



# The Cowboy and the Dandy: Crossing Over from Romanticism to Rock and Roll

*Perry Meisel*

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What is rock and roll and where does it come from? In this adventurous new study of music, literature, and culture, Perry Meisel shows how rock and roll joins Romanticism and the blues tradition by focusing on the preoccupation with boundaries that are common to both--the boundaries between freedom and irony, country and city, and cowboy and dandy. Meisel traces the emergence of rock and roll out of jazz and Romantic culture alike as he examines, in a series of juxtaposed chapters, rhythm and blues, Emerson and the cowboy, urban blues, the dandy and psychedelia, Willa Cather, Miles Davis, Virginia Woolf, and 1960s rock. In the process, Meisel shows how the presumable difference between high and mass or pop culture disappears when both turn out to have similar structures. He also reveals how canons emerge inevitably within all traditions rather than being imposed upon them from without.

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