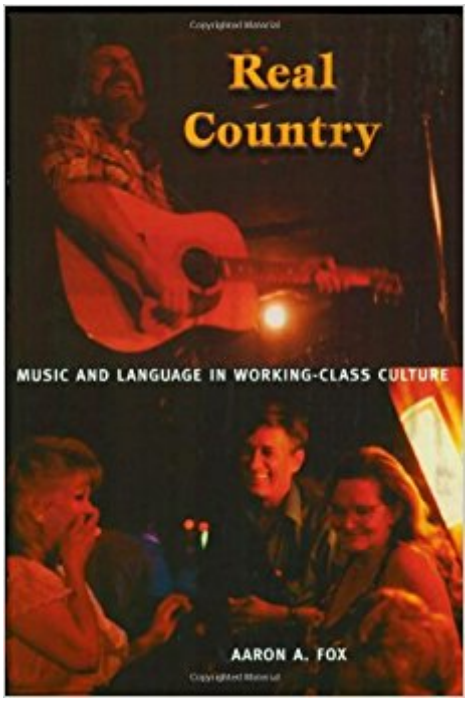
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Real Country: Music And Language In Working-Class Culture



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Synopsis

In Lockhart, Texas, a rural working-class town just south of Austin, country music is a way of life. Conversation slips easily into song, and the songs are full of conversation. Anthropologist and musician Aaron A. Fox spent years in Lockhart making research notes, music, and friends. In Real Country, he provides an intimate, in-depth ethnography of the community and its music. Showing that country music is deeply embedded in the textures of working-class life, Fox argues that it is the cultural and intellectual property of working-class people and not only of the Nashville-based music industry or the stars whose lives figure so prominently in popular and scholarly writing about the genre.Fox spent hundreds of hours observing, recording, and participating in talk and music-making in homes, beer joints, and garage jam sessions. He renders the everyday life of LockhartÃ¢â ¬â„¢s working-class community in detail, right down to the ice cold beer, the battered guitars, and the technical skills of such local musical legends as Randy Meyer and Larry Ã¢â ¬Å“HoppyÃ¢â ¬Â• Hopkins. Throughout, Fox focuses on the human voice. His analyses of conversations, interviews, songs, and vocal techniques show how feeling and experience are expressed, and how local understandings of place, memory, musical aesthetics, working-class social history, race, and gender are shared. In Real Country, working-class Texans re-imagine their past and give voice to the struggles and satisfactions of their lives in the present through music.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Real Country is by far the best book on Texas country music and working-class culture since Manuel PeÃƒÂ aÃ¢â ¬â„¢s The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: History of a Working-Class Music

was published in 1985. As opened to us by Aaron A. Fox, the working-class world of Lockhart, Texas, is complex and richly textured, and country music is its most characteristic and expressive voice. Grounded both in the most sophisticated recent scholarship and in FoxÃ¢â ¬â„¢s longtime involvement as performer and observer, Real Country extends to the music the full measure of respect it deserves. In so doing, it carries country music scholarship to a new level that will challenge and guide all subsequent commentators.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •David E. Whisnant, author of Rascally Signs in Sacred Places and All That Is Native and FineÃ¢â ¬Å“Aaron A. FoxÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Real Country gets to the heart and drama that fuels the cigarette smoke, music, talk, and beer of a honky tonk Saturday night.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Peter Wolf, musicianÃ¢â ¬Å“Aaron A. FoxÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Real Country is a powerful and moving study of Texas working class culture (including an articulate defense of the now heavily criticized notion of Ã¢â ¬Ëœculture Ã¢â ¬â„¢ itself). Combining the tools of linguistic anthropology, ethnomusicology, and sensitive ethnography, Fox performs a series of brilliant interpretations of Ã¢â ¬Ëœvocal practicesÃ¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬â •country music and all kinds of talk, mostly in barsÃ¢â ¬â •as these actively shape personal subjectivities and interpersonal relationships. The chapter on Ã¢â ¬ËœThe Fool in the MirrorÃ¢â ¬â„¢ alone is worth the price of the book.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Sherry B. Ortner, author of New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture, and the Class of Ã¢â ¬Ëœ58

""Real Country" is by far the best book on Texas country music and working-class culture since Manuel Pena's "The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: History of a Working-Class Music "was published in 1985. As opened to us by Aaron A. Fox, the working-class world of Lockhart, Texas, is complex and richly textured, and country music is its most characteristic and expressive voice. Grounded both in the most sophisticated recent scholarship and in Fox's longtime involvement as performer and observer, "Real Country" extends to the music the full measure of respect it deserves. In so doing, it carries country music scholarship to a new level that will challenge and guide all subsequent commentators."--David E. Whisnant, author of "Rascally Signs in Sacred Places" and "All That Is Native and Fine"

This is a piece of world class scholarship! It's a phenomenal ethnography, very ambitious and a major contribution to the study of song and voice in country music and in music more generally.Reading advice: Prior knowledge of linguistics and anthropology is advantageous. Chapters 8-9 are really easy to read, so consider beginning with them and the introductory chapter.I understand why some find the book a little hard to digest but I strongly recommend it to any serious

student and scholar.I’m not a friend of the author, I just think it’s a magnificent book!

This is first of all a scholarly work. Since I have no college background in the social sciences, it took some dictionary work to get through the more densely-written anthropological prose, but part of the charm of this book is that the subjects Fox studied are blue-collar Texans who love county music. There is a lively alternation between his use of the $10 dollar words they abhor, their own speech, and the language it takes to analyze it. Aaron Fox looks at the way they talk to each other and the way country music fits into their lives and outlook. The author’s personal involvement in playing music in honkytonks doesn’t hurt matters. His analysis of how George Jones sings "He Stopped Loving Her Today" is worth the cover charge.

This book does a good job at exploring the small town of Lockhart, Texas in an academic manner. For anyone interested in country music or ethnography this is a cool read with interesting anecdotal stories.

This author is seriously school-damaged and dissects what’s going on around him like a child taking the wings off a butterfly. It seems he thinks he’s elevating the everyday, but it’s just a sad mis-application of social science that comes out like a kabuki transmission repair ballet. A handful of people who had artistic souls who also ground through years and years of college will also like this book.

Great seller, Great product. Thank you!

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