Appalachian music has undergone a great series of changes from the time the settlers arrived until today. This transformation is precisely chronicled in *Oral History*. In following the novel’s plot through the different periods the reader clearly notices how the changes in the community and its music recreate the novel and the generated atmosphere.

Lee Smith shows how this music was constructed by the people and the environment they lived in. On the one hand, she illustrates how the music was used as a form of socialization, how important it was for all kinds of social events, may it be a meeting, dance evening, service or funeral. Knowing the same songs and sharing the same experiences and culture connected the group. On the other hand, Lee Smith describes how this music has gradually changed as the community transformed, how new instruments were used, how lyrics, clothes, performance locations and audience shifted.

The following quotes from *Oral History* give an impression at which events this music was played and how it was perceived by insiders and outsiders in the past and is undertaken in the present.

Frame

Little Luther grabs up his dulcimer and starts in on the cabbage-head song which, sure enough, Jennifer has never heard, and after a while she is joining in on the chorus. [...] Debra runs right up on the porch and starts clogging even in her thong sandals, and Al has a deep, rich boom-boom kind of voice [...]. [...] Jennifer claps her hands when it is over. "You all are just wonderful," she says. (Smith *Oral* 12)

Granny Younger

So when old Joe Johnson takes out his fiddle, you know who Almarine takes by the hand, and you see how sassy she is. Then they go around and around. Old Joe Johnson waggles his head when he fiddles, I wish you could see him, he's got a big old beard and a belly as round as a tick and those little stick legs. (Smith *Oral* 31)

Richard Burlage, 1923

The women take one side and the men the other, as I said. The Hibbitts "girls" – Louella and the other one who is "tetched" but nonetheless boasts a lovely voice – begin the song, some old traditional hymn like "Washed in the Blood of the Lamb" [...], singing in the high nasal mountain manner, with sometimes the accompanied dulcimer or mandolin [...]. (Smith *Oral* 158)

Sally, born 1926

I should say now that Al turned out to be the joy of Pappy's life. [...] Pappy taught him to play the guitar when he was not but six. Pappy and Al had little Western shirts and string ties and cowboy hats exactly alike, they used to go and play at hoedowns and UMW meetings and political rallies. [...] I was not around then but I've seen the pictures – Pappy and Al, cowboy hats cocked at exactly the same angle, grinning. Pappy and Al performing was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened in the world, according to Pearl. She said she could not stand even the thought of it, and didn't go to see them when they played at the Miss Claytor Lake Contest right outside Bristol, not two miles from where she was in school. They said it hurt Pappy's feelings real bad. (Smith *Oral* 309ff)

These extracts indicate how the people of the Appalachian Mountains played music. They describe how they made music at social events, as in Granny Younger's narration, in which Almarine goes to a dance to court a girl, or for religious purposes, as Richard Burlage narrates how the Appalachians make music in their churches. Furthermore, they sing at the burial ground at Pricey Jane and Eli's funeral. Later on, Sally explains how her father and brother played at meetings with cowboy hats and clothes for the amusement of a variety of people. In the beginning of the novel, Jennifer, an outsider to the community, admires how stereotypical her new "mountain family" is by making music together on

their porch. Yet it becomes clear how commercialized her image of this music is and that she possesses no adequate knowledge about it. *Oral History* displays these changes of music instruments, song texts and performance location and audience, from being performed in a private circle within a group of insiders to being performed on festival stages with cowboy clothes for the amusement of a broad range of people.

Looking at this broad range of musical depictions, it becomes obvious that the way music is illustrated in the novel has a major impact on the atmosphere that it creates. Music is one of the main features that helps the reader distinguish between the various narrators and that gives further information on each narrator and the characters they encounter. How the narrator experiences, describes and comments on music creates an essential frame for the whole narration and its atmosphere.

5.1.1.5. The Mountaineer and Cowboy Character

The character that describes the development that this music has undergone best is Little Luther Wade. It appears that Lee Smith chose him to embody the traditional southern mountain musician that changes according to his music.

The Wade family is present throughout the novel in almost all musical scenes. Just a few examples are songs like *Jack of Diamonds* (Smith *Oral* 77ff) or *Bright Morning Stars* (Smith *Oral* 102) in the first part, the service music (Smith *Oral* 158) in the second part, the music at the hog killing (Smith *Oral* 228ff) in the third part, the porch music and conventions (Smith *Oral* 280ff, 309ff) in the fourth part, and finally all the music that is imbedded in the frame narrative at the beginning and end of the novel.

Little Luther Wade is constructed as the stereotypical mountain musician, in whose family line musicality has run for generations, who plays the guitar and the dulcimer (Smith *Oral* 12, 199, 309), who writes his own songs and integrates his own feelings in them, as in the ballad about Dory (Smith *Oral* 199), and who is even recorded by song collectors (Smith *Oral* 268). Furthermore, he amuses community in- and outsiders with his songs, which can be seen in the examples presented above (Smith *Oral* 228ff, 309ff).

To conclude, the Wade family, especially Little Luther Wade, play an essential role in the construction of the musical scenes in *Oral History*. Little Luther Wade's character develops in line with the changes his music undergoes, therefore, and due to his long lasting presence in the novel, he can be seen as the character that chronicles the region's musical transformation.

5.1.2. *Songs and Plot*

This section deals with the relationship between songs and scenes, to find out if specific songs were intentionally included by the author, to provide each scene with a special atmosphere or connotation. For this purpose, the division of the book in four parts plus a frame narrative was maintained, since each part of the book presents a different period of time with altered perceptions and might therefore have a specific aim of narration.

5.1.2.1. Part 1: Early Mountain Life

Most of the songs displayed in the first part of *Oral History* have been already presented in chapter 5.1.1.1. dealing with the settlers' heritage and musical modifications. Nevertheless, they will be mentioned in this chapter again to stress different features concerning their content and meaning and how they relate to the novel's plot.

In Granny Younger's narration Almarine attends a "working" from one of the other community members. All people enjoy this occasion and have a great time, the women bring food, Joe Johnson plays the fiddle and Almarine casts his eye on a girl. During this scene, a number of songs are presented by Joe Johnson, namely *Rattlesnake*, *Shady Grove*, *Cumberland Gap*, *Cindy* and *The Jaybird's Altar*. The quotes for this scene were already presented in chapter 5.1.1.1 above (Smith *Oral* 31ff). *Shady Grove*, *Cindy* and *The Jaybird's Altar* are old American courting songs; the *BI* dates their first recorded appearance back to the time between 1911 and 1916 (cf. *SI* *Shady Grove*; *Cindy*; *The Jaybird's Altar*). These songs clearly support the scene in which they appear since Almarine decides to court and therefore casts an eye on a girl at the working with whom he dances to these songs. A further song Granny Younger refers to is *Cumberland Gap*, as already mentioned before, this song tells the story of a pass the settlers used traveling westwards (cf. *SI* *Cumberland Gap*). The obvious place reference of the song seems to create distance to Europe. The Appalachian region is the home of these people and therefore they sing about it. The song *Rattlesnake* also appears to fulfill the purpose of setting this people apart from their European heritage since the rattlesnake does not exist in England, Scotland or Ireland. All the songs chosen by Lee Smith for this scene are according to the *BI*, only found in the United States, although their tunes and lyrics might often be taken from British sources. Probably, this was done on purpose by the author to stress the characters' specific Appalachian heritage, that might be influenced by other

that musky salty smell in there, a dark smell like something too old to figure whatever it mought have been. (Smith *Oral* 18)

I traveled back home acrost the ridge just a-grinning myself. [...] I don't need no light to show me where I'm going, nor a body to lead me the way. I know all the ways there is on Hurricane Mountain. [...] Once when I stopped to light my pipe I heard me a big old *thunk* when a blacksnake fell out of a tree. Then I heard that little rustle-rustle they make in the leaves when they slip away. Now a blacksnake can climb up a tree, but he can't never climb back down. He has got to fall out like a log. It tickled me, hearing that blacksnake fall. (Smith *Oral* 33)

Therefore, the song *Rattlesnake* does not only signify that the settlers' lives have changed over the course of time, it could also refer to people's strong connection to nature, that is especially found in Almarine and Granny Younger, which lessens as the years fade away and the book proceeds. Keeping Almarine and Granny Younger's close bond to nature in mind, Granny Younger's narrative appears to be perfect for the integration of this song.

The last song presented in Granny Younger's narrative, *Who Will Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot*, is according to the *BI* an Appalachian song that derived from *Child Ballad # 76 The Lass of Roch Royal*, *Child # 263 The New-Slain Knight* or *Fare You Well, My Own True Love* also songs of British origin, all three of them include the "pretty little foot" stanza. Nevertheless, it is not clear if in some of these songs the stanza was included later because it is very wide spread (cf. *SI* *Who Will Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot*).

Granny Younger

[...] Uncle Roy Estep had his dulcimore acrost his lap. [...]. But when uncle Roy done that one about 'Who's gonna shoe your pretty little foot and who's gonna glove your hand? Who's gonna kiss your ruby red lips? Who's gonna be your man?' I seen how Almarine looked at Pricey Jane. He was not bewitched no more, it was a clear-eyed look, I'll tell you, the way a man don't often look nor often love. She was already big then, and had that baby she was carrying come spring. (Smith *Oral* 63)

In most versions this song continues as follows, *Papa will shoe my pretty little foot, Mama will glove my hand* (cf. *SI* *Who Will Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot*). Since this song is played when Almarine finally found the love of his life, Pricey Jane, and she is pregnant with their first child, it could emphasize that both are going to become parents and are really happy about it. Almarine is planning to take good care of Pricey Jane and their child. The following extract from Pricey Jane's section supports this claim. "Pricey Jane knows he's not like other men. The way he brings her things, how sweet he is, how

sometimes he'll cry in the night and when she wakes him she'll feel his wild heart in his chest when he pulls her close" (Smith *Oral* 70ff).

Pricey Jane's section includes the songs *Two Sisters*. The song is embedded in Pricey Jane's memories. While nursing Dory she thinks about her mother and that she never answered any of her questions about love, therefore she took her information from music (Smith *Oral* 68ff). This scene reflects very well that these songs fulfilled not only the role of entertainment, they had various other purposes as well, as for instance offering a source of information. Furthermore, this scene provides evidence that the family history seems to repeat itself as Pricey Jane will also not be around to tell her daughter about love, and therefore Dory will have to get her information from other sources, similar to her own mother, which could suggest that Dory did not know which risks she was taking when she got involved with Richard (The quote for this scene was also presented above in chapter 5.1.1.1).

Another way of interpretation arises when looking at the storylines of *Two Sister* and *Oral History* (cf. *SI Two Sisters*). Similar to the story related in the song *Two Sisters*, Dory will get betrayed by her stepsister Ora Mae, who does not give her Richard's love letter, and therefore Dory faces a heartbroken future (Smith *Oral* 189, 254ff, 282ff). Although Ora Mae claims in her narrative that she did not give Dory the letter because she watches out for her, Ora Mae often appears to be jealous of her beautiful younger stepsister, similar to the song *Two Sisters* (Smith *Oral* 247, 248, 254ff). Another relation between song and novel might be found in the way Dory experiences love as a kind of sickness, similar to the way it is described in *Two Sisters* according to Pricey Jane (Smith *Oral* 68ff). Dory follows the railroad tracks on which her beloved Richard left until it costs her her life and her suffering comes to an end (Smith *Oral* 282ff, 288, 294ff). Therefore, the integration of the song *Two Sisters* could be interpreted as a prediction of Dory's life, given in an intimate mother-daughter situation, which will never happen again as Pricey Jane's death leaves Dory alone without maternal guidance and destroys the chance for her mother to warn her about what she is getting into.

The next song *Jack of Diamonds*, which has been already discussed in chapter 5.1.1.1., is displayed in Almarine's section (Smith *Oral* 77ff). It is included when Almarine leaves his home to do some trading in town and Pricey Jane and the children stay alone at home, which leads to the tragic incident of her and Eli's death. Almarine has been up all night playing poker at Joe Johnson's store. At first he wants to go home to Pricey Jane but the men make fun of him and therefore he stays teaching them a lesson by

taking their money (Smith *Oral* 76ff). The lyrics of *Jack of Diamonds* emphasize this scene in two different ways. On the one hand, the men were gambling and some of them lost their money. Considering *Jack of Diamonds* is a gambling song it is well suited for this situation (cf. *SI* *Jack of Diamonds*). On the other hand, the lyrics of the song can also be seen as a forecast of the future. “*Jack of diamonds, jack of diamonds, I knowed you so well, you lost me my woman and done sent my soul to hell*” (Smith *Oral* 77ff). Referring to the fact that while Almarine was away playing poker, his wife and son die and this incident transforms his personality entirely (Smith *Oral* 76).

The next song sung in Almarine’s section is called *Rock of Ages*. This song is sung by Rhoda Hibbitts at the scene of Pricey Jane and Eli’s death. “ ‘Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide my soul in thee,’ Rhoda sang at the door, to nobody in particular, and then she said, “You-unses come eat’ ” (Smith *Oral* 82). The *BI* states that in this song “[t]he singer admits to the inability to meet God’s demands, and asks forgiveness and protection” (cf. *SI* *Rock of Ages*). One possible form of interpretation could be that Rhoda sings this song for Almarine. In the eyes of most community members, Almarine did not meet God’s demands because he got involved with a “witch”, who many of them make responsible for the deaths of his wife and son. Rhoda might sing *Rock of Ages* to claim peace and forgiveness for Almarine’s soul in this dark hour.

The final song of the first part of the novel occurs in one of the major music scenes of *Oral History*. It is set at the burial-ground during Pricey Jane, Eli and Granny Younger’s funeral. The mountain hymn *Bright Morning Stars* accompanies all the happenings during the occasion. All the events that take place during the singing are precisely described (cf. *SI* *Bright Moring Stars*).

Luther Wade takes off his hat and starts singing then, and others join, Rose and Louella Hibbitts’s clear voices soaring away above them towards the sky, “Bright morning stars are rising, bright morning stars are rising, bright morning stars are rising, day is breaking in my soul.” [...] “Oh where are our dear loved ones, oh where are our dear loved ones, oh where are our dear loved ones, day is breaking in my soul.” Luther’s voice rings out deep and true over the burying-houses and the silky blowing grass: out over the whole burying-ground and into the far hazy distance beyond it, the mountains of Kentucky. Rose and Louella sing rings in and out of his voice. “They have gone to heaven a-shouting, they have gone to heaven a-shouting, they have gone to heaven a-shouting, day is breaking in my soul.” Funny how two ugly girls can sing so sweet. “Let me hold her now,” a Skeens girl says, and Susie Ramey hands her over. Dory’s earrings catch the sun as she cocks her head, for all the world as if she can understand the words of the song. [...] Almarine does not join the singing but stands like a man asleep or a man in a trance perhaps, staring off into the long blue distance. [...] “Oh where are our dear mamas oh where are our dear papas oh where is our dear Jesus day is coming

Jesus in my soul.” Rose Hibbitts can’t help but cry. Rhoda is praying out loud. Vashti, singing, loosens her dress to give Almarine’s son Isadore some titty and he hushes and sucks as singing they leave the burying ground and the grassy windswept bald on the top of Hoot Owl Mountain. (Smith *Oral* 102ff)

This song obviously supports the scene addressing the topic of death and heaven. Furthermore, the reader gets information about the funeral and how these people make music together at such events. It displays how they sing, pray and follow a normal life (Vashti nursing her baby) in wild nature between the mountains.

All in all, the first part of *Oral History* represents the early mountain life during Almarine’s youth, approximately around 1900. The songs represented in this part of the novel appear to have been especially selected for each episode, as they match period, place and often content of the scene they appear in, which creates the novel’s authentic atmosphere. Additional information like a forecast on future events (*Jack of Diamonds*, *Two Sisters*) is evident, but can only be found in a few scenes.

5.1.2.2. Part 2: Two Worlds

The second part of the novel centers around Richard Burlage. In Richard’s narration, an outsider’s perspective on the region’s music is given. On the one hand, Richard’s education and upbringing in a wealthy house in Richmond, makes him comment very differently on the music he encounters. On the other hand, Richard as a community outsider takes part in different musical events, like, for example, Granny Younger or Almarine, who take part in “workings” or hog killings. Richard’s musical experiences in the mountains can be subdivided into two fields, religious mountain music, as hymns that he connects to simplicity, nature and purity that Dory represents, and the piano sheet music of the Perkins family that he connects to the superficial upper class.

The following quotes describe Richard’s experience with music at the services of The Freewill Followers, whom he joins because he is looking for, “[...] a form of worship free of those Catholic constraints imposed upon the spirit by the Episcopal Church” (Smith *Oral* 155).

The Hibbitts “girls – Louella and the other one who is “tetched” but nonetheless boasts a lovely voice – beginning the song, some old traditional hymn like “Washed in the Blood of the Lamb” or “Bringing in the Sheaves” or “There is a Green Hill Far Away,” singing in the high nasal mountain manner, with sometimes the accompaniment of dulcimer or mandolin, as played by old man Luther Wade or his son Little Luther Wade [...] or, perhaps old Hester Little. (Smith *Oral* 158)

The first quote, representing the musical happenings at *The Freewill Followers*, displays how Richard experiences hymns sung in church and how he comments on the way they make music, their voices and instruments. This shows that Richard precisely observes the situation, similar to a survey of a foreign culture. The hymns presented in this scene are *Washed in the Blood of the Lamb*, *Bringing in the Sheaves* and *There is a Green Hill Far Away*. *Bringing in the Sheaves* is the only one of the three hymns that is represented in the *BI*. According to it, the hymn is based on psalm 126:6 “Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, Carrying their sheaves” (cf. *SI* *Bringing in the Sheaves*). Evidently, this is a song about harvesting; however, it is not entirely clear if it is about agricultural or religious harvesting; as in harvesting souls for God or Christianity. The song can be interpreted in both ways, but since Richard becomes a new religious member of *The Freewill Followers* that day, the second form of interpretation seems to be more consistent with the scene. According to the lyrics of the hymn *Are you washed in the Blood*, being washed in the blood of the lamb refers to being cleaned of all sins (cf. *SI* *Washed in the Blood of the Lamb*), which could relate to the following quote by Richard,

It has nothing to do, apparently, with any notion of living a “good life,” as I was brought up to believe a Christian ought to do: hence, all the apparent contradictions. The most evil man imaginable could, theoretically, be “saved” on his deathbed. What one does in this world “don’t hold a candle to Jesus’ blood” (!) as Autry Lily put it in one of his stranger images. (Smith *Oral* 159)

The song therefore refers to a special feature of the congregation that seems alien to Richard, and hence highlights their religious practice. Similar to *Washed in the Blood of the Lamb*, the last song included in the scene *There is a Green Hill Far Away* stresses the same religious theme referring to the crucifixion of Jesus to redeem the humans of their sins.

All the songs Richard seems to encounter in the community during his narration have a religious context. The reason therefore could be Richard’s portrayal as a religious person, who has a strong interest in broadening his spiritual horizon. Due to this fact he sees his journey to the mountains as his pilgrimage. “I intend for this journal to be a valid record of what I regard as essentially a pilgrimage, a simple geographical pilgrimage, yes, but also a pilgrimage back through time, a pilgrimage to a simpler era, back – dare hope it – to the very roots of consciousness and belief” (Smith *Oral* 107). Consequently, Richard may look only for the communities’ religious music and not for other sources.

Contrasted to the religious music Richard encounters in the mountain community stands the music he takes part in when he is with the Perkins family, whose father is Richard's boss. This family does not belong to the mountain community. This can be seen in the way Mr. Perkins looks down on the pupils in Richard's class (Smith *Oral* 132) and how he tries to encourage Richard to take a better job in a different area (Smith *Oral* 136). Furthermore, Richard's description of his appearance and his house make it clear that the Perkins are a wealthy family (Smith *Oral* 131ff). The following quotes demonstrate the music Richard experiences at the Perkins house.

But there came a moment when Camilla and I were alone in the Perkins' parlor, a moment when I stood by the piano turning the pages of her sheet music as she played, brilliantly, and sang the bitter sweet "Mighty Lak a Rose." Her voice is pure and sweet. But for me, Camilla can be but a faint shadow of that other I have seen, my mountain girl, my Dory. (Smith *Oral* 137)

I love her, and no amount of reason, as supplied by Aldous Rife, or "Mighty Lak a Rose" as supplied by Miss Perkins, or silk stockings and manicured hands which await me in Richmond, or religious conviction [...] – nothing at all can change this. (Smith *Oral* 164)

Camilla played "We Three Kings of Orient Are" in a rousing manner upon the piano; "Whoo! Whoo!" Mr. Perkins laughed at some joke which I must have made, I cannot now remember. (Smith *Oral* 181)

Reading the quotes it becomes evident that Camilla Perkins represents the opposite of Dory for Richard. Additionally, the sheet music that Camilla plays on her piano stands in contrast to the freely sung music of the mountain people. The third quote displays how trivial these social events at the Perkins' house seem to Richard during his time with Dory. The evening is just described as a fading memory that is insignificant compared to the time he spends with Dory. Furthermore, the scene's song *Mighty Lak a Rose*, which seems to have a strong connection to Camilla Perkins for Richard, is no traditional mountain song, as it is not included in the *BI* and its composer is known, which is very different from most traditional ballads (cf. *SI* *Mighty Lak a Rose*). This again is a feature that differentiates the music from the two different settings. On the other hand, the song of the third quote *We Three Kings of Orient Are* can be found in the *BI*. Its topic and the fact that it is a Christmas carol, however, make it well suited for the scene it appears in since it takes place around Christmas time (cf. *SI* *We Three Kings of Orient Are*).

To conclude, Richard's part of the novel is very different from the way community insiders narrate their musical experiences. Due to the fact that Richard takes part in different musical events than most of the other narrators, his scope of music varies

from theirs. Richard's narration is dominated by two themes, on the one hand religious hymns and, on the other hand, piano sheet music in wealthier surroundings. These two kinds of music are set in contrast to each other. The presented songs seem to fulfill their purpose as each one appears to be especially chosen to fit into the plot. It appears as if each song is related to the context of its narration, with especially the hymns highlighting religious features or happenings.

5.1.2.3. Part 3: The Musician

Oral History's third part consists of a broad range of different narrators, with two of the narrations centering around music, whereas it represents only a minor point in the other four. The novel's third part is set shortly before the beginning of country music commercialization and therefore relates to a more private and traditional way of making music than the fourth part and the frame narrative.

The first song that is integrated in Little Luther Wade's narration is one of his own compositions. It tells Dory and Richard's story and expresses Little Luther Wade's feelings for her.

I went back and got in the truck and got my guitar and made up this song, my fingers was too cold to pick, but anyway I made up this song.

[...]

Dory come back to your own true love

A month or two don't add up to a life

Dory let me dry them tears away

Dory let me make you my wife.

It took me nearabout a hour to make it up. I knowed I wouldn't never sing it to nobody, least of all to her, but anyway I made it up and then I knowed what I was going to do and I felt good, I tell you, I got to feeling like myself again for the first time all winter. (Smith *Oral* 199ff)

This song was especially written to match the novel's plot. The song tells the story further, exposing Luther's feeling and his plans for the future. Moreover, it helps to establish Luther as a typical musician who writes his own songs, which is also a hint to the further development of the music.

Another song that is included in the third part is *Saro Jane*.

Anyway it's Saturday, day after payday for those lucky enough to be working, close to noon, and the breeze comes up in the windows blowing the curtains and now Blind Bart has started up on his harmonica over there in front of the courthouse, playing "Saro Jane" low and sweet, to suit the morning. [...], why

then Blind Bart will change his tune and Justine Poole will switch from tea to bourbon on her porch, [...]. (Smith *Oral* 207ff)

The *BI* describes Saro Jane as follows, “The singer, despite ‘a wife and five little children,’ decides to ‘take a trip on the big Macmillan.’ The troublesome operations of the boat are described.” (cf. *SI* Saro Jane). In each stanza the singer describes different problems of the boat, like “[b]oiler busted and the whistle done blowed, the head captain done fell overboard, [...]” In the chorus the singer states about his situation that “there’s nothing to do but to set down and sing and rock about, my Saro Jane.” The inability to help oneself that is debated in the song may also relate to the time the narration is set in, since this part of the novel describes the mountains during the Depression, an economic difficult situation.

Finally, a second major music scene is integrated in the third part of the book, namely, the scene at the hog killing, narrated by Jink Cantrell, in which the community members and a few integrated outsiders get together to kill hogs, tell stories, sing bawdy songs and have a good time.

Little Luther, who had been with us, put down his knife and wiped his hands and went over and got his guitar. “Rabbit up gum stump, possum up a holler. Fat gal down at Sudie’s house, fat as she can waller.” I laughed along with the rest of them. Little Luther is kindly a natural antic, so what if he’s not good-looking. [...] “Head in the clouds,” Mamaw said about Little Luther. She wouldn’t give him too much credit. Me neither, but I liked to hear him sing. “If ever I marry in this wide world, it’ll be for love, not riches. Catch a little girl about five feet high and fuck her through the britches,” Little Luther sang. Lute’s eyes went big and he poked me in the side. “You hear that one?” he said. Little Luther went on singing a whole bunch of stuff you don’t hear him sing when the womenfolks and girls is around, now that don’t count Mamaw of course nor Granny Hibbitts. [...] While they where up there, Little Luther sung, “Ring-a-ding-a-doo, Now what is that? Something soft and warm like a pussycat. With long black hair and split in two, now that, my friend, is the ring-a-ding-a-doo.” Lute punched me in the ribs so hard I liked to drap my knife. I could tell my face was getting hot out there despite of the cold. All the men was looking at us laughing. [...] and Little Luther set in on the verse.

Lulu the schoolteacher

Went out West

To take up fucking

‘Cause she liked it the best.

The boys come and the boys went

The price went down to fifty cent.

When over the hill from Bare-Ass Creek

Come the bald-headed bachelor

Known as Pisspot Pete.

I kept looking down and scraping, with my face not working right. I hated that part about the schoolteacher and also I hated the way Little Luther’s little chin

would wobble when he sung, and how he'd grin, the idea of him singing all them dirty words and then making eyes at Dory. I kept looking down and scraping, had no place to lay my eyes. [...]

Pete had the claps

And the blue-balls too

But he took a shot

At the ring-a-ding-a-doo.

I got to grinning despite of myself. Then I got to laughing, and before I knowed it, I was singing along with the rest.

Ring-a-ding-a-doo,

Now what is that?

Something soft and warm

Like a pussycat.

With long black hairs and split in two –

Now, that, my friend is the ring-a-ding-a-doo!

I finished up singing loudern Lute. (Smith *Oral* 228ff)

Bawdy songs are one of the many genres of country music. In this scene, three different bawdy songs are sung, namely *Rabbit up Gum Stump*, a transformed verse from *Devilish Mary* and a modified version of *The Ring-Dang-Doo*. The first song *Rabbit up Gum Stump* is often found under different titles; in the *BI* it is referred to as *Possum up Gum Stump*. Furthermore, the lyrics of the song seem to differ among the various versions, nevertheless the *BI* states that the first two lines that are represented in *Oral History*, are characteristic for the song (cf. *SI* Rabbit up Gum Stump). It appears as if this song's nonsense rhyme makes it especially suitable for such informal and amusing gatherings as the one described in the quote above. Additionally, the *BI* states that the song was also practiced as a "patting chant," which emphasizes this assumption. The next song extract displayed exhibits a connection to *Devilish Mary*. The *BI* states that in this song, "The singer meets a 'pretty little girl' named Mary; they get married within days. She then starts taking over his life, wearing his pants, and abuses and torments him. At last he leaves. He vows to court only tall/short girls who can't wear his breeches" (cf. *SI* Devilish Mary). Other songs like *The Wearing of the Breeches* have addressed the same topic, therefore a connection to another tunes is also possible. The last song included in the scene is called *The Ring-a-ding-a-doo*. This song appears under a broad range of different titles, the *BI* however lists it under the name *The Ring-Dang-Doo*. The song tells the story of, "[a] young woman [who] lets a lad ride her 'ring dang doo,' [later she] is kicked out of her house by her father for losing her maidenhead, and takes up prostitution. In some versions she gives her customers a social [sic] disease; in others her career ends when she dies of the pox" (cf. *SI* Ring-a-ding-a-doo, The). Simone J. Bronner relates this and similar song lyrics back to a poem, entitled *Lady Lil*, which was published

for the first time in *Immortalia*, “a privately published anthology of erotic verse” in 1927 (317). Due to its erotic and obscene content or its inaccessibility for outsiders, folklorists did not publish it before (Bronner 316). About the poem’s oral tradition Bonner states that, “[i]t is typically reported being recited by males to other males in bars, pool halls, summer camps, military bases and ships, bachelor parties, and other ‘stag’ events and fraternity and club houses” (Bronner 316). This male context seems similar to the hog killing scene in which Lee Smith includes the bawdy songs.

To sum up, all three songs presented in this scene scorn women and sex for men’s amusement (cf. Dale 190ff). *Rabbit up Gum Stump* makes fun of a fat girl, the second song ridicules violent sexual assault and the last one reduces women to their pubic area and mocks prostitution. Therefore, these obscene songs are well placed in the rough masculine scene, at the hog killing, in which Jink Cantrell is supposed to become a man by killing his first hog and joining the men the first time in their private circle.

To conclude, the music presented in the third part of the novel especially helps to construct Little Luther as typical mountain musician. It displays how he made music before commercialization and how strongly his feelings are connected with his tunes. Furthermore, two different faces of Little Luther Wade are shown, the rather soft one admitting his love for Dory, planning to comfort and take care of her, and the harsh one that reduces women to their body and makes fun of them. Additionally, the third part offers an overview about the area’s change during the Depression.

5.1.2.4. Part 4: Tragic Love

The fourth part of the novel is narrated by Sally. As she is Little Luther Wade’s daughter, the musical scenes, in her narration, deal with him and his music.

The songs that are sung by Little Luther Wade in Sally’s narration are *Barbary Allen*, *Fair and Tender Ladies*, *Down in the Valley* and one written by himself, *Buried Alive*. The quote, in which the first three songs are included, deals with Sally and her siblings’ childhood.

[...] “Barbary Allen,” or “Fair and Tender Ladies,” or – this was my favorite – “Down in the Valley.” I can still see it all so plain, us of an evening, sitting out on the porch, and Pappy on the steps with his guitar or his dulcimore across his knees, and all of us sitting around out there on the porch in the dark or out in the cool dark yard. “Down in the valley, valley so low, hang your head over, hear the wind blow,” Pappy would sing, his voice so pure and true at that time it was like it never came out of him at all, it was like it was something he called up out of the

dark green summer air and out of the mountains themselves – “hang your head over, hear the wind blow.” The neighbors used to come over too, [...]. [...] nowadays it takes me right back there in a flash, just like I never left, like we are all still sitting around there listening to Pappy sing. “Send me a letter, send it by mail, send it in care of the Birmingham jail.” He had the prettiest voice, he could go up high if he wanted just like a woman, or down real low, he could almost whisper and still be singing. I’ve heard it said a million times that Pappy could of made a mint if he’d of wanted to, if he had ever written down those songs he made up or if he had gone to Nashville and got on the radio. I believe this is true. But Pappy didn’t want any more than he had, I think – or I’ll say it this way – he already had everything the wanted. Which was Mama. (Smith *Oral* 281ff)

Sally tells how beautiful her father’s music was and how idyllically they used to sit together on the porch and listen to him. The image Sally evokes is indeed very romantic, however, what Sally does not know is that her mother had a dramatic love story in the past and although she is everything her father wants, they may not be happy with each other because he loves her more than she loves him. This tragedy in Dory and Little Luther’s story might be reflected in this scene’s songs. The first ballad mentioned in the quote above is *Barbary Allen*, also known as *Child 84*. This ballad tells a dreadful love story. The singer sings of a knight who lies on his deathbed, in love with Barbary Allen, who rejected him. When the knight dies, Barbary Allen regrets her behavior and deceases too. In the end they are buried close to each other and a flower grows from one grave to the other (cf. *SI Barbary Allen*). The painful way of rejection and following regret that is presented in the ballad can also be related to Dory and Little Luther’s relationship. The second song that is included in the scene discusses a similar topic. *Down in the Valley* also deals with the rejection of a lover; therefore it was possibly included in the scene for the same reason as *Barbary Allen*. The next song presented in the quote is *Fair and Tender Ladies*. In this ballad a woman bemoans the dishonesty of men, which can be seen as a warning to other women (cf. *SI Fair and Tender Ladies*). Consequently, the integration of this ballad can also be interpreted as a warning to Dory, who was deserted by Richard. Furthermore, the song may have been included to remind Dory of her luck with Little Luther, who is good and reliable, a rarity among men.

All in all, the music in the fourth part of the novel further characterizes Little Luther’s development as a musician and family man during the time of early country music commercialization. Moreover, the songs selected for the fourth part could be interpreted to be in tune with the novel’s plot and characters’ relations, and consequently give additional information on the scenes they are presented in.

5.1.2.5. Frame Narrative: The Folklorist

The songs included in the frame narrative are mainly sung by Little Luther Wade, sometimes accompanied by his son Al or his daughter-in-law Debra, who clogs.

The frame narrative presents a wide range of different songs. Little Luther performs *Saint James Infirmary*, *The Cabbage-Head Song*, *Fox on the Run*, *Mama don't whup little Buford*, *Wild Flower* and *Wise County Jail* at the beginning of the novel. These songs discuss different topics; a few of them are love, alcoholism, prison and violence. Due to this diversity of themes a connection between the songs' contents and the novel's plot seems implausible. It appears more likely that Little Luther wants to present a broad range of his "culture" to Jennifer, whom he may have mistaken for a kind of folklorist. This claim is supported by the following quote. " 'Jennifer, honey, you come back real soon, you hear?' Little Luther calls from the swing. 'And if you was to put me on that tape recording machine, why that would be all right with me.' 'Yes sir,' Jennifer says" (Smith *Oral* 337).

To conclude, the frame narrative focuses on Jennifer's erroneous perception of Appalachian culture, and the music presented by Little Luther Wade is a big part of it. Jennifer fails to see her "relatives" and their culture as what they really are because she is lacking knowledge about the background history of the area, its music, and, most importantly, about herself. Stereotypes and lies blind Jennifer and prevent her from perceiving the message of the music and the people's real nature. Similar to a folklorist who only looks for the ballad's British heritage and overlooks thereby other central elements of the music, Jennifer is too much concerned with stereotypes about the region (cf. above section 3.1., cf. Jones 102ff). Furthermore, it can be assumed that Little Luther Wade has experience with such behavior and expectations, as he has already performed for "song-catchers" and for people at conventions and political rallies (Smith *Oral* 268, 309). Therefore, he might know what Jennifer is looking for, and in order to satisfy her and to get her full attention, which he clearly seems to enjoy, he presents her with the full range of country music.

5.2. *The Devil's Dream* – Lee Smith

5.2.1. *Historical Correctness*

The Devil's Dream "fictionalizes the history of country music" (Ramos 161). Lee Smith chronicles the genre's past, from its folk background in the Appalachian Mountains to its

heydays in the 1970s. To describe the music's development accurately, the author explored the field by reading specialized literature. Smith refers in the author's note to the works that guided her during her investigations and writing process. Just a few of them are *The Singing Family of the Cumberlands* by Jean Ritchie (1988), *Country: The Music and the Musicians*, edited by Paul Kingsbury and Alan Axelrod (1988) and *Country Music U.S.A.* by Bill Malone (1968), which is also one of the main sources for country music history in this paper. Additionally, Smith read books about Appalachian myths, Baptism and Baptist hymns, medicine shows, country music stars and the rockabilly movement. Due to the author's aim of fictionalizing the genre's history and her extensive background investigation, her novel possesses historical correctness, which is also reflected in her usage of real names (persons, shows etc.) and locations. By following the historical events and ways of music making precisely, the author managed to create a work that outlines the history of country music and creates an accurate picture of the genre's development. The following section deals with Lee Smith's representation of the different stages of country music and how she creates a historically accurate atmosphere in her novel.

5.2.1.1. Folk Background

The first stage of country music that is accurately described in *The Devil's Dream* is the music's folk background. This period is represented in the first part of the novel. The scenes constructed by Lee Smith contain songs, instruments and attitudes towards music that are significant for the region during this time. Consequently, the applied historical accuracy provides information about the time and place and helps the reader to classify the part of the novel.

The narration of the novel's folk roots starts when Moses Bailey brings Kate Malone to his cabin in 1833 or 1834. Lee Smith's depictions of the musical scenes suggest not only the former people's approach to music and their attitudes towards it, which provides the reader with an accurate picture of the mountains in the 19th century, but she also addresses the conflict between music and religion, represented by the characters Kate Malone (music) and Moses Bailey (religion).

Kate Malone is described as a traditional woman, who married early and is devoted to her husband (Smith *Devil's* 13, 19). Additionally, the region's poverty and hard living conditions are reflected in her and her family's appearances and comments on their nutrition (Smith *Devil's* 15ff, 23). Kate is constructed as a very musical character,

which derives from the description of her fiddling family and her depiction as a singing mountain woman.

She'd be barefoot with her yeller hair all over her head, a-churning and singing to beat the band, "*Hush, little baby, don't say a word, Pappy's gonna get you a talkin bird. And if that talkin bird don't sing, Pappy's gonna get you a diamond ring.*" (Smith *Devil's* 12)

Kate set out on the porch in a little rocker, wearing a green dress and a brown shawl, with a cameo pin at her neck, a-playing with a baby doll that she had brung with her from home, and singing, "*Go to sleep, little baby, fore the booger-man gets you! When you wake, you'll have a piece of cake, and all the pretty little horses.*" She was rocking the baby doll. (Smith *Devil's* 14)

Fer she was nought but a gal, and she had come from the fun-lovingest family you ever seed. [...] Her daddy, Pink Malone, was the best fiddler around those parts, and every one of them boys fiddled, too. Hit was always music and laughing and frolics over at Cana (Smith *Devil's* 16).

She took it out on the porch of her daddy's fine big cabin over at Cana, and set out there all night long a-fiddling. Everything she had ever knowed come back to her – "Barbry Allen," "Cripple Creek," "Shady Grove," "The Devil's Dream," "I gave my love a cherry that had no stone" – Jeremiah, he couldn't get over his mamma a-playing thataway (Smith *Devil's* 21ff).

The first two quotes describe Kate Malone's appearance as a modest and beautiful mountain woman, barefoot with long hair, who sings during work or on the porch, which was typical for the South. Further quotes in this section describe how hard life in the mountains was during these times and that Kate was worn out by these circumstances, nevertheless, she never lost her spirit or musicality (Smith *Devil's* 17ff). The third excerpt shows Kate's family's attitude towards music and music's link to fun and having a good time. Finally, the fourth passage, which is taken from the scene when Kate and her eldest son visit her parents and she plays the fiddle again after such a long time, suggests Kate's strong bond to music that cannot be broken by her husband or time. Additionally, the songs selected for these scenes are all old Appalachian songs that date either back to Cecil Sharp's collection (*Hush, Little Baby*; *All the Pretty Little Horses*; *Cripple Creek*; *Shady Grove*; cf. *SI* respective title) or to even earlier anthologies (*Barbry Allen*; *I Gave My Love a Cherry*; *The Devil's Dream*; cf. *SI*), according to the *BI*. Therefore, these songs refer to these people's English heritage and the British Isles' influence on them but also to the fact that they modified those songs to create something new (cf. above section 3.1.). These references create a special sense for the region and their inhabitants.

Kate's husband Moses is described as a Baptist preacher, who waits fanatically for a sign from God (Smith *Devil's* 15). Due to his religiousness Moses rejects fiddle music and dancing, this attitude is later also found in his son Ezekiel, after he got a sign from God (Smith *Devil's* 17, 31, 41, 98). Moreover, Ezekiel's adopted son R.C. is very musical and plays the fiddle but refuses to dance, for religious reasons (Smith *Devil's* 111). Moses' rejection presents the early Primitive Baptists' attitude towards music. His character is described as bitter and obstinate, which contrasts him to his fun-loving, musical wife. Additionally, the descriptions of his descendants show how the relationship between music and religion develops over the years in the mountains. Moses regards the fiddle tunes as the devil's laughter as the following quote suggests:

So Moses was a-walking through the dark dripping trees alongside of Paint Creek, and pondering on God and His ways, when all of a sudden he heerd the Devil's laughter on the wind. Now what hit was, a course, was his own wife Kate, a-fiddling a frolic tune and singing, "*Good-bye, girls, I'm goin to Boston, ear-lye in the morning.*" (Smith *Devil's* 24)

Lee Smith comments on this topic in an interview, "[...] [T]he fiddle [...] often led to a bodily expression and lascivious behavior – all these things that were forbidden in certain ways, that were a threat to this very narrow construction of a family or marriage" (Ramos 161). As mentioned above, religion contributed essentially to the region's musical development as singing always represented an important part of religious services. However, not all religions granted their members the same musical liberties and the attitudes towards music varied (cf. above section 3.1.). Smith portrays in her novel the Primitive Baptists' strict perception of the fiddle and their attitude towards music, which enables the reader to gain more knowledge about the relation between music and religion as perceived by certain mountain communities at the time. Additionally, by choosing strong religious and musical dispositions for her characters, which are passed on under all circumstances, Smith supposedly claims that these traits run strong in the family line and that they cannot be extinguished because they represent two of the area's major cultural aspects. Furthermore, this approach offers the possibility to describe how these two subjects develop next to each other for generations.

Another musical character who develops her musicality during the music's folk period is Nonnie Hulett, Ezekiel Bailey's wife. While Nonnie's early musicality is displayed during folk times, similar to Kate's, yet Nonnie appears very different from her mother-in-law. Nonnie is not depicted as a hard-working mountain woman (Smith *Devil's* 65ff). Her otherness is expressed in her appearance, which is very different from

the other mountain women in church and her way of putting on airs (Smith *Devil's* 69ff). Her dream of wealth and fame is represented in her love for magazines and her clothes. Nonnie's longing for another life and her dreams of deserving something better than these mountains and her family, urge her to run away with the medicine show, which marks the first stage of change in country music.

When she [Nonnie] was a girl, her favorite song was that crazy little cuckoo song. And to this day, it reminds me of Nonnie and how silly she was. But Daddy was plumb fooled by her, and when she was little he used to carry her to town on the saddle and then set her up on the counter in the store to sing for folks. (Smith *Devil's* 53)

These were the burred and busy years, the good years when Nonnie got so caught up in the great tumble and roar of her life that she never even thought of the rose silk dress folded away in the loft, nor of Jake Toney, nor of how she used to dance up on the counter of the store in Cana when she was a little girl and sing, "*The cuckoo she's a pretty bird, she sings as she flies*" – Oh, Nonnie still sang, while she carded the wool or rocked the baby or shelled the beans, but now she mostly sang the hymns that Ezekiel loved, or the old bloody ballads like "Barbry Allen" and "Brown Girl" and "The Gypsy Laddie." It gave Nonnie the strangest feeling to sing that one, all about a woman who left her house and baby to run away with a gypsy. For how could a woman do such as that? Men might wander but women were meant to stay home, and during those years when the house on Grassy Branch was brimming over with babies, Nonnie could not imagine anywhere else she might even *want* to be [...]. (Smith *Devil's* 72)

And so Nonnie sang the song she's sung when her daddy put her up on the counter as a little girl, all those years ago, her high, pretty voice trilling on the last line, "*And she never sings cuckoo till the spring of the year,*" and for a minute, she *was* that little girl again, so silly and so good. The audience clapped and cheered as Pete the Tramp led her up onstage to take a bow. Nonnie curtsied deeply, prettily, as if she'd been doing it all her life. It was amazing how natural she felt up there. [...] That was Thursday, or Stomach Night, at Dr. Harry Sharp's Celebrated Medicine Show. Friday morning, Nonnie and Lizzie went home. Friday night was Catarrh Night at the medicine show. Saturday was Rheumatism Night. On Sunday, the medicine show left town, and Nonnie went with it, taking nothing but her rose silk dress. (Smith *Devil's* 80ff)

Nonnie learned to testify movingly to the amazing curative powers of Dr. Harry Sharp's Celebrated Nervine, [...]. Accompanied by Harry on guitar, she learned to sing "The House of the Rising Sun" in a soulful way, [...] For this number, Nonnie wore a low-cut red velvet dress with black net stockings and gloves, *in order to create the proper illusion*, as Harry said. Nonnie learned fast that everything about the medicine show was illusion, including the medicine itself, which was mixed up as needed. (Smith *Devil's* 81)

The first quote describes Nonnie as a girl and how she sang for the public. Her father especially took his daughter with him to town to present her talent to others. This shows

that Nonnie was used to performing and being admired. Nevertheless, the circumstances of her performance change from performing at home for community members as an ordinary mountain girl to putting on a show for outsiders. The medicine show with its illusions and way of organized performance presents the first form of commercialization of country music that is presented in the novel. However, this way of public appearance was the first chance for musicians to expand their audience and leave their home in the mountains for the cities (cf. above section 3.1.). Additionally, the second quote shows how Nonnie changed during her marriage with Ezekiel. She suppressed that part of her that wished for fame, which is associated with the cuckoo song and her rose silk dress, living a more traditional mountain life, raising her children and working, which could be identified with hymns and ballads. Moreover, all songs presented in Nonnie's scenes can be retraced to old English roots (*The Cuckoo*; *Barbry Allen/Child 84*; *Brown Girl/Child 295*; *The Gypsy Laddie/Child 200*; cf. *SI*). Yet, change is indicated when she performs in the medicine show *The House of the Rising Sun*, which is not a traditional ballad or lullaby documented by Sharp or Child, and is only found in the United States according to the *BI* (cf. *SI The House of the Rising Sun*). Furthermore, the accompaniment on the guitar signifies a transformation, as this instrument was not very common in the mountains at the time (1900) but since the traveling show moved through the cities, it had other musical possibilities (cf. above section 3.1. & 5.1.1.3.).

To sum up, the first part of the novel is dedicated to the folk period of country music. Lee Smith describes the time's historical circumstances such as people's attitudes and appearances in great detail. Additionally, the author includes music that is typical for the Appalachian region at the time, as old ballads, lullabies and hymns; most of them having been documented by folklorists such as Francis Child and Cecil Sharp and are therefore significant for the region's former time and their heritage. The transition to a new stage of country music is initiated by a difference in performance and music. Smith's precise descriptions of the period such as her detailed depiction of the medicine show as well as its program, and her effort to use appropriate historical material enable the reader to broaden his/her knowledge about the region's musical development and gives him/her a sense of time and place.

5.2.1.2. Early Commercialism

The phase that followed the folk period is the time of early commercialism of country music and is represented in the second part of the novel. Similar to the earlier stage

described in *The Devil's Dream*, Smith achieves historical correctness, using detailed description of events, narrator attitudes, real-life names and appropriate songs to create a convincing atmosphere for her novel.

The following quotes describe how Lee Smith creates a historically accurate frame for *The Devil's Dream* by depicting scenes that relate to former real life circumstances:

‘Well, all right, Lucie, what in the hell *is* it?’ and I says, big as you please, ‘*Sing!* Hit’s the only thing I know how to do that wouldn’t make you mad or get the law on us.’ And R.C. is jest a-looking at me. Then he starts laughing. ‘Well,’ he says after a while, ‘just where do you propose we do all this singing?’ and I pointed straight out Mr. Sutton’s screen door at the square. ‘Right over there at the courthouse steps,’ says I [...]. [...]. This was Lucie and R.C.’s first public appearance. They took in more than enough to fix the wagon and shoe the horse. [...] After that, given their enterprising natures, there was no stopping them. R.C. took it upon himself to have bills printed up and hire a hall or a schoolhouse. Then he’d post the bills himself wherever they were playing – Oak Hill, Holly Grove, Cana, etc. I have kept one bill as a souvenir. It says: “LOOK! The Bailey Family Will Offer a Musical Program at Pig Branch School on Saturday, August 1. The Program is Morally Good. Admission is Ten Cents. [...] They played at square dances, play-parties, candy parties, house raising, bean stringings, too. They played wherever anybody would pay them. (Smith *Devil's* 110)

And when he wished to, of course, he could fiddle like a house afire – “Bonaparte’s Retreat,” “Sally Goodin,” “The Devil’s Dream,” “Arkansas Traveller,” “Sourwood Mountain” – oh, nobody could fiddle like R.C. when the mood was on him! Or play the banjo, either. I suppose it goes without saying that R.C. was the presiding genius of the group. It was he who “worked up,” as he called it, the songs, he figuring out new arrangements for even such old classics as “Shall We Gather at the River” and “Shady Grove”; it was he who found new songs for them to sing. Indeed, some of these turned out to be among the most requested – such as that haunting ballad “Preacher’s Son,” which R.C. picked up from an old man over at Bee, or his own “Melungeon Man,” its title referring to a mysterious strain of folks scattered through the mountains, which some believe to be descendants of this country’s first Roanoke Island settlers. (Smith *Devil's* 113)

Mr. Peer seems especially happy to learn that R.C. has written two of the numbers the Grassy Branch Girls plan to sing this afternoon: “Melungeon Man” and “Down by Grassy Branch.” The other numbers, R.C. assures Mr. Peer, feature his own personal arrangements and may be copyrighted as well. The fifth, “Shall We Gather at the River,” is an old hymn that has been recorded many times previously, by many artists, but R.C. assures Mr. Peer that theirs is a brand-new styling. Mr. Peer nods. A dapper, refined gentleman with hooded eyes and a fleshy, florid face, he has little regard for most of the “hillbillies” he deals with. Nor does he like their music much, but a man has to make a living, and this hillbilly music is making him rich. Ralph Peer is no fool. He realizes that R.C. Bailey is smart, a cut above most of the hillbillies who have come here, and treats him with consequent respect. Many of these hillbillies have never heard of

copyright songs, for instance, which is “the basis of the music business,” as Mr. Peer tells R.C. now. “You know, I have been recording nigger music for many years,” Mr. Peer says, and mentions some of the Okeh 8000 series of “race” records he has made: Mamie Smith’s “Crazy Blues,” recorded in Memphis; Louis Armstrong’s “Gutbucket Blues”; minstrel acts such as Butterbeans and Susie, recorded in Negro vaudeville theatre throughout the South. But Mr. Peer is always looking for original material, he tells R.C., and “niggers can’t write.” So he’s turned to hillbilly now. Mr. Peer gives R.C. the necessary papers to sign and R.C. reads them through carefully, as befits the importance of this occasion. Some of the hillbillies Mr. Peer has signed can’t even write their own names. The illiterate fiddler G.B. Grayson signed his contract with an X. (Smith *Devil’s* 133)

The first quote deals with R.C. and his wife Lucie’s first public appearance. In the other narrations before this scene both of them are described as very enterprising and musical characters (Smith *Devil’s* 98, 103). R.C. is a brilliant fiddler who also takes to other instruments like the banjo right away (Smith *Devil’s* 98). His wife Lucie plays the autoharp, she learns the Gibson guitar easily, which R.C. gives her as a wedding present, and sings beautifully (Smith *Devil’s* 103, 105). These talents and their sense for business might also be the reason why R.C. and his wife made profit out of their musical abilities. Firstly, making public appearances in Appalachian neighborhood communities, as can be read in the first quote, and then when the first production companies came to the South recording and extending their audience. The second quote portrays how R.C. got hold of song material by writing new songs, rewriting traditional songs and song catching. During the last of these activities, he collects the ballad *Preacher’s Son*, which Old Man Ira Keen wrote about Moses Bailey and Kate Malone. R.C. is unaware that this ballad was written about his grandparents. This ballad signifies that ballads possess a strong narrative character and how they were used in the mountains to share stories (Smith, cited in Ramos 157ff). Additionally, this scene shows how artists in former times got hold of their songs and that it was not only a creative act. Often, musicians performed songs they learned from others, passed on over the generations or found by song-catching (cf. above section 3.2.). Furthermore, the songs that Smith included in these scenes all appear to be deliberately selected. Lee Smith presents a mixture of old hymns (cf. *SI* *Shall We Gather at the River*), old fiddle tunes (cf. *SI* *The Devil’s Dream*; *Arkansas Traveller*), traditional mountain songs (cf. *SI* *Bonaparte’s Retreat*; *Sourwood Mountain*; *Sally Goodin*; *Shady Grove*) as well as R.C.’s and somebody else’s own creations (*Melungeon Man*; *Down by Grassy Branch*; *Preacher’s Son*). This great variety of songs presents a valid example of what was recorded by former artists and how they dealt with copyright back then (cf. above section 3.2.). Finally, it has to be mentioned that Lee Smith wrote real persons into

her book, which contributes to the novel's historical effect. Ralph Peer was, in fact, the assistant that recorded Mammie Smith's single "Crazy Blues," which triggered Peer's recording journeys into the South through which the early hillbilly recording business was created (Malone & Neal 34ff). Other parallels can be found in the way Peer's attitude is described by Malone and Neal (36) and how Smith characterizes him. Additionally, another fact sticks out, the Bailey family's similarity to the Carter Family, who was also recorded by Peer in Bristol in the summer of 1927 (Malone & Neal 64ff). This is also noted by Rebecca Smith in her article "Country Music Battles Religion in Lee Smith's *The Devil's Dream*." Both the Baileys and the Carters are Virginian families who were recorded in Bristol by Ralph Peer in the period of early hillbilly commercialization. Presumably R.C. Bailey, as his name already suggests, can be identified with A.P. Carter, the enterprising head of the group, whose sense for business and for music brought the group many of their songs. A.P. Carter was one of the first persons using copyright in the country music business (Malone & Neal 45, 67). Additionally, similar to R.C., he went on song-catching expeditions to enlarge the group's repertoire and spent his youth in a stern Christian household, where he was surrounded by religious music but had to suppress his love for the fiddle because his parents saw it as the devil's instrument, as did Ezekiel and Moses Bailey (Malone & Neal 67, 65). A.P. was the guiding head of the Carter family, as R.C. Bailey was of the Grassy Branch Girls. The Carter family consisted of his wife Sara Carter, who can be identified with Lucie Queen Bailey, and his sister-in-law Maybelle Carter, which can be recognized in Tampa Rainette Bailey and her daughter Virgie Rainette. Rebecca Smith recognizes even more similarities between the Carters and the Baileys' story, as Lucie's idea to sing for money to fix their car makes them realize that people are willing to pay to hear them sing and is the same success story that brought A.P. and Sara to the music business. Additionally, the slogan from the Baileys' bills is apparently taken from a Carter Family poster. Furthermore, similarities between the Baileys and Carters can be found in personality traits and performance habits like instrumental choices and vocal range of the particular family member. According to Rebecca Smith, the section entitled the "Bristol Session" is a perfect historical account of the recording session of the Carter Family that offers numerous overlaps between fiction and reality. Just two of them are Ralph Peer's love of Sara's (Lucie's) voice and the fact that Sara (Lucie) brings her baby to the session (R. Smith *Country* 61ff). A further correspondence can be found in Virgie Rainette's all-girl comedy act with her daughter Georgia and her niece Katie, as Mamma Rainette and the Raindrops, which corresponds

to Maybelle Carter and her daughter's (Helen, Anita and June) appearance as Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters (R. Smith *Country* 64).

Another detailed historical account is provided by Smith when Alice Bailey, Durwood and Tampa's daughter, illustrates her encounter with the first radio and what she heard on it (Smith *Devil's* 122ff). Smith uses not only real names, but she also describes clearly what the people listened to and what fascination derived from it (R. Smith *Country* 63).

To conclude, Malone and Neal state that, "The Carter Family [...] represented the impulse towards home and stability, a theme as perennially attractive as that of a Rambler. When the Carters sang, they evoked images of the old country church, Mama and Daddy, the family fireside, and 'the green fields of Virginia far away' " (Malone & Neal 64ff). This sense of the past emerges from Smith's narration of previous times. Therefore, it seems as if the author used a reference to the Carter Family to evoke a similar image of the past in her novel and her representation of the Bailey family. Lee Smith presents this period's characters as hard-working people and parents who try to make a little bit of money on the side by exploiting their musical talents and interests similar to so many of this time's country music stars (cf. above section 3.2.). This becomes obvious when the author describes her characters' appearance and thoughts (Smith *Devil's* 127, 131, 135). Additionally, by precisely describing real life events and persons as well as by integrating suitable songs and instruments, the author manages to create a realistic picture of former times in her novel, which helps the reader to develop a sense for this phase of country music.

5.2.1.3. The Following Years

The following parts of the novel, parts three, four and five, deal with different stages of country music after its commercialization. Lee Smith depicts radio show barn dances where Mamma Rainette and the Raindrops do their all-girl comedy act, the Grand Ole Opry show, as well as different stages of country music as the "Western swing and honky-tonk music of the late 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s", the Rockabilly period of the 1950s, the pop-country tunes from the 1960s and 1970s and the music's return to its roots (R. Smith *Country* 66ff). All these stages are precisely documented with corresponding songs, instruments and styles as well as names of real shows and persons that were important for these eras. Due to the wealth of such descriptions and scenes included in the novel, it is, unfortunately, not possible to include all of them as this would

exceed the frame of this paper. Nevertheless, reference to the essential quotes can be found at the end of each section.

The fourth part of the novel introduces the reader to Blackjack Johnny Rains, originally called Johnny Rainette, Virgie's son. According to Rebecca Smith, Johnny embodies the classical Rockabilly figure of the 1950s. Again Lee Smith includes famous personalities of the Rockabilly time to support her descriptions of the period. Johnny's successful single "I'm a Five-Card Stud" was produced by Sam Phillips, who was the actual founder of Sun Records and recorded Rockabilly celebrities as Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash (R. Smith *Country* 66). Similar to Elvis Presley, Johnny has Afro-American influences in his performance. As it can be seen in the following quote: "[...] [H]e told them about the army, where he met a huge black man named Rufus Main who played nigger blues on the guitar, with a lot of string pushing and choking, and how Rufus Main taught him all his licks and runs, real patient, [...]" (Smith *Devil's* 203). However, this influence is just one of many things that distinguish Johnny from R.C and the Grassy Branch Girls. Also Johnny's lifestyle and appearance changed compared with that of the earlier musical characters. Johnny abuses alcohol and drugs and sees women only as sexual objects (Smith *Devil's* 185ff, R. Smith *Country* 67). This bad boy image is also reflected in his clothes which are typical for the Rockabilly era (R. Smith *Country* 66). Concerning Blackjack Johnny's clothes Smith writes, "Johnny prefers to keep his [alcohol] right here, in the inside pocket of his western jacket, his trademark black Nudie jacket with silver piping, silver studs; it's that dark dangerous look the women like, that's what Johnny's going for, kind of a cross between Porter Wagoner and an undertaker" (Smith *Devil's* 186). Johnny's style is affected by the western branch, similar to that of Wayne Ricketts, Katie's second husband, who dresses her up like a honky-tonk angel and himself like a commercialized cowboy during the honky-tonk era (Smith *Devil's* 210, 292, 294). Furthermore, Wayne Ricketts shares the bad boy attitude with Johnny Rains, as Katie states that, "[t]here's some men that are born to be killed. Johnny Raines was one and Wayne Ricketts was another, and every minute they're alive is borrowed time" (Smith *Devil's* 314, R. Smith *Country* 68). But not only the performers' clothes and musical influences changed during these times, but also the topics that dominated their songs did. Concerning the period's song lyrics, Rebecca Smith quotes Bill Malone, who states that "songs about the 'Poor Old Mother at Home' and 'The Old Country Church' seemed somehow out of place in the honky-tonk environment," therefore, the songs dealt with "less idealization of love" (Malone *Country* 161ff, cited in R. Smith *Country* 67).

Johnny's earlier song "I'm a Five-Card Stud" but also his later tunes, with his wife Rose Annie Bailey, as "Subdivision Wife" and Katie's single "New Eyes" clearly represent more modern topics and attitudes than songs included in earlier chapters (Smith *Devil's* 184ff, 211, 293). Additionally, during this period, attitudes toward home were different than before. Johnny and Katie's feelings towards their home in Grassy Branch contrast with those of the Grassy Branch Girls and R.C. (Smith *Devil's* 5, 143, 187). Finally, Johnny and his childhood sweetheart, Rose Annie Bailey Rush, make a musical breakthrough and become the king and queen of country music, living a luxurious life in a huge mansion in Nashville, which represents the era's massive musical possibilities (Smith *Devil's* 208ff, R. Smith *Country* 69). Although Lee Smith deals with the rise of country stars who become rich and famous, she also comments on the business risks as alcohol, drug abuse and infidelity in this part of the novel (Smith *Devil's* 229, 231ff).

The fifth part of the novel is entirely narrated by Katie Cocker and chronicles approximately twenty or thirty years of country music history based on her example. In her narration, Katie takes the reader through her life. She starts by telling the reader about her childhood, which refers to the humble past in the hills of many other country stars, as, for example, Dolly Parton (Smith *Devil's* 226, 258; Smith, cited in Ramos 162). This is followed by her story about leaving home and appearing in comedy acts on radio shows and later by telling about her record sales as a honky-tonk angel, California pop singer and good country woman. At the end Katie summarizes the phases of her life:

I had been a dumb hick Raindrop with Virgie, I had been a honky-tonk angle with Wayne Ricketts, I had been a California pop singer with Tom Barksdale, I had been a good country woman with Ralph. For the first time in my professional life, I didn't have an image. I was alone again. And somehow, because of my new faith, I felt suddenly open to the whole world, stripping off all the past images, in a new and terrifying way. (Smith *Devil's* 349)

These stages of Katie's career are also supported by Smith's numerous historically correct examples that range from the classical description of Katie's looks, corresponding lifestyles and song lyrics to precise depictions of real events and the usage of names of actual country music celebrities (Smith *Devil's* 257ff, 268, 280ff / 291ff / 315ff, 322ff / 325ff).

Rebecca Smith claims that Katie's story also reflects the story of emancipation in music business, changing the men's dominance of the early days. The Grassy Branch Girls were guided by R.C.. Later in the novel, Rose Annie's breakthrough was caused by her second husband Johnny, similar to Katie's career that was always dominated by the

men on her side, husband or producer. The role of women changes at the end of the novel, when Ralph's death urges Katie to decide for the first time in her life who she wants to be (R. Smith *Country* 67ff).

The songs that Lee Smith presented in all of these scenes are a mixture of old traditional songs as *The Cuckoo* or *Shall We Gather at the River*, songs artists created themselves as *New Eyes* or *Subdivision Wife*, and popular songs of the periods as *Tragedy* by Thomas Wayne or *Rock the Joint* by Bill Haley. This wide range of different songs with various backgrounds provides information about the broad music repertoire of country music stars, who still perform old ballads and hymns although their own creations are very successful.

To sum up, Lee Smith precisely chronicles the commercialization of country music from the 1930s to the 1970s. She follows every stage of the music's development by connecting it to her characters' lives, thereby she sticks as close as possible to real historical settings to create a correct and authentic atmosphere for her scenes. By following Lee Smith's novel through the ages, reading about the history of country music, the reader gains information about the "Southernization of America" and how it gradually took place (Ramos 161). Furthermore, the novel presents a varied view on the genre by discussing its development from various perspectives, which enables the reader to get a complete picture of each period and come to his/her own conclusion about the genre and the development it underwent.

5.2.2. Themes

Music is the dominating theme in *The Devil's Dream*, embedded in the novel from its beginning to its end. However, next to its music, two other themes seem to emerge in the novel, namely religion and family. Both of these aspects are in close connection to music and interact with it frequently throughout the novel.

5.2.2.1. Music and Religion

There is something like a *church* about Opry in those days when it was still at the Ryman Auditorium – why, shoot, the Ryman used to *be* a church, come to think of it. It's got those pews, and the balcony, and stained glass in the windows. There's something solemn about the crowd, too – even now, over at the new Opry House – something worshipful, [...]. [...] It's exactly like people going up for Communion in a big Catholic church, if you ask me, the fans moving forward in a steady stream to pause and snap, pause and snap, and then move on, back to their

seats, back to Ohio and Maryland and West Virginia and all the places they came from, where they will get these pictures developed and put them in frames where they can point to them and say, "I was there. I was right there." – *Katie Cocker* (Smith *Devil's* 318)

Katie's comparison of the Opry with a church clearly shows that there is a strong link between music and religion. Bill Malone already commented on the solid connection of these two phenomena. "Country music has been subjected to no greater influence than southern religious life, which affected both the nature of songs and the manner in which they were performed" (Malone & Neal 10). Additionally, both of these cultural aspects represent essential elements of southern culture. Music and religion's importance in southern society shaped their coexistence and interaction. This correlation between music and religion is also presented in *The Devil's Dream* and represents a crucial part of the novel.

The interaction between music and religion starts when the Baptist preacher Moses Bailey marries musical Kate Malone from a fiddling family. The connection between the Malones and the Bailey family bequeathes to their descendants a strong disposition for both spheres. "Some people said it was like there'd been a feud over Ezekiel's soul, the Malones versus the Baileys [...]" (Smith *Devil's* 43). This blend of musicality and religiousness in the Malone-Bailey clan is responsible for the following appearance of these elements and their persistent entanglement.

The novel's depiction of the relationship between music and religion changes continuously over the years. In the case of Moses Bailey and Kate Malone the two elements appear as counter parts, having nothing in common. This changes when their son Ezekiel moves to Kate's family and discovers his musical side. Indeed, Kate's family, the Malones, combines both religion and music, which can be seen in the descriptions of the services they attend (Smith *Devil's* 36ff). Although Ezekiel swears off fiddle music when God gives him a sign, in his youth, Ezekiel presents a hybrid form of Moses and Kate, as the following quote implies: "[t]he other thing that Zeke likes is meeting; it helps him the way a woman and a fiddle tune help him" (Smith *Devil's* 36). However, this union is destroyed when he walks home drunk during a thunderstorm and receives a sign from God, who tells him to quit singing such unsaintly music and gives him a gift hymn instead (Smith *Devil's* 42ff). When Nonnie arrives at Grassy Branch, a new musical source arrives in Ezekiel's life. Nonnie and Ezekiel include both elements in their lives, as Ezekiel tells Nonnie to get baptized and takes her to his church, and Nonnie sings at home for their family, although it is stated that she kept to a more traditional

sound during her life with Ezekiel (Smith *Devil's* 71, 72). Finally, when Nonnie joins the medicine show, she leaves not only Ezekiel behind but also her religion, breaking the sacrament of marriage, which is stated in the following quote, "Pete the Tramp turned to Nonnie and kissed her. His mouth tasted fiery as the pit of Hell itself" (Smith *Devil's* 80). And although Nonnie knows that she is getting tangled up in something unsaintly, she leaves with the medicine show, thereby choosing music over religion. Ezekiel's former hybrid form is now inherited by his and Nonnie's children. The central character that combines both traits is R.C. Bailey, who also gets a religious sign, which leads him back to his father after he left Grassy Branch (Smith *Devil's* 93). R.C. is a talented musician, who loves the fiddle but he is also a religious man who drives miles after the Bailey family's appearances to take his father to church (Smith *Devil's* 87, 98, 111, 113). R.C.'s character manages a fuse of music and religion that the former characters could not accomplish. This ability is passed on to later generation of the Baileys since Rose Annie, Georgia, Johnny and Katie all sang in church as members of the Grassy Branch Quartet (Smith *Devil's* 158ff). However, this foundation seems to crumble when Katie and Johnny leave their home in the mountains to go into the music business and thereby turn their backs on religion (Smith *Devil's* 185ff, 260). Additionally, Alice Bailey, Katie's mother, turns into a religious "nut" according to Tammy Adele Burnette, who also claims that "religion has always run strong in that family" (Smith *Devil's* 176, 241, 276,). Alice condemns her daughter's uncommitted and frivolous life in the music business, thinking that Katie's daughter's illness is God's judgment for her mother's premarital intercourse. Finally, Alice abandons her daughter with the words "I used to have a daughter [...] but she went to Hell" (Smith *Devil's* 314). This statement describes exactly what Alice thinks of Katie's lifestyle. However, at the end of the novel, music and religion are reunited again when Katie finally finds religion after living through a personal crisis. When Katie finds God again in the form of Billy Jack Reems and the Hallelujah Congregation, which offers her a religion better suited for her lifestyle, saying "Yes! Yes! [...] instead of [the Primitive Baptists'] No! No!" she returns to her family roots, hearing God speak to her in the voice of her lesbian nanny's girlfriend who tells her to summon the Bailey family for a new album (Smith *Devil's* 348, 351; R. Smith *Country* 69ff). Katie's return to religion and her roots is also reflected in the title she chooses for the family album, namely *Shall We Gather at the River*, an old religious hymn that was sung by the family for generations (Smith *Devil's* 3, 71, 113, 133). This title also convinces the religious Alice to bury the hatchet with her daughter and come to Nashville to record the album (Smith

Devil's 351, 358). Although Alice is skeptical, her appearance and participation combined with Katie's retrieval of religion unites music and religion again at the end of the novel.

5.2.2.2. Music and Family

It took me a long time to understand that not a one of us lives alone, outside of our family and our time, and that who we are depends on who we were, and who our people were. [...] I come from a singing family, we go way back. I know where we're from. I know who we are. – *Katie Cocker* (Smith *Devil's* 5)

Two themes that have a strong bond in *The Devil's Dream* are music and family. The Baileys sing together and about each other, additionally, they carry their children to recording sessions and to the Opry show and support their family with the money they earn through music (Smith *Devil's* 120, 128, 157, 162, 316, 336, 340). This behavior shows the high value of the Bailey's familial bond. Additionally, the family evokes a special sense of home and family in their songs, which are passed on over several generations. However, reading the novel, it appears that not only their present family influences their music but also their familial roots of the past. While the reader traces the Bailey family history through the different stages of country music, he/she realizes what changes the family has undergone over the years and is reminded of their humble past in the mountains. Time has changed the family's living conditions and attitudes are different now, but they are still a musical family, singing the same songs over generations. Recurring songs represent a strong reference to the family's connection and their past in the Appalachian Mountains because they preserve the old times, telling the story of their home and their background, similar to the South's oral tradition.

A mixture of ballads, hymns, lullabies, country tunes and their own creations accompany the Bailey family history over the years. These melodies serve as recurring symbols of heritage and link the Baileys over the ages. The following quotes provide a few examples how the music is passed on in the Baileys' lives and how songs keep returning throughout the novel.

How I [Lizzie] thrilled to hear her sing Mamma's favorites, which *I* had taught her! – "Barbry Allen," the cuckoo song, "The Gipsy Laddie," "Brown Girl," and the riddle song I used to love so much as a child: [...]. (Smith *Devil's* 111)

I would sing to her [Annie May, Katie's daughter] all day long, the cuckoo song being her favorite, as it had been mine. (Smith *Devil's* 266)

I stepped up and grabbed the microphone like I'd been doing solo acts on radio all my life. "Actually it's just me by myself," I said into it. "My name is Katie Cocker." [...] Then I heard myself saying, "And I'm going to entertain you tonight with a real old song that my family has been singing down through the years. We call it 'The Cuckoo Song.'" Then I put my guitar down and sung "The Cuckoo Song" flat-out with no accompaniment, not daring to look over at Colonel Jack. [...] Then everybody started clapping and hollering, and Georgia was hugging me. "I can't believe you did that," she said. "That old thing. Whatever got into you? (Smith *Devil's* 284ff)

"This song was brought into our family by my mother, Tampa Rainette," Virgie said, and then she sung "White Linen," accompanying herself on her old guitar. [...] She looked old as the hills. When I said as much, Ramona said, "But she's *authentic*, Katie. That's what they're looking for now. She was *there*, after all. She's the real thing." The idea of the *real* thing being a *good* thing was certainly new for me to think about. After "White Linen," Virgie did "The Preacher's Son" and then "Down by Grassy Branch," which got her standing ovation. They didn't care about her voice, I realized. They cared about something else. (Smith *Devil's* 350)

In the first quote Lizzie Bailey, Ezekiel and Nonnie's daughter, states that she taught Lucie, her brother R.C.'s wife, all the songs her mother sang, including *The Cuckoo* song, which was Nonnie's favorite as a child and also the song she performed at the medicine show (Smith *Devil's* 53, 80, 135). This song was passed on for generations as also Katie, Nonnie's great-granddaughter, sings the song to her daughter (second quote) and chooses to sing the song in her first single performance on the radio (third quote), similar to Nonnie's first appearance on the medicine show. But also *White Linen*, which Tampa brought into the family and *Livin' on Love*, which was written by R.C. about Tampa and Durwood's relationship, are recurring songs (Smith *Devil's* 120, 268). Furthermore, the ballad *The Preacher's Son*, which Old Man Ira Keen wrote about the family's ancestors, reappears through the generations, although they are presumably not aware of the ballad's connection to their family history (Smith *Devil's* 7, 9, 113). Additionally, hymns like *Shall We Gather at the River* or ballads like *Barbry Allen* recur (Smith *Devil's* 3, 71, 113, 133 / 22, 72). However, the fact that the Bailey family's history is told through songs appears the clearest when Katie states at the end "There's *too many songs*, is the problem. The longer you live, the more songs you get attached to, they just get to be a part of you somehow" (Smith *Devil's* 352). The reason why there are *too many songs* is simply because Katie carries not only her songs with her, she is accompanied by songs that are family heirlooms. Therefore, the family album that Katie produces can be compared to the novel itself, telling her family's history.

“Its going to have lots of different kinds of songs on it as a matter of fact, all of them associated with my family – that’s the Bailey family – down over the years. ‘Well, Down by Grassy Branch’ will be on it for sure – Katie answers another question – “and ‘Livin’ on Love and ‘Melungeon Man.’ R.C. Bailey wrote both of those, and they were big hits for the Grassy Branch Girls. We’ll do ‘White Linen,’ which has always been one of my favorites. It’s an old ballad that came into the family when my Granddaddy Durwood married Tampa Rainette in 1910. [...] “And ‘The Cuckoo Song,’ it’s another old ballad that goes way back – [...]. I’d sure like to have ‘Subdivision Wife’ on here if she [Rose Annie] wants to sing it – (Smith *Devil’s* 3ff)

Lee Smith states in an interview about *The Devil’s Dream*, “Yeah, I really saw the structure of this novel like a record, like an album – those big records we used to have before CDs – in which all the different family members had their own cut, and everybody had his or her song on it” (Ramos 161). This statement and the above-mentioned narrative character of music make it clear that *The Devil’s Dream’s* songs fulfill the purpose of telling the Baileys’ family history (Ramos 158, 164).

Finally, it has to be mentioned that all of the recurring songs function in the same way, as a bond between the different family members, which even connects the fiddling mountain woman Kate Malone with her great-great-granddaughter, the country music celebrity Katie Cocker. And although Katie runs away from her roots during her youth, she always praises familial values, which can be seen in her love for her daughters and her support of her huge Nashville family (Smith *Devil’s* 264ff, 302, 340). At the end of the novel, Katie finally realizes the importance of her heritage and returns to her roots with the production of her family album (Smith *Devil’s* 5). With musical contributions and characters’ attitudes represented in the novel, Lee Smith manages to celebrate familial bonds and family roots in *The Devil’s Dream* in a traditional southern way, similar to the South’s oral tradition (Smith, cited in Ramos 157ff).

5.2.3. Songs and Plot

The following section is concerned with the correlations between songs and scenes to establish clarity whether certain tunes were deliberately chosen by the author to support the respective scenes with a distinctive atmosphere or connotation. However, as the novel offers a vast number of musical material such as song titles and lyrics, it is not possible to include all of them as this would exceed the limits of this paper. Therefore, only a few representative aspects of the novel are presented which should give an overall impression of how music and scene interact in *The Devil’s Dream*.

5.2.3.1. Theme Songs

As mentioned above, Lee Smith thought of *The Devil's Dream* as an album in which every character has his or her own song (Smith, cited in Ramos 161). It is possible that this CD structure the author had in mind when writing her novel is also the reason why she equipped every part of her novel with a song title and a theme song, which seem to guide the following narrations and play a special role within them.

The frame narrative is entitled *Shall We Gather at the River*, which is the title of an old Christian hymn and also the title of the album Katie is going to record with her family (cf. *SI Shall We Gather at the River*). It seems possible that the author chose a hymn title as the name for the frame narrative to refer to the family's religious and musical roots, which are united in this musical form. Furthermore, it can be seen as a reference to the family's gathering at the Opryland Hotel.

The first part of the novel is entitled *This World Is Not My Home*, which is also the name of a Christian hymn (cf. *SI This World Is Not My Home*). This title refers to a statement of the strict preacher Sid Bailey, Moses' father, who tells his community that they have to keep going through this lonesome valley by themselves and to keep away from temptations because this world is not their home (Smith *Devil's* 11). Therefore, this title can be seen as a reference to the Baptist denomination and Moses Bailey's strict upbringing. The theme song that opens the novel's first part is the ballad *The Preacher's Son*, which was written by the Baileys' neighbor, who is also the narrator in the first narrative. This ballad was written by Lee Smith especially for the novel and tells the story of Moses Bailey and Kate Malone, emphasizing the narrative character of ballads and their relation to the South's oral tradition. All in all, the traditional Baptist belief is clearly described and most prominent in the novel's first part, which is presumably described by the hymn *This World Is Not My Home*, representing the strong faith of the singer. Additionally, the theme song deals with the conflict between music and religion of the novel's first part and the Baileys' musical and religious dispositions.

The title of the second part is *Down at the Grassy Branch*, a song R.C. Bailey wrote. The name of the song derives from the Baileys' home property Grassy Branch. Nevertheless, R.C. writes the song and it is a recurring melody in the Bailey family history, though its lyrics are never written down. Consequently, the song's true meaning is not explained, however, it can be presumed that it deals with the family's home. The theme song of this chapter is *The Cuckoo* song, also a dominant tune among the family

members over the ages. The *BI* states that “[m]any versions [of the song] are women's complaints about men's false hearts.” Smith included the first two stanzas of Jean Ritchie's version in her novel, which omits the part about men's falsity (cf. *SI Cuckoo, The*). *The Cuckoo* song possesses a strong connection to Nonnie, who has been fooled by men similar to the singer (Smith *Devil's* 59, 83). However, the song is presented as a theme song for the second part, in which Nonnie's family has to cope with her desertion, therefore, the song could also refer to Nonnie's false heart. To conclude, the second part of the novel is concerned with the lives of Ezekiel and Nonnie's children after her abandonment and how they establish the singing Bailey family in Grassy Branch.

For part three, Lee Smith uses the same song as title and as theme song, namely *Flowers in the Meadow*, a song Smith took from Emma Bell Miles' *The Spirit of the Mountains* (1905). The song tells a sad love story. The singer relates that his/her lover kept him/her waiting too long, till all the gathered flowers were dead, which breaks the singer's heart. It seems obvious that this song about a tragic love story refers to Rose Annie and Johnny's sad fate, which is narrated in the novel's third part. Similar to the singer of the song, Rose Annie's is left heartbroken when Johnny disappears while she waits desperately for his return.

Rebecca Smith claims that Smith's title for the fourth part *Rockabilly: Get Hot or Go Home* derives from a phrase in a book by Randy McNutt entitled *We Wanna Boogie: An Illustrated History of the American Rockabilly Movement* (R. Smith *Country* 66). However, one could also argue that Lee Smith's title for the fourth chapter originates in the song *Get Hot or Go Home* by John Kerby, a classical Rockabilly tune (cf. *SI Get Hot or Go Home*). The song is about going out, girls and having a good time, exhibiting similarities to Johnny Rains' Rockabilly lifestyle. As theme song, the lyrics of Johnny Rains' megahit *I'm a Five-Card Stud* are presented. The song was written by Lee Smith herself and captures the musical changes of the Rockabilly period, addressing issues different from earlier songs. Therefore, both of these songs can be seen as an introduction to the musical period represented in this chapter.

Finally, the fifth and last title, *Katie Cocker Tells It Like It Is*, accompanied by the theme song *Single Girl*, a song by Katie Cocker, also written by Lee Smith herself. The title obviously refers to the fact that the whole chapter is committed to Katie's point of view. Though various songs exist that have similar titles, a clear connection to any of them is not clear. Concerning *Single Girl* Katie states that she wrote it while she suffered from alcohol addiction after the tragic death of her third husband. During this period, she

had lots of different men but none of them meant much to her because she was still grieving (Smith *Devil's* 342). However, the usage of this song as theme for Katie's narration could also refer to her metamorphosis as an emancipated woman during her narration (R. Smith *Country* 70ff).

To conclude, it can be argued that Lee Smith chose the musical titles and theme songs, which are presented at the beginning of each chapter, intentionally for each section to emphasize the chapters' storylines with references to their musical periods and core themes.

5.2.3.2. Direct References

Lee Smith uses songs as well as instruments and detailed descriptions as temporal markers within her novels. These devices assist her in creating a sense of a certain period within her narrations. Therefore, all of her songs were deliberately included in the scenes they appear in or especially written for them to construct a particular temporal atmosphere. However, when looking at the relationship between the meaning of songs and the novel's plot, a different notion arises. It seems as if most of the songs were integrated to create a historical effect or a statement about the time the novel is set in, rarely the scenes' song lyrics stress the novel's storyline. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this rule such as the title and theme songs mentioned above, the songs Smith specifically wrote for the novel, like *Subdivision Wife*, *Single Girl* and many more, and a few other songs that directly relate to the situations they appear in. If a song's content refers to the novel's plot, the reference is either very direct, as when *Amazing Grace* is sung at Ezekiel's baptismal service, referring to his salvation by God, or when a narrator comments on the song's relation to the storyline, as Katie points out that Willie Nelson's song *Phase and Stages* reflects her own life (Smith *Devil's* 42, 321).

The following quotes represent a few examples of how Lee Smith integrated song titles and lyrics in *The Devil's Dream* in order to emphasize the scenes. Songs written by Lee Smith herself are consciously excluded from this section as they were especially created for the text, which makes their references obvious:

Kate set out on the porch in a little rocker, wearing a green dress and a brown shawl, with a cameo pin at her neck, a-playing with a baby doll that she had brung with her from home, and singing, "*Go to sleep, little baby, fore the booger-man gets you! When you wake, you'll have a piece of cake, and all the pretty little horses.*" She was rocking the baby doll. (Smith *Devil's* 14)

She used to sing this little song, "*Oh I wonder when I shall be married, oh be married, oh be married, oh I wonder when I shall be married, or am I beginning to fade?*" It was the dumbest little song I ever heard, and she was the dumbest little girl I ever saw to sing it, and I said so (Smith *Devil's* 55).

Oh, Nonnie still sang, while she carded the wool or rocked the baby or shelled the beans, but now she mostly sang the hymns that Ezekiel loved, or the old bloody like "Barbry Allen" and "Brown Girl" and "The Gypsy Laddie." It gave Nonnie the strangest feeling to sing that one, all about a woman who left her house and baby to run away with a gypsy. For how could a woman do such as that? Men might wander but women were meant to stay home, and during those years when the house on Grassy Branch was brimming over with babies, Nonnie could not imagine anywhere else might even *want* to be [...]. (Smith *Devil's* 72)

Suddenly Nonnie felt completely alone, and it was as if the world and all its bright trappings streamed past her like the wind and were gone forever, and she was left on the bleak brown shore of the Dismal River by herself [...]. The others seemed far, far away, as they sang "*Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod? With its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God.*" [...] "Hit looks like Heaven, don't it?" he said, and then the preacher took her and then she was under, frozen solid and dead, and then she was up sputtering and resurrected, and as soon as it was done, the choking dream stopped forever. (Smith *Devil's* 71ff)

The first quote describes how Kate rocks her doll and sings a lullaby to her shortly after she arrives at Moses Bailey's cabin to marry him. Lullabies are a recurring theme with Kate Malone, which could refer to her being still a child of 15 or 16 years when she is married away (Smith *Devil's* 12, 27). Indeed, references to Kate's childlike nature are found frequently in the text, like the doll or her childlike appearance (Smith *Devil's* 14, 19). Although being married at this age was nothing unusual in the 19th century, Kate's representation might stand for her innocent and fun-loving spirit. Kate's cheerful disposition is hard to destroy and she manages to keep it although the times are hard until her son dies (Smith *Devil's* 17). The second excerpt is taken from Zinna Hulett's section; Nonnie sings *I Wonder When I Shall Be Married*, which is a clear reference to Nonnie's marital wish (Smith *Devil's* 55ff; cf. *SI I Wonder When I Shall Be Married*). The third quote is from a 3rd-person narration that tells which songs Nonnie sings while she is married to Ezekiel. This excerpt shows very well that often the included songs are just references to a certain period or genre of music, as in this case *Barbry Allen* and *Brown Girl*, which could refer to the Appalachian inhabitants' English roots since their contents do not seem to offer any parallels to the novel's plot. However, the ballad *The Gypsy Laddie* obviously corresponds to Nonnie's future, which seems to be especially highlighted by her thoughts about it, making the reference clearer (cf. *SI Barbry Allen*;

Brown Girl; Gypsy Laddie, The). Finally, the last quote describes Nonnie's baptism in the river, which is accompanied by the community singing *Shall We Gather at the River* (cf. *SI Shall We Gather at the River*). Again, the reference to religion and to the communities' actual gathering at the river seems obvious in this scene.

All in all, *The Devil's Dream* offers a wide range of musical references that support each scene in various ways, either as temporal markers or as hints to a familial or religious bond, the characters' heritage, attitudes or specific situations. However, as the novel tries to chronicle the history of country music in North America, the examples in which music is represented as historical sign outweigh the other cases.

5.3. *Losing Battles* – Eudora Welty

5.3.1. *Musical Depiction*

The consistency of her stories was an important issue to Eudora Welty. The author was anxious about the historical and regional correctness of her texts as the following comment suggests.

I'm careful as I can be about names, and I work hard at them. And I don't use anything that couldn't happen, that wouldn't be right for that part or the country or that kind of family, that time in history. I really do have those things as near right as I can get them because that matters to me. (Welty *Conversations* 51)

It can be assumed that the music that was integrated in Eudora Welty's works was selected according to the same high standards. Consequently, it seems probable that Miss Welty did some musical background investigations before including the tunes in her work. Furthermore, it is very likely that Eudora Welty included her personal musical knowledge in her novel; as a Mississippi native she must have been familiar with the music that circulated in her state. These facts imply that the music presented in *Losing Battles* was deliberately selected for historical and regional reasons. Similar to *Oral History* and *The Devil's Dream*, the music that is found in *Losing Battles* conveys a clear sense of time and place. However, *Losing Battles* distinguishes itself from the other novels by exhibiting a consistent timeframe. Due to that fact its music does not have to fulfill the role of a period indicator, reflecting the region's continual change in its musical development.

Finally, it can be assumed that Eudora Welty included music in *Losing Battles* in order to create a certain atmosphere for her novel's time and place. Her musical pieces

assist in the process of developing an idea about her participants and the place they live in. Therefore, the following section analyzes Welty's use of music in *Losing Battles* in order to come to a conclusion about the impressions they conveyed. Additionally, short comments about the music's historical correctness are included but are not further discussed, since such a representation does not seem to be the author's main goal but rather a side effect of her precision and effort for consistency.

5.3.1.1. Music-Making

Music seems to be an essential element of the Vaughn-Beecham-Renfro reunion as all the family members constantly engage in musical interaction throughout the celebrations. However, a certain degree of musicality is also evident before the reunion reaches its peak, during the core scenes in the evening. This section looks at the different forms of music making presented throughout the text and how their depictions influence the novel's effect.

Music is present in every chapter of *Losing Battles* in various forms, ranging from background sounds the wind brings to the scene to songs that are deliberately sung by the novel's characters (Welty *Losing* 115, 128, 137). *Losing Battles*' musical interactions usually happen in groups but also single performances are integrated (Welty *Losing* 223, 307). Concerning the musical instruments, the banjo is most frequently used during the reunion, the guitar is played by one character to accompany himself and the cornet occurs only once, but also plain vocal singing is included in the text (Welty *Losing* 307, 115, 347, 258). The dominant musical forms described in the novel are old Christian hymns, which seem to reflect the characters' religiousness, but also nursery rhymes are often presented, which could point to the reunion's broad age range (five generations) and its continual growth (Welty *Losing* 288, 269).

Although singing and music seem to be important matters of transporting information and creating the novel's atmosphere in all parts, the impression is gained that they influence the atmosphere of the reunion's core scenes the most (parts three to five). Singing seems to be a highly valued part of the reunion just as the oral tradition. Comparable to a religious service, where singing and music making are solid traditional components, it is practiced during the dinner part of the reunion. The following quote describes how the reunion members all sit together and sing after dinner.

They sang for a while longer, still in their chairs but settled back, some of them singing with their eyes closed. On the tables before them there were only the scraps and bones, the boats of the eaten-out watermelons; yet still, now and again, a white chicken feather floated down from the sky and did a brief spin on the grass, or a curl of down landed on one of the tables. (Welty *Losing* 227)

This scene of a big family sitting together, enjoying each other's company and good food, sharing stories of the past and making music together in a beautiful environment, where family values are still treasured, although times are hard, definitely contributes to the atmosphere the novel creates. Romanticizing depictions like the description presented above, are an essential feature of *Losing Battles* and the musical scenes presented throughout the reunion often contribute to this effect (Welty *Losing* 3, 223, 288).

To conclude, *Losing Battles* opposes two converse images. On the one hand, Eudora Welty addresses difficult topics like the region's poverty and people's prejudice, skepticism and ignorance (found in community outsiders and reunion members). But on the other hand, Miss Welty creates a beautiful and romantic picture of northeastern Mississippi and its inhabitants. The author describes Banner's scenic nature and its residents who stick together and support their families. The music presented in the novel seems to contribute to the second image, emphasizing the harmonious togetherness of the reunion, which appeals to the novel's romanticizing trend. *Losing Battles* seems to convey partially stereotypical images of the old romantic South and its hillbilly inhabitants, which are supported by its musical accompaniments.

5.3.1.2. The Musicians

Losing Battles includes a broad variety of musicians singing on their own or in groups, just a few of them are the small girl cousins, the Methodists, Elvie, Granny Vaughn and the whole reunion together (Welty *Losing* 29, 128, 137, 307, 223). Although a great number of performers is depicted in the novel two, namely Uncle Noah Webster and Aycock Comfort, take a special place among them. Both characters possess the ability to play an instrument, which proves their musicality and distinguishes them from the others. This chapter analyses how Uncle Noah Webster and Aycock are constituted as musicians and how their roles contribute to the depiction of music in *Losing Battles*.

Uncle Noah Webster is described as a sunny character by Miss Beulah (Welty *Losing* 221). His jolliness can also be seen in the way he greets his family when he arrives (Welty *Losing* 12). He jokes and creates a cheerful atmosphere. Additionally, Noah Webster plays the banjo, which was a common folk instrument at the time (cf.

above section 5.1.1.3.). His comments about his instrument and musicality imply their importance to him. “ ‘I ended up my ad, ‘Don’t care if you drink, dip, cuss, flirt or philander, just so you can wield a broom and enjoy the banjo,’ ’ said Uncle Noah Webster” (Welty *Losing* 76). Comments like this reflect his wit but also his love for music. Uncle Noah Webster’s musical accompaniment of the reunion on the banjo contributes to the typical image that is created by the novel of a southern hill family that makes music together. The traditional instruments and songs as well as the typical setting support this image. Due to the fact that his instrument plays an essential role in the creation of this typical musical atmosphere, Uncle Noah Webster contributes significantly to the depiction of musicality in the novel.

Aycock Comfort is perceived differently by various characters. He is Jack’s best friend who voluntarily went to prison with him and who saves the car from falling down the edge by lending his weight to it. However, Jack’s parents and Gloria think differently of him, having the opinion that he is good for nothing (Welty *Losing* 36ff, 111ff). Nevertheless, Aycock seems to be a faithful friend to Jack who makes the best of every situation. This is reflected in the fact that Aycock does not mind being trapped in a car for one entire night. Aycock contributes to the musical scenes by playing his guitar, another typical musical instrument that already existed in the region during the 1930s (cf. above section 5.1.1.3.). Aycock’s guitar seems to be of great value to him, which can be seen in following quotes, “ ‘I reckon what Aycock spent his year, six months and a day missing was his guitar,’ said Jack. ‘He’s serenading himself now. I wonder what told him he was going to need that before he got back home this time.’ ” (Welty *Losing* 171ff) “ ‘He is happy right where he is. He’ll sit there serenading himself till he’s seen the train go by,’ Jack said as the procession leaped forward” (Welty *Losing* 405). Although Aycock is not present during the reunion, he is depicted as the sunny southern musician who loves his home, friends and music similar to Uncle Noah Webster.

To sum up, both characters, Uncle Noah Webster and Aycock, contribute to the way music is depicted in the novel. Through their portrayal as humorous and jolly characters with a love for music, friendship and family, an image of a typical southern musician is created that might trigger a partly stereotypical but also idealized perception of the novel’s characters and setting.

5.3.2. Songs and Plot

A book, a novel itself is a big symbol, and a word is a symbol. Color is a symbol. Anything can be a symbol if the way it's used refers us to the imagination. It's a vocabulary, and it's part of your equipment. But it does not exist for its own sake, something dragged in with a big, red "S" on it. That way, of course, it would have no effect. (Welty *Conversations* 52)

Referring to Welty's statement that "Anything can be a symbol if the way it's used refers us to the imagination" this paper claims that the music represented in Eudora Welty's novel *Losing Battles* is such a symbol. A symbol that addresses the reader's imagination and creates additional meaning (Welty *Conversations* 52). This assumption suggests that all the song titles and lyrics provided in Welty's work were placed deliberately in the selected scenes.

Furthermore, Eudora Welty states in the same interview that symbols need to come naturally to her when writing a story. "If they're a part of the story, they come readily to hand when you want them, and as often as you want them, and you use them with a proper sense of proportion, and with as light a touch as possible" (Welty *Conversations* 52). Due to this "light touch" Eudora Welty's symbols may not be clearly recognizable within a text, but once one is aware of them, their meaningfulness becomes an inevitable part of her stories.

Paying attention to the fact that symbols can be found anywhere but are not easily recognized, the following section offers a detailed analysis of song lyrics and their meaning in relation to the novel's plot in order to reach a conclusion about music's role and function in *Losing Battles*. Finally, it is essential to note that due to the novel's great number of Christian hymns the religious connotation of the text is obvious, which causes an impossibility to detach the following interpretations from their spiritual meaning. Through a different analysis additional sense can be added to the scenes but their religious notion cannot be obliterated.

5.3.2.1. The Characters

All fiction writers work by indirection; to show, not to tell; not to make statements about a character, but to demonstrate it in his actions or his conversations or by suggesting his thoughts, so that the reader understands for himself. Because fiction accomplishes its ends by using the oblique. Anything lighted up from the side, you know, shows things in a relief that you can't get with a direct beam of the sun. And the imagination works all around the subject to light it up and reveal it in all of its complications (Welty *Conversations* 53).

It can be presumed that this indirection and the usage of the oblique, of which Eudora Welty speaks in this interview, can also be found in the music she uses to emphasize her scenes. It often seems as if the integrated music described Welty's characters or comments on their situation. Or to use the author's words, it illuminates the character with only a ray of light to leave the rest to the reader's creativity.

One example for such an indirect description of a character can be found right at the beginning of *Losing Battles* when Uncle Noah Webster, the fifth Beecham brother, arrives. When Etoyle, the Renfro's nine-year-old daughter, sees her uncle, she request a song from him, which he does not sing due to the excitement and hustle of the reunion.

Clapping Mr. Renfro on the back, he roared "Who you trying to fool with that new lid on the old house?" "Play 'I Had a Little Donkey,'" Uncle Noah Webster!" cried Etoyle. "I'm looking for Jack! Uncle Noah Webster hollered, with a swing of his banjo. "Ain't he here yet? (Welty *Losing* 13)

The *BI* does not list a song with the title *I Had a Little Donkey*, nevertheless, due to the similar title and animal, it can be assumed that this is the same song as *I Had a Little Mule*, *I Had a Little Pony* or *I Had a Little Horse*, which can be found in the *BI*. *I Had a Little Horse* is an American nursery rhyme, which can also be traced back to English sources. The song describes the horse/donkey/etc. in a funny manner; it mentions the animal's features and what its owner does to him, for instance, ride on its tail or pull its tail (cf. *SI* *I Had a Little Donkey*). A possible interpretation of this scene could be that Uncle Noah Webster is a funny and musical character and therefore his niece wishes to hear a nursery rhyme from him. However, looking at the song's lyrics, which are not represented in the text, a different interpretation emerges. In most versions of the song, the name of the extolled animal is Jack, similar to the name of the hopefully awaited Renfro son (cf. *SI* *I Had a Little Donkey*). Therefore, Etoyle's request could also offer an answer to Uncle Noah Webster's question. Maybe the Renfros want to mislead Jack with their new roof, suggesting that everything is all right at home and nothing has changed. Moreover, the roof is the first thing Jack comments on when he is asked to say something (Welty *Losing* 73). He inquires why they have a new roof and shortly afterwards discovers that his grandfather has died during his absence and that his beloved truck was sold to his enemy to pay for the new roof (Welty *Losing* 74, 152). An additional meaning that is possibly implied by *I Had a Little Donkey* is that Jack is owned by his family, as the donkey is owned by the singer. His family relies on him, to come home, to help them

and to improve their situations. It seems almost like there is no possibility for him to get away from them (Welty *Losing* 194ff).

The same song is integrated a second time, supposedly to fulfill a similar purpose, when Gloria narrates the story of her and Miss Julia Mortimer in the fourth part of the novel. While Gloria describes how she told Miss Julia that she would quit teaching to marry Jack, Uncle Noah Webster starts accompanying her on his banjo. He does not stop playing until the scene reaches its climax when Granny Vaughn suggests that Sam Dale Beecham might be Gloria's father, making her Jack's cousin (Welty *Losing* 265).

“Tell it. Maybe we can help you,” said Aunt Birdie. Uncle Noah Webster reached his hand up the neck of the banjo, as the other hand stole to the strings and began to pluck out softly “I Had a Little Donkey and Jacob Was His Name,” without giving the tune its words. “It was the last time I went across to see Miss Julia,” said Gloria. (Welty *Losing* 247)

Uncle Noah Webster's contribution to Gloria's story can also be interpreted as the start of Gloria's story, which follows one sentence later. Hence, from using this song for this scene one can draw the conclusion that Jack is not only owned by his family, but Gloria owns him too. Gloria believes she can change Jack for the better. She wants to have her husband to herself, pulling him away from his family whom he loves so dearly. Furthermore, she imposes rules on him, like “letting him be a Good Samaritan for the last time.” Her behavior implies that Gloria believes she owns Jack, yet in a different way than his family does (Welty *Losing* 126, 320, 356, 360ff).

Another oblique description of a character can be found by close examination of the following quote. The family tells Aunt Cleo Jack's story. When they come to the part where Jack steals the safe and brings it to Gloria, she is circled by little girls singing *King William was King George's Son*.

“And I reckon he was fixing to drop that safe, there at her feet,” said Aunt Beck gently. “But when he gets there, she's ready for him.” They paused to look at Gloria. Small girl cousins had been drawn to her now, and marched in a circle around her, every little skirt a different length from the others. “*Down on this carpet you must kneel Sure as the grass grows in this field,*” the little girls were singing, loud through their noses. (Welty *Losing* 29)

King William was King George's Son cannot be found in the *BI*; however, it is available in the Digital Collection of the Appalachian State University, which states that it is a very popular play party song. Again, a different reading emerges from an examination of the lyrics that are not provided in the novel. “Choose in the east, choose in the west, choose

the one you love the best, If he's not here to take our place, choose another with all your grace. [...]. Salute your bride and kiss her sweet, rise again upon your feet" (www.yorkshirefolksong.net). This play party song was played in a circle where one boy stood in the center, choosing a girl, whom he leads into the middle to give her a kiss (cf. SI King William was King George's son). Gloria is the girl that Jack selected, that is why he brought her the safe. She is his one true love and this is why he wanted to marry her. However, the song could also imply that it is the other way around. Gloria chose Jack as her one true love and, although he is not present, she has not moved on to somebody else as the song suggests, not even to a friendship with a family member, which could have helped her during his absence. Gloria stands apart from the family, not participating in their family game, although Jack wishes for her to love them (Welty *Losing* 360).

Finally, it can be concluded that Eudora Welty's music selection definitely addresses her readers' creativity and musical knowledge, since key elements of the presented pieces are often not included in the text. However, once the reader is aware of the integrated song's lyrics and meanings, it becomes difficult to ignore the additional references to the novel's characters and their relationships created by the scenes' music.

5.3.2.2. The Rescue

During the second part of novel, the car of Judge Moody and his wife runs over Banner Top, which saves Gloria and Lady May's lives. Motivated by the savior of his wife and child, Jack makes it his mission to rescue the Moodys' car from Banner Top and bring it back on the road. The car's rescue is precisely described in the second and sixth parts of the novel. The actions taking places in these two parts of *Losing Battles* are accompanied by various songs, which, under closer investigation, stress different features of the plot.

The first song is included in the second part of the novel shortly after the car drives off with Aycock on its backseat. Jack has come up with the plan to pull the car back with a rope; the Moodys, however, have no confidence in his skill and demand a good garageman. While the Moodys discuss how to get help, they hear a song in the distance (Welty *Losing* 125ff).

"Where's that singing?" Mrs. Moody sharply inquired. "When the wind veers just a little bit to the west, and it's First Sunday, you'll hear the Methodists letting off from Banner," said Jack. " 'Throw out the life line! Throw out the life line!' " sang the Methodists. " ' Someone is sinking today.' " "Then what are we supposed to do?" Mrs. Moody asked. "Stand here together and wait for the first

person to come along?” “Mrs. Judge, generally the first ones to come along the road ain’t exactly the ones you’d have picked,” said Jack. (Welty *Losing* 128ff)

The song they hear is called *Throw Out the Life Line*, an old religious hymn. The song’s lyrics encourage people to save those who are tempted by sin, using the metaphor of a sea rescue. The song ends with the request to accept their help. “This is the life line, oh, grasp it today! See, you are recklessly drifting away; Voices in warning, shout over the wave, O grasp the strong life line, for Jesus can save” (cf. *SI* *Throw Out the Life Line*). Integrating this specific song in this scene seems to be an obvious reference to Jack’s idea of pulling in the car and his Samaritan offer. Additionally, the song could be seen as an encouragement for the Moodys to accept Jack’s offer, because he is the person who will finally save their car with great effort. Therefore, *Throw Out the Life Line* could suggest the answer to Mrs. Moody’s question presented above, which also implies a humorous connotation.

The next song presented in this scene is the Christian hymn *Shall We Gather at the River*. According to the *BI* the song describes “[...] the happy life after death in the land of God” (cf. *SI* *Shall We Gather at the River*).

“Shall We Gather at the River” rose and faded on the air, and the stitching sound of the Buick’s motor played on the midday silence. Then the distant of a pick-axe travelled to them, slow blows falling on dry ground somewhere below, spaced out with hollers of protest in between. “That digs like my Uncle Earl,” remarked Aycock. “On Sunday, too. Wonder who’s played a joke on him?” “I just want the world to know,” Mrs. Moody raised her voice and called to the surrounding hills, “I wouldn’t have budged from my cool house in Ludlow this morning except to go to Sunday School if I hadn’t had my husband’s conscience to contend with. And look where that’s brought me.” (Welty 131)

Banner and Banner Top are situated close to the river Bywy, therefore, it is possible that this song refers to the gathering of all these people at this location. Presuming that this is the case, Mrs. Moody’s statement indicates that her answer to the song’s question is clearly “no,” whereas the song’s lyrics give a different answer. However, considering the song’s religious topic, describing life after death, another interpretation unfolds. Perhaps this song, similar to the “digging” Aycock perceives, is a sign of the death of Miss Julia Mortimer, signifying that she will gather with other souls in heaven. Ironically, also Banner cemetery is located next to the Bywy, therefore, Julia Mortimer’s funeral will again cause a gathering of the novel’s characters at the river. Later in the novel it will be revealed that Miss Julia orders everybody she has ever taught to attend her funeral, which would make half of the reunion her guests. This request, which is perceived as exorbitant

by many members of the reunion, raises the song's question again (Welty *Losing* 290ff). The question "shall we gather at the river," literally understood as a physical gathering or metaphorically as a sign of death and God's calling for souls, is therefore a recurring element of the novel.

Shortly afterwards, when help from home arrives in the form of Jack's father and sister, the next song is introduced. Elvie, the youngest Renfro girl, sings *Yield Not to Temptation*, an old Christian hymn (cf. *SI Yield Not to Temptation*).

Mr. Renfro had come into sight on the farm track. Elvie came with him, singing:

*"Yield not to temptation
for
yielding is
sin,"*

as she came down the steep track. Giving one skip to either side, she kept time to the homesick, falling tune in a sweet voice like plucking strings. (Welty 137ff)

Bridget Smith Pieschel argues in her paper "From Jerusalem to Jericho: Good Samaritans in *Losing Battles*" that Welty rewrote and ridiculed the *Good Samaritan Parable* (Luke 10.30) with *Losing Battles* by placing machines over men in the novel (Pieschel 67). Pieschel claims that Jack represents two contrastive roles; the thief and the Good Samaritan. This is supported by Gloria's statement, "For the sake of the reunion you were willing to run Judge Moody into the ditch. Now for his sake you are just as willing to break your neck" (Welty *Losing* 126). It has already been mentioned above that Jack offers the Moodys to be their Good Samaritan but they refuse his help and demand professional knowledge (Pieschel 68). In addition, a new interesting interpretation is offered by Pieschel's comment on the role of Aycock Comfort.

Aycock Comfort provides the transitional image in the modern version of the parable. It is hard no to see Welty's joke here. Aycock comforts as the Holy Comforter, the Holy Spirit, especially when, later in the scene, Elvie begins singing the old Baptist hymn "Yield Not to Temptation." (69)

Again, this song's reference is made in the lyrics that are not represented in the text. "Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through" (cf. *SI Yield Not to Temptation*). According to Pieschel, "Jack, the savior [...] is joined by 'Comfort,' who actually chose to go with Jack to prison, who has been his constant companion laboring in the fields, who parks himself in the Buick, and who gives it, for the first time, a benevolent human spirit" (69). Therefore, this

scene's hymn is supposedly again a reference that the Moodys' savior is standing in front of them and that they should accept his help.

In the sixth part of the novel when the car-mule caravan goes down the hill to Banner and almost collides with the school building, Mrs. Moody prompts all of them to pray, which results in the singing of the school anthem.

"Pray!" cried Mrs. Moody.
And the children all with one accord began to sing,
 *"O hail to thee, Banner School so fair,
 The fairest school in the land!"*

[...]
"The blind crossing!" Judge Moody cried, warning, while the children all sang the louder, *"Beyond compare! Beyond compare!"* and the rushed upon the railroad tracks [...], and seemed to be running straight into the schoolhouse – it [the schoolbus] pressed close like a face against a windowpane – while the children yelled to finish the song,
 *"We rally to thee!
 To the purple and gold!"* (Welty *Losing* 407ff)

Information about this song is not available in the *BI*, however, looking at different school anthems of colleges and universities, similarities are evident. It seems rather ironical that before the school gets almost hit and damaged, the children start singing a hymn of praise to it as kind of prayer. Especially since the reunion conveyed a rather negative view of education (Welty *Losing* 235ff). Miss Beulah states that they quit worshipping Miss Julia, which implies the worshipping of school, contrary to the school children on the bus who sing the school anthem and Vaughn who is ready to worship his new teacher (Welty *Losing* 408). Therefore, the integration of the school anthem in this scene might suggest that the new generation's attitude may have changed. It can be presumed that the children pray for the rescue of Banner school, which Jack manages by pulling the brakes before the actual crash.

At the end of the novel, when Jack has rescued the car and they all have been to Miss Julia Mortimer's funeral, Jack and Gloria walk home and he sings *Bringing in the Sheaves*, ending the novel with his song (cf. above section 5.1.2.2).

One of his eyes still imperfectly opened, and the new lump blossoming on his forehead for his mother's kiss, Jack raised his voice and sang. All Banner could hear him and know who he was,
 *"Bringing in the sheaves,
 Bringing in the sheaves,
 We shall come rejoicing,
 Bringing in the sheaves!"* (Welty *Losing* 436)

This scene's song is an old Christian hymn that has an agricultural theme. However, this topic could also serve as a metaphor for religious harvesting. The lyrics that provide a different interpretation of the scene are not represented in the text, such as "sowing seeds of kindness" (cf. *SI Bringing in the Sheaves*). Jack definitely sows "seeds of kindness" throughout the novel. Jack's inner need seems to be to satisfy everyone's desires, which is also stated in Gloria's comment above, claiming that he first wanted to satisfy the reunion and then the Moodys at all costs (Welty *Losing* 126). Even his treatment of his "enemy" Curly, who brought him to prison and took his property, is not hostile and vengeful (Welty *Losing* 146). Other incidents, such as the appearance of Jack's horse Dan or his confession of love for Miss Julia, although she wanted to ruin his family, prove Jack's good intentions and his unbreakable good spirit (Welty *Losing* 434, 361). Jack's answer to Gloria's question at the end of the novel seems to describe his attitude very well.

"Between 'em all, they've taken away everything you've got, Jack," said Gloria. "There's been just about a clean sweep," he agreed. "Everybody's done their worst now – everybody and then some," she said. "They can't do anymore now." He sets his lips on hers. "They can't take away what no human can take away. My family," he said "My wife and girl baby and all of 'em at home. And I've got my strength. I may not have all the time I used to have – but I can provide. Don't you ever fear." (Welty *Losing* 434)

Jack's optimistic point of view supports him by "sowing his seeds of kindness" along the way and he expects to "bring in the sheaves" resulting from his behavior, to provide for his family, which is most important to him.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that during the car rescue scenes, in the second and sixth parts of the novel, Jack Renfro emerges as a strong force that guides the saving process. Furthermore, Jack not only appears as the car's savior but also as the rescuing hand for the Moodys and his own family. This portrayal of Jack as the Good Samaritan and savior is not only reflected in his actions, but also evident in the music accompanying the scenes.

5.3.2.3. The Reunion

A reunion is everybody remembering together – remembering and relating when their people were born and what happened in their lives, what that made happen to their children, and how it was that they died. There's someone to remember a man's whole life, every bit of the way along. I think that's a marvelous thing [...]. (Welty *Conversations* 78)

This is exactly what the Vaughn Beecham and Renfro reunion does. They reminisce about the past, about their family history and other people that are connected to it. This process of remembrance is accompanied by various musical forms that seem to emphasize this activity. Instrumental pieces played on the banjo or cornet as well as vocalized hymns and other songs affect the reunion's atmosphere. The music creates a frame for the shared stories that seems to contribute certain symbols to each scene and carries different meanings. An in-depth analysis of each musical scene offers various insights about the reunion and the participating characters. The following chapter presents musical quotes from the core scenes of the reunion, which starts with the reunion gathering for dinner and Brother Bethune giving them the family history (part 3) and ends with everybody leaving for home or going to bed (part 5).

The first song mentioned in part three is *Blest Be the Tie* during the narration of the family history. However, this song is used in other parts of the novel as well, since it is the family's farewell song.

"We didn't know, till Mr. Renfro rode the horse into the daylight to tell us, how shortly he lasted after 'Blest Be the Tie,' " said Uncle Percy in a whisper (Welty *Losing* 184).

Then they had a singing of "Blest Be The Tie." There was only one really mournful voice – Judge Moody's (Welty *Losing* 348).

"Granny's going to be my next girl," said Mr. Willy. "I lost me one girl this morning, but I believe I already found me another'n." "Willy Trimble, if you come a step closer – ! cried Miss Beulah. "Didn't you feel your foot stepped on in 'Blest Be the Tie'?" "And take that jade of yours off somewhere and leave her," Granny told him in dismissal. "She's been cropping my flowers." (Welty *Losing* 351)

Blest Be the Tie also called *Blest Be the Tie that Binds* is an old Christian hymn frequently connected to farewell. The song's lyrics state that all Christians are connected by Christian love and that they share their woes before their father's throne. Furthermore, it declares that when they part again, they have gained strength from their sharing and are cleansed of their sins (cf. *SI* *Blest Be the Tie*). Why this song was selected for those scenes seems obvious. The song's lyrics state exactly what they do at the reunion. "Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one [,] Our comforts and our cares. We share each other's woes, our mutual burdens bear; and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear" (cf. *SI* *Blest Be the Tie*). But the reunion is not only connected by religion, they are bound by family ties. They come

together as a family to talk about their past and share their woes before their grandfather's pulpit (Welty *Losing* 183). It can be assumed that Granny and Grandpa Vaughn are the leading forces that bind the reunion since the reunion's occasion is Granny Vaughn's birthday, and in the past Grandpa Vaughn's sermon and his narration of the family history were the reunion's central elements. Additionally, it is mentioned in the novel that Granny and Grandpa Vaughn were literally the force that tied the Beecham siblings together after their parents' death (Welty *Losing* 220). *Blest Be the Tie* might therefore not only refer to the Vaughn-Beecham-Renfro clan's religious connection but also to their family ties with their grandparents at the center. In the third quote, Mr. Trimble, the coffin carpenter, suggests that Granny Vaughn could be his next girl after Julia Mortimer, for whom he milked the cows and wanted to make her coffin. Miss Beulah chases him away with a reference to *Blest Be the Tie*, which could suggest that Granny Vaughn is theirs, she is bound to the family, there is no need for him and no possible way to be included in this tie.

One of the novel's major music scenes is presented at the end of the third part and the beginning of fourth part. The reunion starts singing after Brother Bethune has given them the family history and they all handed Granny Vaughn her birthday presents. The singing ends with the arrival of Mr. Willy Trimble, who tells them about the death of Julia Mortimer.

Miss Beulah threw back her head and in an unwavering note gave them the pitch. All their voices rose as one, with Uncle Noah Webster trailing his echoes in the bass.

*"Gathering home! Gathering home!
Never to sorrow more, never to roam!
Gathering home! Gathering home!
God's children are gathering home."*

As they sang, the tree over them, Billy Vaughn's Switch, with its ever-spinning leaves all light-points at this hour, looked bright as a river, and the tables might have been a little train of barges it was carrying with it, moving slowly downstream. Brother Bethune's gun, still resting against the trunk, was travelling too, nothing at all was unmovable, or empowered to hold the scene still fixed or stake the reunion there. (Welty *Losing* 223)

"Why does she sing so old-timey?" Aunt Cleo asked. Granny was a jump ahead of everybody else with her fa-so-la, on up to the Amen of "Blessed Assurance." "She sings it that way because that's the way she likes to hear it." Miss Beulah told her. "If that ain't the way you want it, my little granny's going to go you one better than you want." (Welty *Losing* 227)

The two songs introduced in this scene are entitled *Gathering Home* and *Blessed Assurance*. Presenting these two Christian hymns in this part of the novel implies different interpretations. *Gathering Home* tells about the gathering of dear ones in heaven (cf. *SI* *Gathering Home*). This meeting of dear ones relates in some way to *Losing Battles*. Firstly, it is a gathering of the family at home, a place that is precious to all of them and that none of them wanted to leave (Welty *Losing* 194). Secondly, a lot of their dear ones are already in heaven, only present in the stories and memories shared at the reunion (Welty *Losing* 329). Additionally, the comment at the end of the quote “nothing at all was unmovable” could suggest that also other members of the reunion will eventually gather with their dear ones in heaven; even the strong Granny Vaughn, whose “old-timey” singing might imply that she too will pass away to make space for something new. Lastly, the verse “Up to the city where falleth no night, Gathering home! gathering [sic] home! Up where the Savior’s own face is the light, The dear ones are gathering home” addresses the savior, which supposedly can also be identified with Jack’s role in the novel (cf. *SI* *Gathering Home*). Therefore, *Gathering Home* could also refer to Jack Renfro’s special position in the family, as the light they all depend on (Welty *Losing* 194ff). Placing this hymn after Granny Vaughn has received her presents could also refer to Miss Beulah’s statement, “And Granny, you’ll get the best present of all – the joy of your life’s coming home [...]” (Welty *Losing* 5). This quote suggests that Jack is one of Granny’s presents, which again stresses the high expectations his family has for him. A further argument that could support this claim is the second song presented in this scene, *Blessed Assurance*. This hymn, which is about trusting in Jesus, could also refer to the reunion’s complete trust in Jack to save them, their land and the judge’s car. Phrases like “Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine!” and “This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior, all the day long [...]” could point to Jack’s devotion to his family and how they value, celebrate and claim him as can be seen in numerous statements (cf. *SI* *Blessed Assurance*).

The next song that is sung at the reunion is called *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. This song is included in the scene in which Granny reveals that Rachel Sojourner is Gloria’s mother and the whole reunion engages in wild assumptions and stories about her. The song is sung after Aunt Lexie tells the story of the death of Rachel Sojourner, which she has heard about from Julia Mortimer, who was with Rachel back then. “All went quiet, except for those somewhere at the outer edges who were singing a round, ‘... *gently down the stream. Merrily merrily ...*’ ” (Welty *Losing* 258). Again, the lyrics that might

be of importance for the text's interpretation are not included. The song's lyrics are "Row, row, row your boat, Gently down the stream, Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, Life is but a dream" (cf. *SI* Row, Row, Row Your Boat). The end of the song suggests that life is a dream, therefore, unreal and an illusion. From this two different interpretations emerge. On the one hand, it could indicate that Gloria was living an illusion before Granny Vaughn opened her eyes, believing she is nobody's. As Judge Moody points out, " 'You're an idiot,' Judge Moody told her, not unkindly. 'The fact is, you could be almost anybody and have sprung up almost anywhere' " (Welty *Losing* 315). On the other hand, it could suggest that the whole reunion lives an illusion because they do not have real judicial evidence to support any of their stories, which are perceived as unreliable oral tradition by Judge Moody (Welty *Losing* 315).

Later when Gloria is engaged in a watermelon fight with family members to break her will and make her part of the Beecham family, *London Bridge is Falling Down* is sung. " 'London Bridge is falling down,' some voices sang, and a trap of arms came down over Gloria's head and brought her to the ground. Behind her came a crack like a firecracker – they had split open a melon" (Welty *Losing* 269). According to the *BI*, the song tells the story of the London Bridge's collapse, "Upon [...] [hearing these news] the singers must decide what to do, e.g. 'Shall we build it up again?' [...]" (cf. *SI* London Bridge is Falling Down). Similar to the strong London Bridge, Gloria's strong will is brought to fall by the participants of the reunion in this scene. Additionally, it is possible that references in the materials can be found, "[m]ud and clay will wash away" and "[i]ron and stone will stand alone." The family wants to make Gloria a Beecham, made out of Banner clay, which is typical for the region and to which they refer several times in the novel. They want her to be shapeable like clay in order to adapt to the family, not to be stiff and remote like iron. The term iron is also used to describe Julia Mortimer (Welty *Losing* 258).

Two other songs are presented after Granny Vaughn clearly shows that she has begun to suffer from dementia. In this scene she forgets where she is and that she has already received her presents. In addition, Mr. Trimble reveals Miss Julia's spelling book, which carries her will.

"Oh, come – come – come – come," the bass voice of Uncle Noah Webster started off, and they came in with him, "Come to the church in the wild wood, oh come to the church in the dell." After that Miss Beulah, with a churning fist, led them through "Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown when at evening the sun

goeth down?” Mr. Willy Trimble, who didn’t sing, got to his feet and waited on them to finish. (Welty *Losing* 288)

The whole reunion sings *Church in the Wildwood*, also called *Little Brown Church in the Vale* and *Will There Be Any Stars*. Both of these songs are Christian hymns, one deals with childhood memories of a church and the second one addresses the topic of doing good deeds before one’s death. Phrases like “[w]hen the farewell hymn shall be chanted I shall rest by her side in the tomb” from *Church in the Wildwood* and “[w]hen through wonderful grace by my Savior I stand” from *Will There Be Any Stars* show that both songs focus on the topic of aging and death, which are also issues that the reunion has to face (cf. *SI Church in the Wildwood*, *SI Will There Be Any Stars*). Their strong grandmother’s mortality gets visible when she shows clear signs of age, namely dementia.

At the end of the fourth part, another major musical scene is presented. After Judge Moody reveals his acquaintance and close relationship with Miss Julia Mortimer, the whole reunion is surprised when Granny Vaughn starts singing a song accompanied by unexpected dance moves. Granny knows every single verse of the song, however, her listeners are unsure if the song she performs is *Wondrous Love* or *Frog Went A-Courting*.

Shoulders high, hands stiff but indicating the least little movement from side to side, Granny stood gathering herself, and then, in a quick, drumbeat voice just holding its own against the steady, directionless sounds of crickets, she began to sing. Uncle Noah Webster rose, put his foot on the seat of a chair, and raised his banjo to his knee. Picking lightly, he fell in with her. “Is it ‘Frog Went A-Courting’ or ‘Wondrous Love’?” Aunt Birdie whispered. “Sounds like a little of both.”

She knew every verse and was not sparing them one. When the verses were all sung, Granny, giving them calculating looks, kept on patting her foot. Uncle Noah Webster kept up with her, the banjo beat on, and as her left hand folded itself small as Elvie’s against her hip, she gave a pat with her right foot and was lifted bodily straight up – Uncle Curtis was ready for her – to the top of her own table and set down carefully among the platters and what was left of everything. Uncle Noah Webster’s hand came down sharp on the strings, and under its long skirt her foot, her whole leg, was lifted inches high to paddle the table in time to another chorus. The little black sliding-slipper with the silk-fuzz pompon on the toe must have been a dozen years old, though it was as good as new.

“With that little patting foot, she comes in right on time,” said Uncle Dolphus. “Something she never showed us before.” “Just so we ain’t seeing the last of Granny!” mourned Aunt Beck. She danced in their faces.

“Mama, tell her it’s Sunday,” Elvie whispered. “You got the brain of a bird? She’s got track of what day this is better than you have, better than anybody here,” said Miss Beulah fiercely, leaning forward and ready to spring. “Her own birthday.” (Welty *Losing* 307ff)

Listening to those two songs it seems interesting that the song sung by Granny could be both of them. On the one hand, *Wondrous Love* is a Christian hymn in which the singers sing about their salvation “[...] from the burden of sin by Christ's sacrifice; therefore [...] [they] praise[s] God and the Lamb” (cf. *SI Wondrous Love*). On the other hand, *Frog Went A-Courting* has an amusing theme, namely a marriage between a frog and a mouse. The *BI* states that this strange wedding could also introduce a political theme. Additionally, nonsense verses such as “Rolly-bob-rinktum-kimo” seem to differentiate *Frog Went A-Courting* clearly from the serious hymn *Wondrous Love* (cf. *SI Frog Went A-Courting*). That Granny Vaughn's song sounds a little bit like both of these songs could refer to the two sides of her. Granny Vaughn is a very religious woman, since she was married to a Baptist preacher; nevertheless she dances on a Sunday. Furthermore, Granny confesses later that she knew about Uncle Nathan's murder and kept quiet about it, not even telling her husband, and hence, putting her family before law and religion (Welty *Losing* 344). Two other face of Granny Vaughn are also represented in her broad knowledge about the past and her fading cognition of the present, as she seems to recall every detail from the past, for instance, Gloria's mother, but does not remember her own age (Welty *Losing* 5, 253, 346).

One of the last musical scenes of the reunion is Uncle Nathan playing on his cornet after he has confessed the murder of Mr. Dearman.

“Play ‘Poor Wayfaring Stranger’!” came a call.

“Play ‘Sweet and Low’ for me!”

When they all stopped asking, he played them “Let the Lower Lights Be Burning.” He needed nothing but his good left hand.

“Makes the hair of my skin stand on end. Like I was pulling okra,” said aunt Nanny. “To hear him reach with his horn like that.” “That's right, that's the way. Blow 'er over Jordan, Nathan,” called Uncle Noah Webster. “Blow Miss Julia Mortimer over Jordan.” Uncle Nathan held the last note. He held it till none of them listening had any breath of their own left – than he ceased. Miss Beulah looked at Granny. So did they all. Though the hills were ringing still, Granny nodded in her chair. (Welty *Losing* 347)

The reunion requests Uncle Nathan to play *Poor Wayfaring Stranger* or *Sweet and Low* but he decides to play them *Let the Low Lights Be Burning*. The *BI* states that in *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*, “[t]he singer confesses, ‘I'm just a poor, wayfaring stranger / A-travelling through this world of woe.’ The singer plans to cross the Jordan (into heaven), [...] to meet with family and loved ones and live forever free from trouble and burden” (cf. *SI Poor Wayfaring Stranger*). Therefore, the family's request of *Poor Wayfaring Stranger* can either be seen as a wish for Nathan to stay with them and forgive himself or

as an attempt of comfort, telling him that he will be forgiven his sins and will be reunited with them in heaven. In the second song, *Sweet and Low*, a woman asks the wind to blow her husband home to their child and her (cf. *SI Sweet and Low*). Hence, *Sweet and Low* could again be interpreted as a request of the reunion to stay with them for good. However, Uncle Nathan decides to play neither of these and performs *Let the Lower Lights Be Burning* instead. According to the *BI*, this hymn is based on the story of a boat that was trying to find its way to the harbor. Due to a storm the crew could not see the city's "lower lights" and therefore lost its way. "Bliss [the hymn's author] made an analogy: God manages the 'great lighthouse,' but people are the 'lower lights' which help with parts of the navigation, and hence should present the best light they can" (cf. *SI Let the Lower Lights Be Burning*). Consequently, *Let the Lower Lights Be Burning* could offer an answer to their requests. Nathan's choice of song could suggest that he is still lost in the "night of sin", unable to find his way home ("to the shore"). But if the reunion helps him with the navigation ("keeps their lower lights burning"), he might be able to find his way back home some day.

To conclude, the reunion's strong familial cohesion is emphasized during the whole novel but reaches its peak throughout the dinner scenes, the core elements of the reunion (parts three, four and five). Miss Beulah's statement about her family clearly represents her family's attitudes, which guides their actions and comments. " '[...] [T]his is a strict, law abiding, God-fearing, close-knit family, and everybody in it has always struggled the best he knew how and we've all just tried to last as long as we can by sticking together' " (Welty *Losing* 344). The reunion is set during the Depression in one of the poorest parts of the country and this makes the life of the Vaughn-Beecham-Renfro clan hard (Welty *Conversations* 50). Nevertheless, they have managed to get through it because of their familial ties, religion and traditions (oral tradition). These values are also reflected in the music that is represented in the reunion's core scenes. The family's religiousness is addressed in the great number of Christian hymns that are performed by them. However, it seems as if the most important value to all of them is family. Family is clearly placed over religion, which can be seen in the family's violation of the Ten Commandments and its acceptance (Jack stole, Nathan committed murder). The family's celebration of familial cohesion and family values is also expressed in the scene's songs, as *Gathering Home* or *Blest Be the Tie*. Additionally, other songs that do not seem to address familial issues at a first glance are included in order to serve this purpose, as

London Bridge is Falling Down accompanies an attempt to break Gloria's will and integrate her into the family.

6. Conclusion

Lee Smith and Eudora Welty both integrated numerous examples of southern music, as song titles and lyrics but also descriptions of traditional instruments and typical ways of music making, in their novels. The familiarity that both authors exhibit with southern music can be traced back to their southern heritage and their deep roots within their home states, in which this kind of musical expression is regularly practiced as well as to both writers' extensive background investigations.

Similarities in the writers' musical descriptions are clearly evident. In an interview Lee Smith even confesses that Eudora Welty and her musical depictions have had a great influence on her (Ramos 160). Smith states that music is an essential aspect of Welty's writing, as it is in hers, and that the author uses a "perfect musical prose" similar to the mountain's tradition of a tale or song. Unlike a story which contains a pattern of "conflict, complication and resolution," Welty's texts present a "rhythm and repetition" of "this happening and this happening and this happening," states Smith (Ramos 160). The rhythm that is mentioned by Smith strongly relates to the southern oral tradition, which is a central element in both writers' works. *Losing Battles* consists almost wholly of direct speech, telling the story of the Vaughn-Beecham-Renfro clan and *Oral History* and *The Devil's Dream* both possess a great number of 1st-person narratives relating the history of the Cantrells and the Baileys. Music represents an essential component of the South's oral tradition and therefore Smith's and Welty's musical elements complete their texts ideally.

Further parallels can be found in both authors' precision in describing musical occasions and their effort to depict historically correct circumstances. Welty as well as Smith precisely depict the musical incidents in their novels. Often the writers portray which song is sung, its sound, the accompanying instruments and how the musical setting is arranged. Moreover, both authors especially pay attention to the historical accuracy of their accounts. This becomes evident in their choices of instruments and songs, as both writers include devices and tunes that were well established in this region at the time of the narration. Additionally, references to the people's heritage and religiousness are made by the music, as Welty almost entirely uses Christian hymns to emphasize the clan's religiosity and Smith applies a great number of English ballads to stress the families' heritage. To sum up, both authors use music to make statements about their characters

and the places they live in and thus create a sense of time and place through their musical contributions.

Finally, another parallel is the symbolic role that music plays in Welty's and Smith's works. Both writers use music to give additional meaning to the scenes and to emphasize certain elements of the novels' plots. However, it seems that concerning this aspect the three novels differ from each other. *Losing Battles* appears as a text in which the symbolic function of music is the hardest to recognize, as the reader has to be acquainted with the entire lyrics of most songs represented in the novel in order to understand their relation to the text. Often the songs' references that carry additional meaning, as an answer to a character's question or a statement on characters' relationships, are included in passages in the lyrics that are missing in the text. This is sometimes also the case in *Oral History's* musical contributions, as references to future events, current situations or character relationships are occasionally made through song titles or lyrics not cited in the text. However, most of the time *Oral History's* references seem to be more direct than those in *Losing Battles*, as the parts of the songs that are relevant for the text are often represented in the novel or a character comments on the song's content. Finally, *The Devil's Dream* seems to be the novel in which music has the least symbolic function. In this novel Smith chronicles the history of country music. Therefore, the author represents a vast number of musical material that reflects the development of country music through the ages. In order to do this, Lee Smith mentions an extensive number of songs, which are historically appropriate for the described era and stage of music but that differ widely content-wise, which often excludes a relationship between the songs' contents and the novel's plot. Although a few musical examples that introduce additional meaning exist, they were often written by Smith herself as a supplement for the novel, which makes the reference very direct and easy to recognize, or they are real songs offering a direct relation to the text, which becomes obvious in some characters' comments on them or their role as a theme or title song.

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10. Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the role and development of music in southern society as mirrored in 20th century fiction. To gain an insight into this topic the musical elements of three novels by two southern writers, Lee Smith and Eudora Welty, were analyzed.

The three novels chosen for this purpose, *Oral History* (1983) and *The Devil's Dream* (1992) by Lee Smith and *Losing Battles* (1970) by Eudora Welty, are all set in the mountainous region of the southern United States, namely the Appalachian Mountains. More precisely, the first two novels are set in hollows in the Virginian mountains and the third text is placed in the hill country of Mississippi. Both authors share a close bond to this region, as Lee Smith was born in Grundy, Virginia, a town in the Appalachian Mountains and Eudora Welty, although she was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, experienced mountain life when she visited her mother's family in West Virginia every summer.

Music represents an essential element in all three texts which can be linked to their setting in the Appalachian Mountains, an area that is not only known for its high relief but also for its unique music. The region's particular living conditions and the intermingling of settlers of different nationalities created a certain form of music making that even lay the foundation for contemporary country music. This distinct way of playing music, its historical developments and the attitude towards it are depicted in the novels in order to create a sense of time and place.

All the novels deal with historical settings; *Oral History* and *The Devil's Dream* chronicling more than one hundred years of family history and *Losing Battles* dealing with the area during the Depression of the 1930s. The musical elements included in the three novels are therefore a useful device to place the texts in a certain period of time. Additionally, the historical accuracy exhibited by the authors makes it possible to retrace the music's developments precisely. Especially *The Devil's Dream* by Lee Smith is a correct depiction of country music history that is based on true events. Furthermore, both authors use their musical features to make statements about their characters, as Lee Smith includes a wide range of English ballads to stress the people's descent and Eudora Welty uses Christian hymns to emphasize her characters' religiousness. Finally, the novels' musical constituents also possess a symbolic function, equipping many scenes with additional underlying meaning that sometimes stresses different features of each text.

Diese Diplomarbeit untersucht die Rolle und Entwicklung von Musik in Südstaaten-Gemeinschaften im Rahmen der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts. Diese Analyse wird anhand von drei Texten zweier gebürtiger Südstaaten-Schriftstellerinnen Lee Smith und Eudora Welty durchgeführt. Alle drei Werke, *Oral History* (1983) und *The Devil's Dream* (1992) von Lee Smith und *Losing Battles* (1970) von Eudora Welty, befassen sich mit Gemeinschaften und Familien in den Appalachen, einer im Südosten der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika gelegenen Gebirgsregion. *Oral History* und *The Devil's Dream* berichten über das Leben zweier Familien, die sich in den Niederungen von Virginia niederließen, *Losing Battles* hingegen erzählt die Geschichte einer in der Berglandschaft von Mississippi lebenden Familie. Beide Autorinnen besitzen selbst eine starke Bindung zu dieser Region. Lee Smith wurde in Grundy, Virginia, einer Stadt in den Appalachen geboren, und Eudora Welty, die eigentlich aus Jackson, Mississippi stammt, hatte die Gelegenheit das Bergleben bei der Familie ihrer Mutter in West Virginia kennenzulernen.

Musik stellt in jedem dieser drei Romane einen essentiellen Bestandteil dar. Dieser Umstand kann höchstwahrscheinlich durch den gewählten Schauplatz der Texte erklärt werden. Die Region der Appalachen ist nämlich nicht nur für ihr hohes Relief, sondern auch für ihre einzigartige Musik bekannt. Die speziellen Lebensumstände und die Vermischung von Siedlern unterschiedlicher Nationalitäten in der Region kreierten eine eigene Art zu musizieren, die typisch für die Gegend ist und sogar den Grundstein für aktuelle Country Musik legte. Diese individuelle Weise Musik zu machen, ihre geschichtlichen Entwicklungen und die unterschiedlichen Einstellungen dazu werden in den drei Texten dargestellt, um ein Gefühl für die zeitliche Periode und den Ort der Handlungen zu erzeugen.

Alle drei Romane befassen sich mit historischen Kontexten, *Oral History* und *The Devil's Dream* behandeln mehr als einhundert Jahre Familiengeschichte, *Losing Battles* beschreibt die Region während der Depression der 1930er Jahre. Die musikalischen Elemente stellen deshalb gute Hilfsmittel zur zeitlichen Klassifizierung der Texte dar. Zusätzlich weisen beide Autorinnen eine hohe historische Korrektheit auf, welche dabei hilft, die genauen geschichtlichen Etappen der Musik nachzuvollziehen. Insbesondere *The Devil's Dream* von Lee Smith zeigt eine genaue Darstellung der Geschichte der Country Musik, welche an wahre Begebenheiten angelehnt ist. Zudem verwenden beide Schriftstellerinnen Musik, um Aussagen über ihre Charaktere zu treffen. Lee Smith setzt eine Menge englischer Balladen ein, um die Herkunft der Leute hervorzuheben und Eudora Welty benutzt christliche Hymnen, um die Religiosität ihrer Charaktere zu

betonen. Letzten Endes besitzen viele der musikalischen Bestandteile der Romane auch eine symbolische Funktion, die jede Szene mit einer zusätzlichen tieferliegenden Bedeutung versieht und auch vielschichtigere Aspekte zum Ausdruck bringt.

11. Curriculum Vitae

Persönliche Daten

Vorname: Corina

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Ausbildung

1994 – 1998	Volksschule Steyrdorf
1998 – 2002	Dr. Rudolf Kirchschräger – Schule
2002 – 2007	Bundesbildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik Steyr
2004 – 2007	Zusatzausbildung zur Früherzieherin
2007 – 2008	Au-Pair in Jersey, Channel Islands
2008	Cambridge First Certificate
Seit 2008	Studium an der Universität Wien: UF Psychologie und Philosophie, UF Englisch