

Stephanie Vander Wel

“Voices of Angels: Kitty Wells and the Emergence of Women’s Honky-Tonk Music”

AMS San Francisco 2011

Example 1. Al Dexter: “Honky Tonk Blues” (ARC, 1936)

A I’ve got the blues, the blues I can’t lose, I’ve got them honky-tonky blues

A I’ve got a honky-tonky baby girl, she’s got my brain in a whirl

B She wears her dresses to her knees, and when she stands in the breeze, it puts a sneaky feeling in my spine

C And when she sits on my knee, it’s like a honeybee, oo, baby mine

Example 2. Al Dexter: “Answer to Honky Tonk Blues” (ARC, 1938)

A I’m telling you true, my honky-tonk days are through, my wife has done refused

A She goes with me at night, we see all the sights, now we get home before daylight

B My roaming days are over, for she locks the door, oo, baby I can’t see you no more

C For she sits on my knee and takes care of me, oo, baby mine

Example 3. Ernest Tubb: “I Ain’t Going Honky Tonkin’ Anymore” (Decca, 1941)

I ain’t going honky-tonkin’ anymore

I know that I have said the same before

But trouble’s all I’ve ever found and it’s almost got me down

But I ain’t going honky-tonkin’ anymore

Now my good gal has really done me wrong

I guess that’s why I hate to stay at home

For I always get the blues that I’ve tried so hard to lose

But I ain’t going honky-tonkin’ anymore

Somehow this life seems so unfair

I love a girl that just don’t just seem to care

I gave her everything I had then she treated me so bad

But I ain’t going honky-tonkin’ anymore

If you have troubles that you need to drown

You can’t do it by honky-tonkin’ around

You may stay out every night but you’ll never win the fight

So don’t go honky-tonkin’ anymore

I know that I have almost blowed my top

And something tells me I had better stop

So I’m changing all my ways and get myself out of this place

And I ain’t going honky-tonkin’ anymore

Perhaps someday I will find true love

A girl that’s just as pure as stars above

Who will know how to be a wife and really love me all my life

And I won’t go honky-tonkin’ anymore

Example 4. Hank Williams: “Honky Tonk Blues” (MGM Records, 1952)

I left my home down on the rural route, I told my paw I’m going steppin’ out

And get the honky-tonk blues, yeah the honky-tonk blues

Lord I got ‘em, I got the honky-tonk blues

I went to a dance and I wore out my shoes, woke up this mornin’ wishin’ I could lose

Them jumpin’ honky-tonk blues, yeah the honky-tonk blues

Lord I got ‘em, I got the honky-tonk blues

I stopped into every place in town this city life has really got me down

I got the honky-tonk blues, yeah the honky-tonk blues

Yeah, lord I got ‘em, I got the honky-tonk blues

Example 5. Hank Thompson: “Wild Side of Life” (Capital Records, 1951)

You wouldn't read my letter if I wrote you	I didn't know God made honky-tonk angels
You asked me not to call you on the phone	I might have known you'd never make a wife
But there's something I'm wanting to tell you	You gave up the only one that ever loved you
So I wrote it in the words of this song	And went back to the wild side of life

Example 6. Kitty Wells: “It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels” (Decca, 1952)

As I sit here tonight the jukebox playing	It wasn't God who made honky-tonk angels
The tune about the wild side of life*	As you said in the words of your song
As I listen to the words you are saying	Too many times married men think they're still single
It brings memories when I was a trusting wife	That has caused many a good girl to go wrong

Example 7. Kitty Wells: “You’re Not Easy to Forget” (Decca, 1954)

A I make all the honky-tonks and taverns just to see who's hanging round
A And there I try to drown my sorrow just because you let me down
B I can't get someone to kiss me, I can't get someone to care
C But when I need someone to oo love me, you're not easy to forget

Example 8. Goldie Hill: “Say Big Boy” (Decca, 1953)

My life is sad, low down, and blue
I've go no one to tell my troubles to
Say big boy, big man, you're on my mind

I'll never forget the day we met
You said I'd always be your loving pet
Say big boy, big man, you're on my mind

Example 9. Kitty Wells: “Honky-Tonk Waltz,” (Decca, 1953)

A The lights are dim and low in the tavern as I sit all alone with a heart that's lost
A But the laughing crowd don't know tears are ready to flow as I listen to the “Honky-Tonk Waltz”
B It's the same waltz we used to dance together now you're gone and I must suffer the loss
A I'm so blue tonight while another holds you tight and I listen to the “Honky-Tonk Waltz”

Example 10. Jean Shepard: “My Wedding Ring” (Capitol Records, 1959)

You ask me how long I've been drinkin' and livin' this honky-tonk life	I am a girl that is left without a future and a baby boy that has his daddy's name
Well, listen girls I'll tell you my story I'm a mother that was once a happy wife	And the baby looks just like his daddy but another woman wears my wedding ring

I'm a girl just like so many others
Neither good nor bad, maybe a girl like you
And just think but for the grace of God in heaven
It could have been your heart that was broke in two