

This project generally argues that oil capitalism has enabled new forms of feminism in music, in addition to its more well-known environmental devastation. It examines two key 1970s singer-songwriter albums, both recorded in Los Angeles and released in 1971, through the lens of what is called "petroculture." Oil is everywhere in popular culture, especially with the ever-presence of automobiles in film and television, and contemporary Cultural Studies scholarship is starting to recognize its importance in popular culture and literature since oil was first discovered in the U.S. in the nineteenth century. However, while oil capitalism has clearly had negative effects on the global environment—witness oil spills and other disasters—it has simultaneously enabled new forms of social movements to occur, including of feminism. The car became a symbol of liberation for women, and this project seeks to examine how this symbol manifests itself in Joni Mitchell's *Blue* and Carole King's *Tapestry*, two crucial albums of popular music that are rarely read as about themes connected to oil, like travel and the road. Mitchell's album embodies the open road in many ways, including with her expansive and unique guitar tunings and the poetic lyrics about travel. Mitchell opened new metaphorical roads of possibility for women in popular music with her frank discussions of sexuality on the road and her role as a strong woman in a very male-dominated industry, including producing, writing, playing instruments on, and performing her own original work. King's album requires a subtler reading of how oil enables the album's approach to King's singing and writing and Lou Adler's production. While making a larger point, this project does not seek to make a singular argument to prove over and over again; instead, it follows Fredric Jameson's approach to dialectical thinking, examining both the problems and the utopian possibilities in both recordings. Ultimately, I intend to show how oil capitalism enabled new forms of feminism in music by using the car as a literal and metaphorical vehicle for franker discussions of sexuality and of different kinds of relationships between women and men, as well as other forms of empowering women in the music industry.