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Worldviews in Music: A Rhetorical Study of Philosophies of Truth and Reality in Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music

Karen Lynn Legg
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Karen Lynn Legg entitled "Worldviews in Music: A Rhetorical Study of Philosophies of Truth and Reality in Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Michelle Violanti, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

John Haas, Bob Ambler

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Bob Ambler

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

Vice Chancellor and
Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

WORLDVIEWS IN MUSIC:
A RHETORICAL STUDY OF PHILISOPHIES OF
TRUTH AND REALITY FOUND IN
COUNTRY MUSIC AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master's of Science Degree
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Karen Lynn Legg
December 2004

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Abstract

This study examines the philosophies of truth and reality that are communicated through the lyrics of Country and Contemporary Christian Music. The lyrics from the top ten songs from the years 1980, 1990, and 2000 were collected and analyzed for both genres. The songs were then coded and placed in one of eight categories: N/A, Naturalism, Transcendentalism, Theism, Naturalism/Theism, Transcendentalism/Theism, Naturalism/Transcendentalism, and Undeterminable. Country and Contemporary Christian Music's trends were discussed individually as well as compared and contrasted to each other. Results found that Contemporary Christian songs communicate a Theistic view of truth and reality every time worldviews were brought up. In Country music it was found that truth and reality were interpreted in a broad spectrum of ways. There is no way of predicting if a Country song will have worldview implications. If the song does discuss worldview, there is also no way of predicting which worldview will be promoted. Examples of every worldview category and combination were found in the 30 Country songs analyzed. The findings of this study help communication scholars understand what philosophical assumptions are being communicated through the lyrics of Country and Contemporary Christian Music.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“I’m already there. Take a look around. I’m the sunshine in your hair. I’m the shadow on the ground. I’m the whisper in the wind, and I’ll be there until the end. Can you feel the love that we share? Oh, I’m already there. Oh, I’m already there.” Country Music fans sing these familiar words over and over again as the radio sends out the popular song by Lonestar, but what do these words mean? How do they portray truth and reality? The purpose of this study is to begin to address the question of what philosophical messages are being sent through the music lyrics we hear. This study examines lyrics of 30 Country songs and 30 Contemporary Christian songs to understand what ideas of truth and reality are communicated. Do the lyrics portray objective Truth to be discovered, or do they indicate reality created through our perceptions and interpretations?

Overview of Related Literature

The Standpoint theory of communication states that the social groups we identify ourselves with have a strong influence on what we experience and know, as well as how we understand and communicate with ourselves, others, and the world (Littlejohn, 2002). Standpoint theory, coming from the sociopsychological tradition, looks at how people’s perspectives, attitudes, cognitions, or any number of other characteristics influence the way they see and interact in the world. The majority of standpoint research that has been done has focused on feminist standpoint theory (Martin, Reynolds & Keith, 2002; Stoetzler & Yuval, 2002; Swigonski, 1994). This theory states that society is divided into specific groups with their own views of people and the world. This research will begin to

determine if Country Music artists, as well as Contemporary Christian Music artists, are distinct groups of people with defined standpoints and views of truth and reality.

A standpoint is developed, not inborn (Hallstein, 2000). For example, a person may not have a woman's standpoint simply because she was born female. Also, it is important to note that not everyone in a group will have the same standpoint. Women of color, lesbians, and feminists may all have very different standpoints, though they are all female (Hallstein, 2000). They could attain their standpoint based on their minority status, rather than on their status as a female. This is important to communication scholars because by studying the way people from a particular standpoint construct their messages, we can learn what they think, believe, and feel about the issue of interest. It is important to have an understanding of where our standpoints come from because it enables us to have a better understanding of why seemingly similar people can be so different as well as what common standpoint can bring seemingly different people together. The standpoint we are studying is a shared group standpoint, not the standpoint of an individual. In this study we may be able to find out if musicians in the same genre have different standpoints, or worldviews, related to interpreting truth and reality. Are artists in a particular genre coming from the same philosophical standpoint or worldview?

One goal of theorizing is to predict and control outcomes (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Many theorists who believe this do not feel that having an understanding about how society works is enough. They desire to use that knowledge to benefit people through sociological reform. A major problem we are still facing in America today is prejudice (Bobo & Zubrinski, 1996; Zuriff, 2002). Many people develop misconceptions about other groups of people based on their demographics. This study of music helps us

understand whether music genres produce philosophies of reality that are consistent within their own group. If no such consistency can be found, then we can begin to explore the breadth of worldviews presented within a particular genre of music.

Similar to Standpoint Theory is the idea of Selective Perception. Researchers (Massas, Hubbard, Newtonson, 1979) studied Selective Perception and concluded that past experiences can alter an observer's perception of an event. Vidmar & Rokeach (1974) concluded that the way viewers perceived Archie's racist comments on "All in the Family" was dependent upon the level of prejudice already existent in the viewer. So, viewers were selective in how they perceived the conversations and what the show was saying about racism. This concept is important to remember as we structure messages in our scholarly work and in our daily lives.

The audience must be considered whenever one engages in the communication process. An example of this is clearly seen in pro-life/pro-choice debates. Pro-life advocates will react very differently to a message delivered by a Pro-life advocate than will pro-choice advocates. They could both hear the same words and see the same nonverbal cues, but still walk away with vastly differing opinions of what was meant and what was intended. The reason for this is explained through the phenomena of selective perception. Pro-life advocates and pro-choice advocates are coming from different views of how our society should be run, so they will likely interpret and process the information received in a way that is consistent with their previously established views. There are numerous other studies dealing with Selective Perception that would validate the previous example and the idea that different people can perceive the same words or events in vastly differing ways (Gummerman, 1973; Gummerman, 1971; Mills, 1997;

Paivio & Steeves, 1963). Most would agree that people see things in different ways, but to what extent does that perception determine people's view of reality.

Most communication scholars rely on the scientific method and logic to learn about the world and to obtain knowledge and Truth by using observation, measurement, and control (Buzzannell, Burrell, Strafford, & Berkowitz, 1996; Clair, 1996; Dorsey & Scherer, 1999). This system of knowing is based on the assumption that there is a reality external to people, and that reality, or Truth, can be observed, tested, and verified by methods independent of the knower. If this were not the case, quantitative research would be useless. The scientific method is "A systematic way to describe and reveal the universe based on observing, comparing, reasoning, predicting, testing, and interpreting" (Moore, 1998, p. 10). The very first step in the scientific method, observation, indicates that there is, in fact, a reality that can be seen by all people in the same way. This type of knowledge gathering is based on objective reality and Truth. If this were not the case, scientists could not learn anything about the world, and scientific progress in areas such as medicine, technology, or agriculture would be hindered. We use this system to formulate answers to questions in all aspects of life.

These views on the scientific method are the legs upon which all theory stands to assert its knowledge of reality and a knowable Truth. By examining the physical world and drawing logical conclusions from our observations and experiments we can find knowledge of reality, and ultimately of Truth. A new line of thinking is the belief that "[T]he universe is a creation of our minds." (Colson & Morse, 1997, p. 179) "There is no physical world 'out there.' Consciousness creates all" (Talbot, quoted in Colson & Morese, 1997, p. 179). This philosophy claims it is impossible to know Truth because it

is an individual, subjective thing that can only be known to the individual perceiving it. There is not one, but many realities and each one is as real and valid as the next. Every person has his/her own version of reality. The only way to know anything is through personal experience and the accumulated experiences of others. There is no one Truth or reality that can be known. All people can do is pool their personal ideas and decide as a group or individually what they will accept and how they will act (Beckwith, 1998, p. 12).

The implications of this view on society and communication theory are enormous. If one believes that there is no ultimate, objective Truth, there is no basis from which to say something is right or wrong, good or bad. There would actually be no difference since what one person sees as good another might see as bad. It is intolerant and offensive to assert that one person knows an absolute Truth since it is putting down the point of view of another. This view says there are no infallible means of knowing anything; individuals build reality through communication; events and texts mean what we want them to mean. The universe is meaningless; there is no meaning in words, ideas, or art. It would be morally wrong to say that one person's views are wrong because everything is subjective. There is no ultimate authority by which to judge actions (Beckwith, 1998).

Some may argue that Truth must be relative because facts have changed throughout history (Myers, 2002, p. 2). What was true a century ago may not be true today. However, Richard Weaver said, "If the facts used by someone appear to be incorrect, that has no necessary bearing on the truth. Such 'wrong' facts simply suggest imperfect skill on the part of the rhetor in finding instances of truth." (Foss, p. 52) "Truth,

by definition, is universal and outside of history and the world of facts.” (Haskell & Hauser, 1978, p. 237) So what we believe to be true may change, but the reality of “what is” is unchanging.

These different ways of looking at the world and answering basic questions in life can be referred to as different worldviews. A worldview is a filter through which a person pours all information (Myers, 2002). It could also be described as a pair of glasses that a person wears. Different lenses cause a person to view the world in different ways. The old saying that people see life through rose-colored glasses is another way of saying that their worldview causes them to see reality as better than it actually is. The three main worldview categories, or lenses, are naturalism (the belief that matter is ultimate reality and there is no spiritual), transcendentalism (the belief that the spiritual realm is ultimate reality), and theism (the belief that the physical and the spiritual are both real and that there is one God)(Brown, 2002).

Why Use Music?

The persuasive power of music can be traced back for centuries. In a study of music as communication, Sellnow and Sellnow (2001, p.395) quoted Plato as saying, “the introduction of novel fashions in music is a thing to beware of as endangering the whole fabric of society”. Music has been used as a form of communication more recently. For example, Civil War religious hymns were used to communicate escape options. The folk songs of the 1930s and 1940s were used “to engage workers to rally around labor unions,” and even modern Rap Music is being used to promote violence towards police officers and women (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001, p. 395).

Popular music is a mode of communication, and it “creates socially shared meanings by exploring and celebrating in a state of awareness or consciousness which a particular audience identifies with as an expression of its emotional and moral precepts” (Chesebo, Foulger, Nachman, Yannelli, 1985, p. 116). In other words, it is a language that can be understood by those within its group. The people in a group, those who associate themselves with a particular genre, can identify in some way with the music style and/or lyrics. It is a way for them to express themselves and identify themselves with a group of like individuals. Popular music is said to have three defining characteristics: repetitive form, emphasis on the nondiscursive, and to be an experience about an experience (Chesebo, Foulger, Nachman, Yannelli, 1985). Repetitive form is when an artist reemphasizes an ideal or belief through music and/or lyrics. For example, a song can use familiar sayings, or simply a familiar beat and tune. When listeners hear the familiar, they are much more likely to be persuaded by it. The nondiscursive is the influence music has over a person’s physical body. An example of this is the volume at which music is played. To achieve the desired effect, Rock Music is played much louder than is Easy Listening Music. Finally, music is an experience about an experience. This is said because music is often conveying an experience of the artist. When the audience hears the song, they can remember or imagine their own experience, thus creating a new experience from the old.

“Certain genres or types of music are apparently more suited for certain types of messages than others. Some musical genres advocate certain values far more frequently than other types of music” (Chesebro, et al., 1985, p. 118). “County western and rhythm and blues reflect ‘older values’ 100% and 65.8% of the time respectively, while 70% of

rock and roll songs persistently argued for the ‘newer values’” (Carey, cited in Chesebro, et al., 1985, p.118). This shows that at the time of the aforementioned study, genres of music did have very different messages. The differences in genres are emphasized by comparing adolescent cliques based on music preference to the ritual marking of aboriginal tribes as symbols of inclusion and exclusion. “Teenagers gather around music, talk about it, wear T-shirts featuring the names of various groups, all in the spirit of camaraderie” (Desmond, 1987, p. 283). The root of these differences could very well have been philosophical in nature.

Since this study focuses on Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music, it is important to spend some time exploring the origins of these two genres. Country Music has always been based on tradition. The artists, to be considered authentic, must establish a connection with the audience through the recounting of traditional Country themes as well as following the example of Country Music legends (Sartwell, 1993). These themes, as reported by Sartwell (1993), are summed up well in the words of the David Allen Coe song “You Never Even Called Me By My Name.” This song was used because in a joking way it touches on the classic themes of Country Music such as Mama, trucks, trains, prison, drinking, and broken relationships. Country Music legends such as George Jones, Patsy Cline, and Hank Williams as well as current, well-established stars such as George Strait are mentioned in many songs as a way of establishing the credibility of the songwriter/singer as well as the song itself in Country Music history (Sartwell, 1993).

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of Country Music is that its songs deal with almost all of the issues facing the working class members of society,

particularly the southern working class (Malone, 2002; Millard, 1993). Malone (2002) points out that while the problems discussed in Country Music are real, the “proposed resolutions often take the form of fantasy - nostalgia, machismo, escapism, religion, and romantic love” (p. ix). Although it is clear that the Protestant evangelical religion asserts great influence over Country Music, at least in its roots, it is not clear where the music stands today (Malone, 2002). Most southerners consider themselves to be Christian and disapprove of those who claim to be non-Christians; the exception is Jews because they are seen as God’s chosen people in the Bible. Southerners now seem to be embracing religious free thinkers as well (Malone, 2002). Most Country Music performers have been from the southern region of the Country known as the Bible Belt. It is because of their upbringing based on obedience to God and respect for the Bible and ministers of the Gospel that so many Country songs deal with issues related to morality, sin, and guilt (Malone, 2002).

Filligim (2003) gives many examples of God being present in Country Music when he references songs by artists such as Alan Jackson, Patty Loveless, Daryle Singletary, and Randy Travis. Of course, he also mentions people like Hank Williams who went back and forth between writing Gospel songs and Saturday night party songs. Filligim’s (2003) analysis of Country Music found that fate, rather than God, is often given the ultimate power. There is a humanistic perspective pervasive throughout Country Music that urges the listeners to help each other because we are all human and need to do whatever it takes to be happy. He concludes his book with the reflection that Country Music has a very fatalistic message, yet people keep hoping that love, good times, or drinking will ease their pain and bring them happiness, or at least contentment

(Fillingim, 2003). This leaves the researcher wondering if the pervasive philosophical messages being sent through the lyrics of Country Music are, in essence, more inclined to God (theism), humanism (practical atheism), or mystic fate (transcendentalism).

Now that the origins and traditions of Country Music have been established, it is time to look at what Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is and how it began. For the purpose of this study CCM will be defined as any Contemporary style of music that names and proclaims Jesus Christ as the one and only risen Lord and Savior of the world. There are many Country artists such as Johnny Cash, the Oak Ridge Boys, and Barbara Mandrell who got their Country Music start by singing gospel songs (Cusic, 1990); however, CCM is not thought to have originated as an offshoot or transformation of Southern Gospel. Powell (2002) describes CCM as primarily emerging out of the Jesus movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. He says it came as a result of young people in the rock and roll culture desiring to express their faith in Jesus Christ. CCM is a way for young Christians to have fun and identify with a social group without having to betray their Christian values (Howard & Streck, 1999). By the 1980s it was a multimillion-dollar business that demanded national attention (Powell, 2002). CCM has had to survive outside the secular market because of the refusal of non-Christian stations to play Christian songs (Powell, 2002). While there have been some artists, such as Amy Grant, Jars of Clay, P.O.D., and Sixpence None the Richer, who have managed to “cross-over” or overlap both Christian and secular markets, it is still not common place (Powell, 2002).

One of the first and most well-known CCM artists is Amy Grant. She played a major role in taking the message of Gospel Music into mainstream music (Cusic, 1990);

however, this change was quite controversial (Gill, 1990). This controversy was not concerning her lyrics but the musical style in which they were presented (Gill, 1990). Gill (1990) said that Grant wanted Christians to be seen as joyful and not as nerds. So, she began to dispel that image by dressing and singing in a more Contemporary way. This was and is the major question being discussed within the Christian community today. How much should Christians look like, sing like, perform like secular artists (Baker, 1985; Gill, 1990)? Howard and Streck (1999) discuss the four different responses to this question. The first is the separational artist who sees music as a ministry. Anything from the secular world can only taint the pureness of the message. Integrational artists see music as entertainment and as long as it is offering a positive alternative to secular music, then it is good. Transformational artists see their music as art. It is not primarily done to evangelize, encourage Christians, praise God, or to entertain, but as an artistic expression of the artist. A final way Howard and Streck (1999) talk about seeing CCM is as a business. CCM has its own recording industry and market. There are recording labels specifically for Christian artists. Some of these artists sing songs that all speak about God. Others, however, have some songs that do not specifically address God, but there is nothing in the lyrics that would contradict the Christian values and beliefs of the artist or audience. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use songs produced under the CCM recording label and recognized by the Contemporary Christian Music Association as a way of identifying the appropriate songs.

Research Questions

Even questions that deal with philosophy are answered in a systematic way that can be tested or reasoned. The study analyzed changes in lyrical content across a 20-year

period, using Country and Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) as the genres studied.

In this study the researcher began to answer several questions pertaining to how philosophies of truth and reality are communicated through different genres of music.

The questions asked in this study are:

(RQ1) What are the ways in which reality is portrayed in Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music?

(RQ2) To what extent do these genres have distinct philosophies of truth and reality that are consistent across artists?

(RQ3) Which of the major worldview categories does each of the genres fall into, if they can be classified into whole categories at all?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Music

The reason for studying how truth and reality are communicated through music is that music is an expression of our modern culture. From the mid 1980's to the mid 1990's communication scholars were looking at several aspects of music and how it affects our lives in ways from emotional use of music to the impact of music on society. Music is what we use to enhance our moods or help us relax (Wells & Hakanen, 1991). Ernest Hakanen has written several articles and co-authored one in which he examines the emotional use of music by several different groups of people. He states, "Listening to popular music is a major media use by adolescents, and it increases with age" (Wells & Hakanen, 1991, p.454). Larson and Kubey (1983) reported that, "US adolescents have greater emotional involvement, higher motivation, greater excitement, and more openness for music than for other media" (Wells & Hakanen, 1999, p.73). This being the case, it is important to understand what philosophical perspectives are behind the music, and particularly the lyrics. Music listeners in the US tend to primarily listen to one genre or another, depending on which group they most identify with (Wells & Hakanen, 1999). Different genres have been found to elicit very different emotions (Hakanen, 1995), so there is reason to wonder if these different emotions are partially evoked through the presentation of a particular worldview. Hakanen (1995) discusses the emotional use of music by African American adolescents. He suggests that, "there is a need for further research of the uses and impacts of specific songs and lyrics within genres" (Hakanen,

1995, p.221). In this study, I will examine the impact of lyrics within specific genres as it relates to philosophical interpretations of truth and reality.

Sellnow and Sellnow (2001) support the idea that different genres of music function to communicate and persuade distinctly. They say “lyrical content and musical score” must both be taken into account when determining the impact and meaning of a song (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001, p.396). The reason for this is what Sellnow and Sellnow (2001) call congruity and incongruity. “Congruent discursive linguistic symbols and non-discursive aesthetic symbols reinforce each other, making the didactic message more poignant” (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001, p.408). “Incongruent discursive linguistics symbols and non-discursive aesthetic symbols transform the meaning in some way. That is, the holistic message communicated is more than, and perhaps even different from, the message depicted by analyzing lyrics alone” (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001, p.409). Music can “convey multiple meanings based on the relative degree of emphasis placed on music and lyrics” (Sellnow, 1996, p.50). So, it is not just the lyrics that need to be considered when attempting to discover the meaning of a song. This study is a step towards learning what philosophies of truth and reality are being communicated by the different genres of music. After lyrical content has been analyzed, it would be possible to examine the musical scores of the songs to see if they support the lyrical messages or not.

Philosophies

Now that we know what research has been done on music and philosophy and communication, let’s turn our attention to what philosophers of the past and present have to say about the nature of truth and reality. There are three main worldview categories: naturalism, transcendentalism, and theism. In order to better understand these categories

we will look at how each one is defined and described individually. First, we will look at naturalism. Naturalism acknowledges only natural forces, denying the existence of anything supernatural. It says that there is no God, and “nature” is all that exists. An example of this is Freud’s notion that God is just “an idealized projection of our human fathers” (Johnson, 2000, p.21). Everything that occurs has a “natural” cause and nothing is supernatural. There are no external rules to follow, so each person must do what they feel is best and come up with purpose and meaning for their own life. There is no life after death. When a person dies, it is simply over. Common worldviews that fit into this category include Existentialism, Secular Humanism, Marxism/Leninism, Atheism, Agnosticism, and Scientism. Some key people in this philosophical worldview are John Dewey, Fredrick Nietzsche, Steven Jay Gould, Sigmund Freud, and Karl Marx (Myers, 2002).

The second worldview category is transcendentalism. Unlike naturalism, and actually quite the opposite, transcendentalism says that everything is “God.” All that exists is spiritual in nature. The physical world is either an illusion or a manifestation of the divine nature. “God” is not a personal being but an impersonal force that is “inextricably intertwined with the universe into one fabric of reality” (Myers, 2002, p.5). All is one. Reincarnation is a vital component of transcendentalism. Successive rebirths form the links in the chain of the individual soul’s journey back to the One. Some cultural examples of this worldview are found in movies like *The Matrix*, *Star Wars*, *Groundhog Day*, and *Harry Potter* and in sitcoms like *Dharma & Greg*. Some key people in the worldview include Shirley MacLaine, Deepak Chopra, and James Redfield. Common worldviews that fit into the transcendental category include Cosmic Humanism, New

Age, Eastern Religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism), Bahi'i, Scientology, Wicca, Occult, Hyper-environmentalism, and Unitarian/Universalist (Myers, 2002).

The final worldview category is theism. Theism, sometime called Supernaturalism, describes people who affirm the existence of both the natural and the supernatural. It says there is a personal God who exists and created everything, including humans, and who remains involved with His creation. Islam, Judaism, and Biblical Christianity are the three worldviews that fit into this category. Theists have three main arguments for the existence of God. The first is the cosmological argument. This says that since every effect must have a cause, then the effect of the universe existing must have had a cause. This "first cause," or God, is what makes everything else possible. Nothing that exists would exist if it were not for Him. The second argument is the teleological argument. It says that all of the design in the universe suggests an intelligent designer. The unchangeable laws of nature and the intricate balance of nature would not be possible through random chance. The third argument is moral. "There is a pervasive sense of right and wrong intrinsic to humanity that transcends different cultures. The reality of the moral nature of man can only be explained in terms of a moral 'lawgiver,' and not in terms of randomness"(Myers, 2002, p.6).

Both theism and naturalism use the scientific method to formulate answers to questions in all aspects of life. This can be seen from the early scientists whose work fueled the scientific revolution. Scientists such as Copernicus, Isaac Newton, and Carl Linnaeus were all professing Christians, thus, theists (Colson & Morse, 1997). These men believed nature was made by God for us to study and learn more about Him and His

nature. Galileo even asserted that God's ways are not necessarily our ways," (Colson & Morse, 1997, p. 178) and the nature of God can be found through the use of what is now called the scientific method. When Copernicus claimed that the planets revolved around the sun, as opposed to the earth, he was thought to be crazy. However, he held firmly to the belief that God created the universe in a mathematical way. The planets revolving around the sun made more mathematical sense, so he held to his position, and later his theory was proven to be correct. These are examples of early thinkers who believed that the world did physically exist and that it held Truth that could be discovered (Colson & Morse, 1997).

There is a huge difference between discovering reality and creating reality. Czeslaw Prokopczyk (1980) illustrates this difference in asking the reader to "consider the weird consequences of thinking of the God of the Holy Bible as merely a Discoverer and not Creator of the world, or about Christopher Columbus as the creator and not the discoverer of America" (Prokopczyk, 1980, p.51). This is a key difference between theists and naturalists. Theists believe that God created reality. Reality is described as, "that which has existence apart from any idea any mind may have of it, and which would exist if there were no mind anywhere to entertain the thought of it. That which is real has being in itself. It does not depend upon the observer for its validity" (Tozer, 1992, p. 50). Tozer goes on to talk about how the plain, sincere man views reality. This man engages the world with the five senses given to him by God and concludes that there is a physical reality. We do not doubt the existence of the physical world because it is constantly intruding on our senses. The spiritual world, however, is invisible to our senses. This makes it easier to ignore. "For the great unseen Reality is God" (Tozer, 1992, p.54).

In the statement by Tozer, we can see the primary difference between the naturalist and the theist. The theist believes not only in the physical world that can be detected by the senses, but also in the spiritual world. Naturalists, on the other hand, believe only in those things that can be detected by the senses. They use the scientific method, but they use it for very different reasons than do the theists. Richard Rorty is a modern day philosopher who espouses the naturalistic position. Rorty came into popularity in the late 1970's. His philosophical inspiration came from the likes of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey (Peters & Ghirdelli, 2001). Rorty suggests in *Pragmatism, Davidson, and Truth* "that a 'naturalistic' approach to the problems of meaning and the propositional attitudes will automatically leave the skeptic no room for maneuver"(Donaldson, 1991, p.136). Donaldson, in a commentary on Rorty's work, stated, "In order to doubt or wonder about the provenance of his beliefs an agent must know what belief is. This brings with it the concept of objective truth, for the notion of a belief is the notion of a state that may or may not jibe with reality"(Donaldson, 1991, p.133). Dr. David Noebel (1991) points out that even though science can tell us how the universe works, it will never be able to tell us why.

Transcendentalism is a very different worldview than either naturalism or theism. It says that everything is connected, so everything is god and everything is spiritual. In his book "Understanding the Times" Noebel quotes Gordon H. Clark discussing the transcendental perspective. He says, "Truth is not individual, but universal; truth did not begin when we were born, it has always existed" (Noebel, 1991, p. 170). In transcendentalism, there are no infallible means of knowing anything. "The knowledge acquired through the use of any structure is selective. There are no standards or beliefs

guiding the search for knowledge which are not dependent on the structure...If this is so, then all views at all times are equally valid. There is no metaphysical, super-ordinary, final, absolute reality. There is no special direction to events. The universe is what we say it is. When theories change the universe changes. The truth is relative” (Myers, 2002, p.2). In his book, Existential Thinking, Boelen (1968) makes his argument for transcendentalism, paying particular attention to arguing against naturalism’s pure use of the scientific method. He says that all beginnings are the start of something new. “There is novelty, spontaneity, originality, and creativity in every real beginning” (Boelen, 1968, p.3). Boelen boldly disagrees with rationalist thinkers who say that everything can or will eventually be rationally explained. Naturalists take all of the mystery out of life by supposing that everything can be explained by a simple cause and effect relationship. There must be mystery in life. We live in a day where people are looked down on for asking fundamental philosophical questions. Anyone who dares to ask these questions “lacks the ‘scientific approach’, and is old fashioned, irrational or dabbles in mysticism” (Boelen, 1968, p.16). “A full realization of the fundamental mysteriousness of reality disturbs our everyday security, keeps us in suspense, and arouses in us a profound sense of wonder. We experience an inner need to transcend the solid ground of everyday life and logic, and to probe in to the significance of the ultimate mysteriousness of all that is. How are phenomena such as beginnings and becoming possible? What is the ultimate meaning of my existence? Why is there anything at all and not rather nothing? By asking such fundamental questions we have become involved in a truly philosophical situation...Philosophy, therefore, is our probing into the significance of the ultimate mysteriousness of reality” (Boelen, 1968, p.4). “The primordial question of Being,

therefore, is the most fundamental, the most encompassing, and the most original of all questions” (Boelen, 1968, p.11).

In the section on Scientism, Boelen relates the views of Henry Bergson. “Man’s body has become too big for his soul. In other words, the outward technological progress has not been balanced by a comparable progress in self-discovery or by an exploration of the more fundamental regions of reality. This is why modern man has a predominantly controlling attitude towards reality based on his exclusively, utilitarian interests” (Boelen, 1968, p. 15). When naturalists think everything that exists is motivated, they are saying that through science everything can be explained and understood in time. “There is no doubt indeed that we are looking for objective reality. But in light of our foregoing elucidation we have our serious doubts about the possibility of an objectivity which would not involve the subjectivity of human situations” (Boelen, 1968, p.19). “The discovery of the world is anterior to the discovery of both the human self and the surrounding objects. Fundamentally, we understand both the subject and the object in the natural light of the horizon of the world, and not the other way around. The world, therefore, is prior to the beings encountered in the world. Consequently, it is one-sided, and a contradiction of our fundamental situation to place the source of all knowledge and objectivity exclusively in the human subject as the rationalists and idealists do. But equally unacceptable is the assertion of scientism that explains the objectivity of the ‘real world’ in terms of material objects alone and relegates the meaning of the ‘phenomenal world’ to the realm of myths and dreams” (Boelen, 1968, p.20). Only the physical scientist meets the requirements of studying reality if the only real things are material. “Consequently, only that which can be discovered by the physical sciences is real and

objective. There is no reality but scientific reality, there is no truth but scientific truth, there is no objectivity but scientific objectivity. The ‘real world’ of the physical scientists completely replaces the ‘phenomenal world’ of our immediately lived experience...the knowledge supplied by the physical sciences is true knowledge- the rest is poetry, romanticism, or subjectivism. Unfortunately, ‘the rest’ are our most authentic and profoundly human realities such as love, beauty, moral responsibility, creativity, personal life, happiness, and freedom” (Boelen, 1968, p.20-21). This is precisely why Boelen disagrees with the position of the naturalist. If matter is really all there is, then we are missing a lot.

After looking at these three very different views of truth and reality, we may wonder, as Friedrich Nietzsche did, “What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically...truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that is what they are.” (Myers, 2002, p.1) Or, is truth as Tozer described it, a reality that exists apart from human understanding or recognition that does not change? The answer to this question impacts what view of morality a person will hold to. The way morality is determined between these views is quite different. Many naturalists and transcendentalists adopt an ethical system called relativism. Beckwith and Koukl (1998) describe relativism as consisting of three main types. The first type he calls Society Says Relativism. This type says that all people ought to act in keeping with their own society’s code. Anyone who goes against what his/her society says to be right is being immoral. Theists point out that in order to subscribe to this belief, one would have to label people such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Jesus, and George Washington as

immoral because they went against what their societies said was right. On the other hand, the modernist would point out that a Society Says Relativist must agree that people like Hitler, slave owners, and tribes who practice human sacrifice are all moral since they are living within the codes of their society.

The second type of relativism is called Society Does Relativism. This says that different cultures have different moral codes. Every culture should be free to practice its own traditions and laws without interference from other cultures. These relativists would say we could not know what is right or wrong, true or false, so we cannot say anything should change. The problem a theist would have with this is that sometimes cultures do collide. When this happens, the morality of one culture will be forced onto the other culture. This can be seen in acts of war and terrorism quite clearly. In these cases, the beliefs of one culture are thrust onto another. The Society Does Relativists could not morally defend their home or Country against outside attacks because it would be saying that the other societies' values were wrong.

The third and final type of relativism Beckwith and Koukl (1998) describe is called I Say Relativism. This type asserts that what is right for one person may not be right for another. Every moral decision is just a preference; no one has the right to force his/her morality onto others. However, according to theist thought, this would make the concept and implementation of laws immoral. Theism says that there are things that are good and bad, but relativism says that it might be wrong for one person to lie and right for another person to lie in the same situation. It would be immoral for an I Say Relativist to say that stealing, rape, or murder should be punishable by law because everyone has to decide for himself or herself what is right and wrong. The concepts that telling the truth,

paying taxes, not hurting others, and not damaging other's property have to come from somewhere, and theists would assert that they come from absolute, ultimate truths that are given by God. Since theists use the scientific method and logic they can make their argument against relativism based on how it holds up under these tests. The argument for the relativist would start with their assumption that all views are equally right. From there the theist would point out that if you disagree with them, one view has to be wrong.

Reality ultimately exists and two opposing views of it cannot both be right. The one who is wrong will act in a way that does not fit the real universe (Noebel, 1991). They would argue that there could only be one ultimate Truth and reality. Logically, according to Aristotle's law of non-contradiction, A cannot be both A and non-A at the same time and in the same sense, thus, their argument self-destructs. A reality cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense. An example of theist Richard Weaver's support of this proposition is found in *Ethics of Rhetoric* when he is commenting on a passage from *Meditation on the Divine Will*. He says, "In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time.' God is a rational being and will not be found embracing both sides of a contradictory" (Weaver, 1970, p.107).

There are some answers to the problems posed by the relativism described above. In the book *Truth Without Objectivity* Kolbel (2002) describes one way that relativism can be justified. He says that people can disagree and neither one be wrong. For example, one might think liver bread is delicious and another might think it quite distasteful. However, neither is wrong because they are merely saying what is true from their perspective. "A thinker commits a mistake (an error) if he or she believes a content that is

not true according to the perspective he or she possesses (at that time)” (Kolbel, 2002, p.100). This is the case in non-objective content. “A content is objective just if it is *not* possible for two thinkers to possess perspectives that diverge in their evaluation of that content” (Kolbel, 2002, p.102). So, if two people disagree, then the content must be either non-objective (meaning two people can hold opposite views of truth and both be right.) or someone is in error (because to be objective there can be no possibility of both people being right). However, this only addresses relativism as it relates to non-objective issues.

Ayer, in his book Language, Truth and Logic, goes on to describe another way to avoid the traps of relativism. He says “Truth” does not mean anything. It is a superfluous word containing no real value. “P is true” can be more precisely stated “p” because to add “is true” is redundant. “When, for example, one is saying that ‘Queen Anne is dead’ is true, all that one is saying is that Queen Anne is dead” (Ayers, 1952, p.88) So, to even claim truth is not necessary. He goes on to say there is “no way of proving that the existence of a god, such as the God of Christianity, is even probable...for if the existence of such a god were probable, then the proposition that he existed would be an empirical hypothesis. And in that case it would be possible to deduce from it, and other empirical hypotheses, certain experiential propositions, which were not deducible from other hypotheses alone...Regularity in nature is not enough to support the proposition that there is a God. People who would claim ‘God exists’ would say that they are referring to God in a metaphysical sense. “For to say that ‘God exists’ is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false. And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance” (Ayers, 1952, p.115). He says it is equally absurd for someone to assert,

“God exists” as it is to assert, “God does not exist.” Ayers does not support the agnostic position because, while they do not know the answer to the question of God’s existence, they see it as a legitimate question. Ayer is claiming that metaphysical questions should not even be asked. He goes on to explain how truth can be relative. The claim “Jehovah is angry” can be accepted to mean, “it is thundering” when a person says that thunder means that Jehovah is angry. The words in the sentence are simply not taken literally. And, of course, it would not be taken literally because “all utterances about the nature of God are nonsensical”(Ayers, 1958, p.115). Ayers (1958) says that, “It is only when the theist claims that in asserting the existence of a transcendent God he is expressing a genuine proposition that we are entitled to disagree with him”(p.116). The same logic for arguments about God can be applied to arguments about the existence of an after-life. “To say that there is something imperceptible inside a man, which is his soul or his real self, and that it goes on living after he is dead, is to make a metaphysical assertion which has no more factual content than the assertion that there is a transcendent god” (Ayers, 1958, p.117). The authors do not say more about religious beliefs because their point is “that there cannot be any transcendent truths of religion. For the sentences which the theist uses to express such ‘truths’ are not literally significant” (Ayers, 1958, p.118).

After making his case for the concept of truth not being relevant, Richard Rorty goes on to say that truth cannot even be a goal of inquiry, even if it were relevant, because we cannot know when or if it has been obtained. We should instead seek justification of our ideas. "You cannot aim at something, cannot work to get it, unless you can recognize it once you have got it...We shall never know for sure whether a given belief is true, but we can be sure that nobody is presently able to summon up any residual

objections to it, that everybody agrees that it ought to be held” (Brandom, 2000, p.2). For example, it was once held to be true that the earth was flat. Later, evidence came to justify a change in what was held to be true. According to this view, we could not even now say with certainty that the earth is round. All we can say is that the idea is currently justified. Brandom says that using words like “truth” or “universality” do not change how we act, so there is no reason to use them. So, the question becomes “Is Truth a goal of inquiry?” Rorty said, “Pragmatists think that if something makes no difference to practice, it should make no difference to philosophy” (Brandom, 2000, p.243). Akeel Bilgrami quotes Davidson as saying, “Truth is objective if the truth of a belief or sentence is independent of whether it is justified by all our evidence... We can’t consistently take truth to be both objective and something to be pursued. But I think that they would have done better to cleave to a view that counts truth as objective, but pointless as a goal” (Brandom, 2000, p.245) To this Rorty says that truth would have to be “a justification after which no further justification is needed” (Brandom, 2000, p.245). Truth is only a goal of inquiry if it is relevant to practice. Therefore, according to this way of thinking, whether or not we even aspire to pursue truth is irrelevant.

To the argument that says what was true a century ago may not be true today Weaver says, “If the facts used by someone appear to be incorrect, that has no necessary bearing on the truth. Such ‘wrong’ facts simply suggest imperfect skill on the part of the rhetor in finding instances of truth” (Foss, 1985, p.52). In describing Weaver’s views on Truth, Haskell and Hauser (1978) said, “Truth, by definition, is universal and outside of history and the world of facts” (p.237). This further shows that Weaver believed that

Truth was permanent and unchanging. What we believe to be true may change, but the reality of “what is” is unchanging.

Transcendentalists, as well as naturalists, often adopt a relativistic way of viewing morality. Beckwith says that having relativism as a moral system is the same as having no moral system at all. Either way, a person is doing what they want to do (Beckwith, 1998, p.105). Dr. Jeff Myers gave an example of this when he described relativism. He said that a relativist is like a person in the wilderness who straps a magnet to his back. He does this so that he will always know where he is headed. He says that he is his own true North. But, in reality, he never knows where he is because his compass is useless. It is not pointing to where North is in reality (Myers, 2002). A transcendentalist takes this idea of relativity and applies it not only in the moral realm, but also in the physical and spiritual realm. They would say that you determine your own reality and that whatever direction you want North to be, that is the direction in which it will be located. A theist or naturalist would say that there is an actual North that is outside the individual, and if you pick the wrong way to walk, you will end up even more lost. This is a physical example of the different ways of thinking, but many would assert that it could be applied to societal and moral issues as well (Fitzgerald, 2002 & Weaver, 1948). Even in the first few pages of Weaver’s most famous book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, we can see his view that what people think about the world affects the condition into which the world falls. In the introduction he says that when a society assumes humans have evolved, rather than been created by God, they have no ultimate standard by which to judge right and wrong. He then says,

There is ground for declaring that modern man has become a moral idiot. So few

are those who care to examine their lives, or to accept the rebuke which comes of admitting that our present state may be a fallen state, that one questions whether people now understand what is meant by the superiority of an idea. One might expect abstract reasoning to be lost upon them; but what is he to think when attestations of the most concrete kind are set before them, and they are still powerless to make a difference or to draw a lesson? For four centuries every man has been not only his own priest but his own professor of ethics, and the consequence is an anarchy which threatens that minimum consensus of value necessary to the political state (Weaver, 1948, p. 1-2).

So, it is clear that Weaver believes that there are ultimate Truths that must be agreed upon in order for a society to stand. He must believe that people are capable of learning these Truths or he would not criticize them for not knowing them. In the last sentence quoted above, Weaver demonstrates his idea that if people adopt relativism, being their own priest and professor of ethics, they cannot even agree on the very minimum things necessary to hold society together.

In Weaver's book *Language is Sermonic* he addresses the issues of being able to know things and by knowing, name them, and by naming them, define them; by defining them, asserting that there is an objective way and manner by which to call a thing. He discusses that the naming of something is the ultimate definition. One who names has to know the nature of the thing. He discusses how Adam named the animals that God created, and this shows that God gave people the ability to see objective reality. If there were no objective reality of what things are, naming things would not only be useless but impossible (Weaver, 1970, p.192-193). Weaver is saying that the name is the thing, but

post-modern thinkers claim the word is not the thing. Martin Heidegger's famous quote summed up this up well. "In the naming, the things named are called into their thinging. Thinging, they unfold world, in which things abide and so are abiding ones" (Myers, 2002, p.2). Edward Hallet Carr supported this idea in his statement ascribing to belief that events and texts mean what we want them to mean. "That which offers itself for our historical study from tradition or as tradition, the significance of an event or the meaning of a text, is not a fixed object that exists in itself, whose nature we have simply to establish. The historical consciousness, in fact, also involved mediation between past and present" (Myers, 2002, p.2).

The controversy of the meaning of words established, Weaver moves on to discuss the effect this has on education. He says that he knows the question will be asked, "By what act of arrogance do we imagine that we know what things really are?" (Weaver, 1970, p.194) This question is one that a post-modernist would ask. After all, if there is no reality that can be known, how dare anyone propose that they know enough to be able to name anything? Weaver offers a response question of, "By what act of arrogance do we set ourselves up as teachers? There are two postulates basic to our profession: the first is that one man can know more than another, and the second is that such knowledge can be imparted. Whoever cannot accept both should retire from the profession and renounce the intention of teaching anyone anything" (Weaver, 1970, p.194). He goes on to say, "If we cannot be sure that one person knows better than another the true nature of things, then we should follow the logic of our convictions and choose our teachers...by lot" (Weaver, 1970, p.194-195). Weaver is making an argument of logic that the ideas of no one being able to know anything is absurd for people to argue because they cannot even claim the

right to assert they are right. To assert you are right is to say that you know the nature of things more than another; and if it is inconceivable and arrogant to say that you know what things really are, it is impossible and pointless to teach or to educate. To educate mean to lead out of ignorance (Neufeldt, 1997, p. 431). If the transcendental view that there is no ultimate authority or truth is true, Weaver claims they cannot educate or they are claiming to know what they claim cannot be known. They say they believe all perspectives on reality to be equally valid and true, but by claiming to be able to educate, they are saying that the prospective student is ignorant, but they, the educator, are not ignorant. They are teaching that all perspectives are equal, but that the student should abandon their own ideas and adopt those of the educator. Truth is defined as that which agrees with reality (Neufeldt, 1997, p.1435). If there is an ultimate reality, there is an ultimate Truth. Therefore, there can be only one right way to think to teach or believe. Weaver clearly states that in order to believe in education, one must believe that Truth exists and that it is knowable.

Dr. Gary Phillips stated, “We must always keep in mind that it does not matter whether or not a particular worldview suits us; the questions is, Does it suit the world?” (Phillips, 1991, p.27). This is a question that Weaver would likely ask. He was very conscious about the nature of things and what they really were. In *Ethics of Rhetoric* he makes his case for this by asserting that argument form definition is the most valid and ethical form of rhetoric. He said, “To define is to assume perspective, that is the method of definition” (Weaver, 1970, p.108). By this he is saying that to define anything one must be able to perceive it objectively. We already discussed his views on this when we examined his thoughts on God asking Adam to name, or define, all the animals. This

demonstrates that Weaver, as a theist, does, indeed, believe that people are given the needed perspective to know the Truth of the world, and, thus, define it. This indicates that unlike transcendental thinking, there is a right way to call a thing, and unlike naturalist thinking, there is a supernatural God who had to impart the knowledge needed to name.

Now that we have studied the research on music and communication as well as looked at what past and present philosophers have had to say concerning truth and reality, we are better able to understand the basic worldviews and their implications. We can now see the importance of learning if genres of music can be classified according to worldviews. The reason comes down to the element of persuasion. If people are influenced by the lyrics of the music they hear, then it is important to understand what messages about truth and reality are being communicated through the songs.

Chapter 3

Methods

After studying the past research on music and the ideas of many philosophers, it is time to apply that knowledge to the current study. In this section the researcher explains how the study was conducted, including which genres of music were chosen, how the specific songs were chosen and how each song should be categorized. The researcher also explains more about the ideas behind the three main worldviews mentioned previously and how to distinguish between them.

Genres

In deciding which specific genres to study, the researcher examined Eidenmuller's (1993) indicating Rap and Country Music were the most popular, followed by Rock, A-Rock, R & B, and Contemporary Christian Music. Eidenmuller asked a research question in his study that is particularly relevant to the current study. "How does lyric attendance compare across different popular music genres?" (Eidenmuller, 1993, p. 40). He found that religious music listeners pay far more attention to lyrics than any other group, including rap and Country. This may be a result of the evangelical push for understanding the message. Rock Music listeners were found to pay little attention to lyrics, focusing mainly on the beat as the most important aspect of music (Desmond, 1987). The researcher chose Country and Contemporary Christian Music for several reasons. First, the listeners of both genres tend to pay attention to lyrics, and second, they both enjoy a large fan base (Desmond, 1987). The final reason Country and Contemporary Christian Music were chosen is because they are both very popular in the researcher's area of the Country, so she is familiar with many of the songs already.

Song Sample

There are hundreds of songs in each category that could be chosen for analysis, however, time does not allow for complete analysis of all songs. Therefore, the researcher took the top 10 songs of each genre from 1980, 1990, and 2000 for analysis. These years were chosen to allow for changes in lyrical content over time. The research began in 1980 because Contemporary Christian Music did not exist very long prior to this year. The top 10 Country songs were determined based on the American Country Countdown and the top 10 Contemporary Christian songs were determined using the rankings of the Contemporary Christian Music Association. The lyrics for all songs were obtained primarily from Internet lyrics sites; however, when lyrics from an actual album cover were available, the researcher used the actual album to retrieve the lyrics.

Worldview Categories

There are three main worldview categories: naturalism, transcendentalism, and theism (Brown, 2002). To better understand these categories we must define and describe each one individually. First, Naturalism acknowledges only natural forces, denying the existence of anything supernatural. It says that there is no God, and “nature” is all that exists. An example of this is Freud’s notion that God is just “an idealized projection of our human fathers” (Johnson, 2000, p. 21). Everything that occurs has a “natural” cause and nothing is supernatural. There are no external rules to follow, so everyone must do what they feel is best and come up with purpose and meaning for their own life. There is no mystical fate or destiny. There is also no life after death. When a person dies, it is simply over. Common worldviews that fit into this category include Secular Humanism, Marxism/Leninism, Atheism, Agnosticism, and Scientism. Some key people in this

philosophical worldview are John Dewey, Fredrick Nietzsche, Steven Jay Gould, Sigmund Freud, and Karl Marx.

The second worldview category is transcendentalism. Unlike naturalism, and actually quite the opposite, transcendentalism says that everything is “God.” All that exists is spiritual in nature. The physical world is either an illusion or a manifestation of the divine nature. “God” is not a personal being but an impersonal force that is “inextricably intertwined with the universe into one fabric of reality.” All is one. Reincarnation is a vital component of transcendentalism. “Successive rebirths form the links in the chain of the individual soul’s journey back to the One. Some cultural examples of this worldview are found in movies like *The Matrix*, *Star Wars*, *Groundhog Day*, and *Harry Potter* and in sitcoms like *Dharma & Greg*. Some key people in the worldview include Shirley MacLaine, Deepak Chopra, and James Redfield. Common worldviews that fit into the transcendental category include Existentialism, Cosmic Humanism, New Age, Eastern Religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism), Bahi’i, Scientology, Wicca, Occult, Hyper-environmentalism, and Unitarian/Universalism.

The final worldview category is theism. Theism, sometimes called Supernaturalism, describes people who affirm the existence of both the natural and the supernatural. It says there is a personal God who exists and created everything, including humans, and who remains involved with His creation. Islam, Judaism, and Biblical Christianity are the three worldviews that fit into this category. Theists have three main arguments for the existence of God. The first is the cosmological argument. This says that since every effect must have a cause, then the effect of the universe existing must have

has a cause. This “first cause,” or God, is what makes everything else possible. Nothing that exists would exist if it were not for Him. The second argument is the teleological argument. It says that all of the design in the universe suggests an intelligent designer. The unchangeable laws of nature and the intricate balance of nature would not be possible through random chance. The third argument is moral. “There is a pervasive sense of right and wrong intrinsic to humanity that transcends different cultures. The reality of the moral nature of man can only be explained in terms of a moral ‘lawgiver,’ and not in terms of randomness” (Myers, 2002, p. 6).

Measures

The way to determine one’s worldview is to answer the ultimate questions of life. These questions are (1) origin—From where did everything come? (2) meaning—Why am I here? (3) morality—How are we supposed to live? (4) destiny—What happens when we die? The way people answer these ultimate questions, either consciously or subconsciously, will determine the way they live their life. These answers are the basis for everything we do (Brown, 2002). Table 1 below illustrates how the aforementioned worldview categories answer these questions. This is not meant to give the impression that everyone will fall neatly into one of these three categories. On the contrary, many groups and individuals hold to a worldview that consists of combinations of two or more different ideologies that are, in fact, contradictory in nature.

Procedures

This study was conducted thematically. I started by analyzing the three broad worldview categories. This analysis consisted of looking at how each worldview answers the fundamental questions of life. These questions address origin, meaning, morality, and

Table 1

Comparing worldview answers to philosophical questions

Worldview	Philosophical Questions			
	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Morality</i>	<i>Destiny</i>
Naturalism	Natural Processes	Unknown	Human Centered	Annihilation
Transcendentalism	Fragmented from the "One"	Seek unity "Oneness"	Human Centered	Reincarnation
Theism	Created by God	Determined by God	Determined by God	Eternal life with or apart from God

Note. From "What is a Worldview" by W. E. Brown, 2000, Summit at Bryan College.

destiny. Once these categories were defined, I analyzed the top 10 songs in 1980, 1990, and 2000 from each genre to see if they fit systematically, randomly or at all into one of the worldview categories. I looked to see what each song says about truth and reality. This was done by a lyrical analysis. First, I looked to see if the song made a specific reference to truth or reality (the words "truth" or "reality" are used in some form). If so, then I examined whether the statement fell clearly into one of the three main worldview categories. Then I looked to see which worldview category, if any, the view asserted best fit. If it fit into one clear category, then the categorization was complete. If the statement did not seem to fit into a category, then a fourth category was created. If the statement appeared to be a combination of two or more categories, then additional categories were added. The possible combination categories could be a naturalism/transcendentalism, naturalism/theism, or theism/transcendentalism. No distinction would be made as to which worldview is most prominent in the case of mixed views. After the analysis, I hope to see if there is a pattern or consistency as to which genre fits into which

worldview category, which genres, if any, have the most mixed worldview messages, and, if mixing of worldviews occurs, which worldviews each genre is most likely to mix.

If the songs do not specifically use the words “truth” or “reality,” then I will look to see if there is an overarching message or theme in the song using answers to one or more of the four worldview questions. On the question for origin, for example, I listened to see if the song mentioned creation by God. If it did, then I classified it in the category of theism. If it references everything being fragmented off of the “one,” then I categorized it under transcendentalism. A Country Music example of this type of song, recorded by Lonestar, is “I’m already there.” This song is about a father missing his son and telling him that he is not really gone because he is in the wind and the sunshine and everything is connected. If a song talked about everything coming into existence through natural processes, then it was categorized under naturalism.

In the category of meaning, I would call a naturalist song one that indicates the meaning of life is unknown or unknowable. A Country example of this type of song is “The Secret of Life” by Faith Hill. This song is about a bartender expressing to a customer that the secret of life is different for every person. A transcendental song would indicate that the meaning of life is to be unified, in harmony, with everything, and a theistic song would say that God determines the meaning of life. On the issue of morality, both naturalism and transcendentalism would be the same, human centered. This means that people determine what is good or bad, right or wrong. This could be an individual choice or a collective decision, but the power to decide what is moral is in the hands of people. In the theistic view, God determines morality. He is the one who decides

what is good or bad, right or wrong. Anything that suggests a standard of morality that does not come from God would be either naturalistic or transcendental.

For the purposes of this study, if further clues from origin, meaning, or destiny were found in the lyrics, they were used to determine if a song is classified as naturalistic or transcendental. If the lyrics offered no further clues, then the song was placed in the naturalism/transcendentalism category. The final question to help categorize songs was destiny: What happens when we die? If the song indicated annihilation, when you die, you die and that is it, then it was classified as naturalism. If it supported reincarnation, the idea that people come back to earth again and again and live different lives, then it was classified as a song supporting transcendentalism. Finally, if the song indicated that after death a person would either spend eternity with God or eternity without God, then it was classified as theistic. An example of this is the Country song, "Three wooden crosses" by Randy Travis. This song is the testimony of how a dying preacher led a prostitute to believe in God while he looked at the lights of heaven. For those songs that do not appear to comment on truth or reality at all a final category will be added.

The reason for categorizing the songs in this way is so that we can see if there is a pattern. Once all of the songs have been placed in a category, then we can look to see where the songs are and see if a particular genre is consistently placed in one category or another. This will let us know if the people who consistently listen to one of these particular genres of music are consistently listening to the same worldview messages about truth and reality. If the genres do not produce a significant pattern, then we will know that the messages within the genre are inconsistent and the listeners are being exposed to a variety of views.

Data Analysis

In order to establish reliability in the song coding, a sample was given to another coder. The second coder had a base knowledge of the three worldview studied. The researcher explained the coding process to the second coder for fifteen minutes. The second coder randomly selected 10 songs from each genre and coded them according to worldview classification. The results of this second coding process were as follows: 8 out of 10 of the Country songs were coded the same as the researcher, and 9 out of 10 of the CCM songs were coded the same as the researcher. This gives the classification of songs in this study a high level of internal reliability.

Chapter 4

Results

This study was started out of a desire to understand what philosophical messages are being communicated through the lyrics of Country and Contemporary Christian Music. In this section, the results of examining how ideas of truth and reality are portrayed in 30 Country and 30 Contemporary Christian song lyrics from the years 1980, 1990, and 2000 are presented. This section reveals the dominant themes and trends in both genres of music; thus, giving the reader an understanding of how the philosophical messages in the music have changed over the last twenty years, as well as what worldview philosophies they are most likely to encounter while listening to each genre.

Contemporary Christian Music has been consistently theistic in its worldview messages, with the exception of a small but rising percentage of songs that do not necessarily comment on worldviews or philosophy at all. Country Music may be moving away from its theistic roots and branching out to embrace other worldviews. There is also a trend toward more Country songs that do not comment on worldview questions at all. It would appear as if the Country genre is getting more clear in its worldview messages, meaning there are fewer undeterminable songs, when they make philosophical comments, and at the same time limiting the number of songs that do actually comment on worldviews at all.

Contemporary Christian Music

The results of the research on Contemporary Christian Music were in-line with what was expected. Analysis of the songs from 1980, 1990, and 2000 revealed that the vast majority of CCM lyrics put forth a very obvious theistic message. Twenty-four of

the 30 songs analyzed mentioned God, Lord, Jesus, or a title for God found in scripture, such as Prince of Peace. Not only were these songs theistic in their worldview, 12 of them were songs sung directly to God as songs of praise, worship, or request. The other 18 were songs sung about God and His attributes. Five of the songs that did not specifically mention God were definitely not contrary to theism. In fact, understanding the artist and the genre as a whole, it is easy to conclude that the song is speaking in reference to God, although His name is not specifically used. Only one song was found which did not seem to be commenting on worldview at all. Table 2 below illustrates how the CCM songs were categorized.

There was not a top ten list from which to gather CCM songs from 1980, so the researcher located as many top songs from individual CCM artists as possible. Nine of these songs were obviously theistic while one song, “Do Right” by Paul Davis, could not be positively identified as only coming from a theistic worldview. This song talks about wanting to do right to honor the one who “gave his life for me” and “set all our spirits free.” These song lyrics, while certainly leaning toward ideas of God, could not be proven through lyrics alone to be conclusively theistic. When read from a theistic worldview, it would obviously be talking about God, and that is most likely how this

Table 2

Number of CCM songs found in each category for each year researched

Year	N/A	Nat.	Tran.	The.	Tran./Nat.	Tran./The.	Nat./The.	Und.
1980	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	1
1990	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	1
2000	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	3

Note. Title abbreviations are as follows: N/A = Not Applicable, Nat. = Naturalism, Tran. = Transcendentalism, The. = Theism, Tran./Nat. = Transcendentalism/Naturalism, Tran./The. = Transcendentalism/Theism, Nat./The. = Naturalism/Theism, Und. = Undeterminable

CCM artist intended it, however, from an objective viewpoint, it could be talking about a person. For this reason, the researcher concluded this song to be in the undeterminable worldview category. The nine songs that were identified as theistic can be broken into two further categories. Seven are songs about God while two are songs to God. An example of a song about God is “Jesus On My Mind” by B. J. Thomas. The chorus says:

Just because I’ve got Jesus on my mind
 Just because I’ve got Jesus on my mind
 The situation might look so awful grim
 But that’s when I just stop and get my mind on Him
 Before you know it
 Everything’s just fine
 Just because I’ve got Jesus on my mind

This song’s theme is a belief and trust in Jesus, a blatantly theistic message because theism is the only worldview that allows a belief in Jesus. Naturalism would deny the deity of Jesus, if it did not deny His existence as all. Transcendentalism would not rely on Jesus for help, but would call upon the power of the universe for aid. This shows “Jesus On My Mind” to be a great example of a 1980 theistic song about God. The other songs about God were “Heavenly Love” by Lon Christian Smith, “Maranatha Marathon” by Honeytree, “A Broken Heart” by Dallas Holm, “Advent Suite” by John Michael Talbot, “So You Wanna Go Back To Egypt” by Keith Green and “Gotta Serve Somebody” by Bob Dylan. The two songs written to God from the 1980 list were “I’m Forgiven” by the Imperials and “Follow You” by Davis Meece. The latter song is an example of a song written to God. It explains a person’s prayer to God and a heart’s desire to follow Him.

The final chorus says:

Follow you
 Travel anywhere You want me to
 Follow you

Travel anywhere you lead me to
 Tell me which way to go
 Any road that You choose
 Follow you
 Lord I know that it won't be easy
 But as long as Your spirit leads me
 I'll carry on

This song is easy to place in the theism category because only theism would allow for one supernatural Lord to lead a person's life. Naturalism denies the supernatural and transcendentalism denies one all-powerful Lord, rather than a force.

The lyrics for all 10 songs from 1990 were located and categorized. There were eight songs in the theism category, one song in the undeterminable worldview category and one song that did not seem to comment on worldview at all. Of the eight theistic songs "Father" by Morgan Cryar was written to God and the following seven were found to be songs about God: Twila Paris, "I Can See You Standing"; David Meece, "The Man With the Nail Scars"; Sandi Patty with Wayne Watson, "Another Time, Another Place"; Wayne Watson, "When God's People Pray"; 4 HIM, "Where There Is Faith"; Rich Mullens, "While The Nations Rage" and Kim Hill, "Charm Is Deceitful." The N/A song from 1990 was Russ Taff's song, "I Cry" because it proclaims the dedication and support of one individual to another. It makes no reference to God or any worldview questions.

The Steven Curtis Chapman song, "I Will Be Here" was placed in the undeterminable category because the end of the song says: "I will be true to the promise I have made, to you and to the One who gave you to me." The listener would not be able to distinguish whether or not the artist is referring to God or the "One" of the universe (as the capitalized "O" in "One" might indicate), or a parent or other significant figure. In order to deduce that "One" refers to God, a person would have to know the history of the

artist or draw some extra lyrical conclusion. Another point that places this song in the undeterminable category is the fact that a capitalized “O” in “One” could also be in reference to the “One” that is the universe in transcendentalism. The song makes no other mention of a worldview preference, so the researcher chose to put it in the undeterminable category.

The remaining eight songs clearly indicate a theistic worldview. Seven of these songs talk about God. For example, “The Man With the Nail Scars” (David Meece) and “When God’s People Pray” (Wayne Watson) have theistic titles as songs written about Jesus and God. Because these songs were written about God and Jesus, they exclude naturalism and transcendentalism, neither of which can accept one supernatural being as God. Morgan Cryar’s song “Father” was one song written to God, which begins with the words:

Maker of heaven
 Awesome Lord of all
 O Most Holy
 On my knees I fall

Only a person coming from a theistic worldview would have used these words. A transcendentalist would not use the words “Maker,” “Lord,” and “Most Holy” because they indicate a single, higher being. Transcendentalists believe everything is one and that there is no ultimate “Maker,” “Lord,” or anything that is “Most Holy.” Thus, someone writing from this perspective could not and would not have used these words. Likewise, a Naturalist would also have chosen different words. They believe there is no supernatural, thus no “Lord” or “Holy One.” Physical things are all that is real and everything in the physical world has meaning or prominence only because people have

chosen to give them meaning. Thus, nothing is in and of itself Holy or Lord of anything. These words are further expelled from coming from a Naturalist because of the words “Maker of heaven.” The very notion that there is a Maker of heaven or earth goes against the Naturalistic perspective of evolution. In evolution, there is no need for a Maker. Everything that exists does so because it evolved to be so, not because it was made to be so.

All 10 top songs from 2000 were located, analyzed and categorized according to worldview. Seven songs easily fell into the theistic category, while three songs fell into the undeterminable category. The three undeterminable category songs were: Mark Shultz, “I Am The Way”; Rachael Lampa, “Live For You” and Avalon, “Always Have, Always Will.” All three of these songs, when looked at from the knowledge that they are CCM songs, can easily be interpreted as songs from or to God. However, as noted previously, since it is only the lyrics themselves that are being analyzed, the researcher decided to categorize according to specific mention of God or answer to specific worldview questions. None of these three songs mentioned God specifically enough to conclude that they would be objectively interpreted as promoting a theistic worldview.

For example, the Mark Shultz song, “I Am The Way” says:

I am the answer
 I am the way
 I am the promise
 I have called you by name
 So you want a brand new start
 Asking me into your heart
 Down on bended knee
 For the world to see

A non-theist could interpret this chorus as words from one person to another. If this were the case, then it could be coming from either a naturalist or a transcendental worldview. However, a theist, particularly a Christian, would likely interpret these words as coming from God. This discrepancy placed this song, as well as the other two, into the undeterminable category.

Of the seven theistic songs, three were discovered to be about God and four were songs written to God. The songs to God were: Tammy Trent, “My Irreplaceable”; Michelle Tumes, “Heaven’s Heart”; Sixpence None The Richer, “Breathe” and Sonicflood, “I Could Sing of Your Love Forever.” Once again, these songs were further categorized as songs written to God because they address God in ways like “My Irreplaceable” where it says:

Lord, you gave me a second start
 Now I’m giving you back my heart
 You were as close as a word of prayer
 And in a moment I knew You cared

The three songs about God were: Watermark, “More Than You’ll Ever Know,” Nicole C. Mullen, “Redeemer,” and Michael W. Smith, “This Is Your Time.” An example of one of these songs about God is “Redeemer.” The second verse and chorus say:

The very same God that spins things in orbit
 He runs to the weary, the worn and the weak
 And the same gentle hands that hold me when I’m broken
 They conquered death to bring me victory

Now I know my redeemer lives
 I know my redeemer lives
 Let all creation testify
 That this life within my cries
 I know my redeemer, He lives

This is a great example of a theistic song about God for several reasons. First, it is full of verses proclaiming attributes, characteristics, and actions of God. We know the song is talking about God as the redeemer because He is mentioned by name in the second verse of the song written above. The second reason we can know it is a theist song is that it answers the origin worldview question quite plainly in the line “Let all creation testify.” For creation to testify, it has to be actually created, and this creation is only claimed by theists and is attributed to God. This would rule out Naturalistic evolution as well as transcendental views of everything being “God.” If everything and everyone were connected and essentially “One” then there would be no need for a redeemer and no one capable of doing the redeeming even if it were necessary. This is because if everyone is connected and part of a whole, then no one is higher than anyone else, thus incapable of redeeming.

Country Music

Now that Contemporary Christian Music has been analyzed and categorized, it is time to see an overview analysis of Country Music in the years 1980, 1990, and 2000 and some of the interesting results it revealed. Table 3 illustrates the results of the worldview categorization. As shown in table 3 below, there were a total of 30 songs found and evaluated.

Table 3

Number of Country songs found in each category for each year researched

Year	N/A	Nat.	Tran.	The.	Tran./Nat.	Tran./The.	Nat./The.	Und.
1980	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	3
1990	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	3
2000	4	1	1	1	0	2	0	1

Note. Title abbreviations are as follows: N/A = Not Applicable, Nat. = Naturalism, Tran. = Transcendentalism, The. = Theism, Tran./Nat. = Transcendentalism/Naturalism, Tran./The. = Transcendentalism/Theism, Nat./The. = Naturalism/Theism, Und. = Undeterminable

The year 1980 produced more Undeterminable and Naturalistic/Theistic songs than any other category. There was only one song for this year what was purely theistic in nature. This song was, "One Day at a Time" by Cristy Lane. The second verse says:

One day at a time, sweet Jesus, that's all I'm asking of you.
 Teach me today, to do all the things that I have to do.
 Yesterdays gone, Sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine.
 Lord, for my sake, teach me to take, one day at a time.

It was easy to categorize this song because it is a prayer to Jesus, and theism is the only category that will allow for such a direct prayer. The categories of Naturalism, Transcendentalism, and the N/A category did not have any songs for this year. This shows that every song analyzed from the year 1980 made some sort of reference to worldview and this reference, with the exception of two, was either all or partially theistic or the worldview could not be determined.

Another category containing only one song was N/A. Ronnie Milsap's song "My Heart" did not comment on worldview issues at all. This was a song about a man trying to forget a failed love, but who is unable to because his heart will not let him. The chorus says,

"My heart says I'm not so smart
 My heart tears my plans apart
 My heart won't admit we're through
 'Cause my heart, O, my heart, still belongs to you"

Someone coming from any worldview studied here could sing this song without it conflicting with any beliefs or values she or he holds. Therefore, the song was determined to not apply to the worldview classification in this study.

There were three songs placed in the undeterminable category because they mentioned worldview issues, but did not indicate a clear stance or include enough

information to determine the worldview supported. An example of this is the song "Happy Birthday Darlin'" by Conway Twitty. Part of the first verse says, "I'd like to take away the suspicion that I know clouds your world at times..." The phrase "your world" was determined to be a worldview issue because it could be taken to mean several different things. It could be read from a transcendental perspective as meaning that everyone lives in a different world, or reality. This would imply that there is no one true world, but only individual worlds that co-exist side by side. On the other hand, it could be read from a Naturalistic or a Theistic perspective, which would likely see the phrase in the same way. These worldview perspectives might read the phrase "your world" as simply referring to her set of emotions and perspective. Naturalists as well as Theists would say that worlds and realities are not actually different for each person, but each person simply sees and interprets one reality in different ways. Therefore, this song's worldview origin was unable to be determined.

The Kenny Rogers song, "Coward of the Country" was also placed in the undeterminable category because it is about a son talking to his deceased father. It is unclear if this talking is the son actually communicating to his dead father's spirit, which would be transcendental, or if the son is simply talking out loud, but knowing that his Dad cannot really hear him, which would be a naturalistic view. Talking to his dead father's spirit would be transcendental because it implies life after death, but not necessarily God or heaven. The son talking to his dad, but knowing he is not being heard is naturalistic because it implies that once a person is dead, that is the end. There is no life after death, so no communication can occur. Another option for interpreting this song is if he is trying to talk to his father who has gone to heaven, giving the song a theistic

backing. This could be an example of theism because it would potentially allow communication with people who are already dead. However, this would be a debatable issue among various types of theists. Due to the lack of information given in the song lyrics, it is impossible to determine how the artist believes the son is communicating with his dead father or even if he actually believes communication is occurring. Therefore, this song must be declared to be undeterminable.

The final 1980 undeterminable song was "Dancing Cowboys" by the Bellamy Brothers. This song was categorized as such for a similar reason as "Coward of the Country." The phrase "It's a song about all the things we live and what we are" is a worldview issue because it addresses a sub-question of our worldview question of meaning. The song's question "What are we?" helps to answer the bigger question of "What is the meaning of life?" What we are determines the meaning of our life. The song discusses some of what "dancing cowboys" do, but it does not answer the question in enough depth to categorize the song.

The two songs placed in the Transcendental/Theistic category were "I Believe in You" by Don Williams and "Tennessee River" by Alabama. The Don Williams song, like the others, was placed in this category because it introduces mixed worldview messages within the same song. The second verse of his song, "I Believe" supports a theistic worldview and the very next stanza introduces transcendental ideas. The second verse says:

I don't believe that heaven waits for only those who congregate
 I like to think of God as love, he's down below, he's up above
 He's watching people everywhere, he knows who does and doesn't care
 I'm an ordinary man, sometimes I wonder who I am

The following stanza goes on to support a transcendental worldview by saying:

But, I believe in love, I believe in music
I believe in magic, and I believe in you

The first set of lyrics clearly shows the artist does believe in God, however, his conception of God is a little unclear. He has questionable ideas about heaven, but it is clear that he does believe in it and in God. It may be questioned at this point as to why the artist did not choose to capitalize “he’s” in the second line of text copied above. The reason for this is unknown; however, a likely reason could be that the artist follows the example of many Bible translators and chooses not to capitalize pronouns referring to deity (International Bible Society, 1984). Examples of these Bible translators include the translators of the New International Version and the Schofield Reference Bible. Despite the fact that the reason for not capitalizing “he’s” is unknown, it is still obvious that the artist is talking about God because the beginning of the sentence indicates reference to God specifically by the words, “I like to think of God as love.” When he says, “I like to think of God as love” it could be interpreted as the artist saying that God is whatever he decides He will be. This idea of being able to decide God’s attributes is transcendental in origin. The second set of lyrics also supports a transcendental view when it mentions believing in magic. Of the three major worldview categories, only transcendentalism supports the idea of magic. Naturalism does not support the idea of magic because it is supernatural in origin. Theism does not support it because supernatural events are attributed to God or Satan, but never “magic.”

The other song in this category was “Tennessee River” by Alabama. This song was placed here because in the second verse it mentions “Mother Nature,” which is very

transcendental, but in the first and third verses it mentions “Lord,” a very theistic reference. The blending of these two worldview references places it in this twofold category. The author does recognize that reference to Mother Nature or Lord could be used in a song as common references with no definite association with worldview; however, even if these references were not made intentionally with reference to worldview, they are still indicative of the thought pattern of the artist and still indicate a mixed philosophical view of the world. Further, since there was no specific reference to indicate any naturalistic philosophy, this song was placed in the Transcendental/Theistic category.

“Barroom Buddies” by Merle Haggard was the only song from 1980 to be placed in the Naturalism/Transcendentalism category. It was placed here because of the ideas concerning morality that it portrays. The song is about two men who frequent a bar together for the purpose of getting drunk and picking up women. The first verse and chorus illustrates this when it says,

“I know a couple of gals that we can call down
They’ll shake the pictures right off of your wall

We’re barroom buddies and that’s the best kind
Nobody fools with a buddy of mine
I laugh when you’re happy
And I cry when you’re blue
We’re barroom buddies and we’re doin’ fine
So, pour me another, we got nothin’ but time
Ol’ chugga lugga luggin’ barroom buddy of mine”

The final words of the song sum up what they see as their purpose and lines of moral acceptability.

“We’re skirt chasin’
Tail kickin’

Guitar pickin'
 Cool husslin'
 Ol' chugga lugga luggin'
 Ol' barroom buddy of mine"

These lyrics place this song in the Naturalism/Transcendentalism category because the morality it relates is human centered. As shown in table 1, both Naturalism and Transcendentalism have human centered morality. Only theism is different with God determining morality. There are no further worldview clues in the songs to show if the artist is coming from more Naturalist or Transcendental ideas, so the author chose to put the song in this category that encompasses both, since theism was obviously excluded.

The final 1980 category to be discussed is the naturalism/theism category. The two songs placed in here were "Lookin' for Love" by Johnny Lee, and "He Stopped Loving Her Today" by George Jones. This last song illustrates why a song would be either naturalistic or theistic, but not transcendental. The premise of the song is that this man will finally be released from unrequited love because he has died. The song indicates that this is finally the end for him in this world, thus a reincarnation option is eliminated. The song does not indicate what now happens to the man. We do not know if the artist believes him to be going to heaven or hell or if he simply returns to the earth with no afterlife at all. If the answer were that the man is simply dead, with no afterlife, then the song would clearly be naturalistic. However, it is just as possible that the artist is envisioning the deceased man in heaven or hell, which comes from a theistic view. If this were the case, the man would be too preoccupied with the joys of heaven or the miseries of hell to dwell on loving the woman who did not return his affections. All we really know is that he will not be back here on earth again. So, with the reincarnation,

transcendentalism option omitted, and the song clearly addressing worldview issues of what happens when we die, the song was placed in the naturalism/theism category.

The final song in this category is the Johnny Lee song that talks about telling lies. This indicates that there is a true reality because for something to be a lie, there must be a reality to which to compare it. Once again, only naturalism and theism support this type of ideology of truth and reality because transcendentalism says that there is no truth, only perspective.

Like 1980, 1990 produced similar results in several categories. Once again the transcendentalism category had no songs in it and the undeterminable category had three songs. The N/A and Theism categories went from one to two, transcendentalism/theism decreased from two to one, and naturalism/theism decreased from three to one. The two songs contained in the N/A category for 1990 were “I’ve Cried My Last Tear For You” by Ricky Van Shelton and “Nobody’s Home” by Clint Black. “I’ve Cried My Last Tear For You” is a song about a man who has cried so long and been so distressed over his lost love that he thought he would never run out of tears. However, he finally gets over her and can say that he has cried his last tear. Someone coming from any of the worldviews studied here could sing this song of heartache. It is dealing with human emotion, not philosophy; thus, it does not apply to the current philosophical categories. “Nobody’s Home” is a song with a similar theme of a man with a broken heart. He says that although he looks the same and many things in life have remained the same since she left, he has lost his joy in life. Once again, this song deals with raw human emotion, not philosophy, and could be felt and sung by a person from any of the three worldviews. Thus, these songs were both placed in the N/A category.

The two theistic songs from 1990 were “Hard Rock Bottom of Your Heart” by Randy Travis and “Love Without End, Amen” by George Strait. The Randy Travis song talks about praying for someone to decide to come back and forgive him. The act of prayer along with ideas of temptation and forgiveness indicate a theistic view of the world. The last verse and chorus of the George Strait song “Love Without End, Amen” are transcribed below.

Last night I dreamed I died and stood outside those pearly gates
 When suddenly I realized there must be some mistake
 If they know half the things I’ve done
 They’ll never let me in
 Then somewhere from the other side I heard those words again

They said, “Let me tell you a secret about a father’s love
 A secret that my daddy said was just between us
 You see, daddies don’t just love their children
 Every now and then. It’s a love without end, amen
 It’s a love without end, amen”

Using the word “Amen” is very theistic in that it comes from the traditional use of the word in the Bible. Also, the final verse of the song talks about dreaming that he went to heaven and his conversations with God, his heavenly father. Once again, the ideas of heaven and God the Father are solely theistic in nature.

“Chains” by Patty Loveless was the only transcendental/theistic song from the 1990 top ten. The reason it was placed in this category is because of a line in the fifth verse. It says, “Love was never meant to be a one-way street. I was never meant to be falling at your feet.” The idea of destiny conveyed in the phrase “meant to” is only applicable to transcendentalism or theism. Naturalism does not advocate that there is any force responsible for moving people or events along a certain course. The song does not

indicate if this “meant to” originates in the force of the “one” or from God, so it must be placed in the transcendentalism/theism category.

The two songs placed in the naturalistic/theistic category were “No Matter How High” by the Oak Ridge Boys and “Here In The Real World” by Alan Jackson. “No Matter How High” was placed here because of the phrase, “When I’ve had it up to here with all of their lies, I count on you to tell me the truth.” This sentence indicates that there is a difference between truth and lies and that there is an objective way to tell the difference. Only naturalism and theism purport an objective reality and truth as indicated by these lyrics. This second song was placed in the naturalistic/theistic category for similar reasons to the first one. It commented on worldview and the nature of that comment could eliminate transcendentalism as an option. “Here In The Real World” talks about reality as being different from our desires or dreams, thus transcendentalism is not an option. Only naturalism and theism support the idea that there is an ultimate reality of the physical world.

The three songs in the undeterminable category were “Walkin’ Away” by Clint Black, “Help Me Hold On” by Travis Tritt, and “On Second Thought” by Eddie Rabbitt. All three of these songs were placed here for the same reason. They mentioned right and wrong, so they were addressing worldview issues, but they did not indicate the criteria for determining each. Phrases such as “I was wrong” and “You were right” indicate a standard for determining right and wrong, which relates to the worldview question of how morality is determined. However, none of the songs indicate an answer to the issues brought up.

The year 2000's top 10 brought changes to each of the worldview categories, except for transcendentalism/naturalism. The 1980 transcendental/naturalistic song remains the only one to be found in Country Music for the years analyzed. This year was different from the previous two years studied in that there were no songs in the naturalism/theism category. This category went down from three in 1980 to two in 1990 and finally had no songs at all in 2000. First, the N/A category once again increased. This time it went from two songs in 1990 to four in 2000. The songs placed here were "The Best Day" by George Strait, "The Way You Love Me" by Faith Hill, "My Best Friend" by Tim McGraw, and "What About Now" by Lonestar. These songs describe and discuss family and romantic relationships, but they do not appear to comment on worldview. So, these songs could be sung by a person from any of the worldviews discussed here and not pose a problem or a contradiction.

A new development seen in 2000 was the introduction of a purely transcendental song. Faith Hill's song, "Breathe" makes transcendental references in the first verse and in the chorus. The very first line of the song says, "I can feel the magic floating in the air." As noted previously, references to magic are exclusively transcendental in nature. This is because naturalism does not believe in any sort of mystical or spiritual force and theism credits unnatural phenomena to God or Satan. The chorus starts out with the words:

Cause I can feel you breathe
 Just watching over me
 And suddenly I'm melting into you

The phrase "melting into you" while it may refer to two people being very physically close, could also be a reference to the transcendental idea of oneness. This would be the

idea that the two people are so close spiritually that they are actually fusing into one spiritual unit that is part of the cosmic “one.” Only those under the worldview category of transcendentalism support this concept.

The purely theistic category went back down in 2000, from two songs to one song, the same as 1980. The year 2000 theism song was “I Hope You Dance” by Lee Ann Womack. This song was placed here because of phrases such as, “God forbid love ever leave you empty handed,” “Promise me that you’ll give faith a fighting chance,” and “Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance.” There is nothing in the song to indicate any naturalistic or transcendental ideas, and three examples of theism since God, faith, and the heavens all have theistic meanings or tones. Even though the mere idea of faith is not exclusive to theism, “faith” seems to be talking about theistic faith in God.

Another first for the 2000 top 10 was a naturalistic song. “That’s The Way It Is” by Jo Dee Messina describes the reality of life. The last few lines of the final verse of this song says:

You live you learn
 You crash and burn
 It’s hit or miss
 And that’s the way it is

The song says that there is no rhyme or reason to life. You just have to go with the flow and keep getting back up. The song offers no ultimate meaning or destiny in life. It says that it is all chance and unexplainable. This idea is quite the opposite of theism. Theism says that the meaning of life is to please God and serve Him. There is definite purpose in life and there is a master plan, thus theism can be eliminated as a possible worldview perspective for this song. Transcendentalism is also eliminated as a possibility because

this worldview says that life is about getting back to “oneness” not randomness. The lyrics do fit with the ideas of naturalism. This worldview, as you may recall, does not offer any meaning to life. It is unexplained and at the end of life, a person simply dies and that is the end. This song is philosophically in line with naturalistic thinking, thus it becomes the first song in this study to fall into a purely naturalistic category.

The transcendental/theistic category for 2000 contained two songs: “Cowboy Take Me Away” by the Dixie Chicks and “Yes!” by Chad Brock. The reason the Dixie Chick’s song was placed in the category was because of the phrase, “Set me free oh I pray.” It is not clear if this prayer is directed to God or the universe, but it obviously cannot be naturalistic since naturalism offers no God or force to which to direct prayer. The Chad Brock song is primarily theistic in nature, but it does have a transcendental element to it. It mentions destiny in the first verse, “How could I know in just a minute that I’d be standing face to face with my own destiny” and fate in the second verse, “Then I asked if she believed in fate, and she said, ‘Yes!’” Both destiny and fate are transcendental ideas. They indicate that something other than God or human free will is in charge of determining what happens. The theistic part of the song comes in when he says, “she was made for me,” which is a reference to God being the creator. This can be seen as theism because neither naturalism’s theory of evolution nor transcendentalism’s theory of reincarnation allow for anyone to be “made.” Theism is the only worldview that specifically states that God makes each person. The final verse of the song indicates a marriage conducted by a preacher. This supports the theistic aspect of the song because preachers are associated with being minister of the Word of God and indicates that the couple wished to be united in marriage in the sight of God, not just legally.

The final worldview category from 2000 to be discussed is the undeterminable category. “How Do You Like Me Now” by Toby Keith was the only top ten song of 2000 that mentioned worldview but could not be definitely categorized or have any of the three main categories eliminated. The main line in question for this song says, “Ain’t it a cruel and funny world.” This is certainly making a statement about reality, but it is not clear from which worldview it is coming. This statement could be said by a naturalist who sees no meaning in life, by a transcendentalist who sees circular irony, or by a theist who sees a world infested by sin. The final phrase of the song, “I will preach on!” is a reference to traditional theistic preachers, however this does not necessarily mean that the artist is advocating the ideas of a preacher, but perhaps, merely his style of delivering a message.

Comparing and Contrasting

At this point in the research, it is helpful to look at the ways in which Contemporary Christian and Country Music are alike and the ways in which they are different. Table 4 shows the total number of songs each genre contained for each worldview category over the three years studied. One major way in which they are alike is that they both comment on worldviews a great deal. Of the 30 CCM songs, 29 dealt with worldviews and 23 of the 30 Country songs dealt with worldviews. CCM contained no songs in the Naturalism,

Table 4

Total number of songs in each category

Genre	N/A	Nat.	Tran.	The.	Tran./Nat.	Tran./The.	Nat./The.	Und.
CCM		1	0	0	24	0	0	5
Country		7	1	1	4	1	5	7

Note. Title abbreviations are as follows: N/A = Not Applicable, Nat. = Naturalism, Tran. = Transcendentalism, The. = Theism, Tran./Nat. = Transcendentalism/Naturalism, Tran./The. = Transcendentalism/Theism, Nat./The. = Naturalism/Theism, Und. = Undeterminable

Transcendentalism or the Naturalism/Transcendentalism category, and Country Music contained only one song in each of these categories. This demonstrates that, for the most part, both CCM and Country Music are not coming from purely transcendental or naturalistic perspectives. An interesting observation is that both genres have similar numbers of songs categorized as undeterminable in worldview. CCM had five in this category while Country had seven. This indicates that these genres are relatively equal in the number of songs that are dealing with worldview issues, but whose lyrics are not very clear as to which worldview perspective they support.

Also, the two genres started out very similarly in the amount of songs that did not comment on worldview at all. Country Music had only one N/A song in 1980 and CCM had none. In 1990 both genres increase by one so that CCM had one song while Country had two; however, in 2000 CCM dropped back to zero songs in the category and Country Music continued to grow to include four songs. This gives an overall total of one N/A songs in CCM and seven N/A songs in Country Music.

Along with these similarities come several key differences in the genres. One major example of this is the diversity of categories filled in Country Music versus the limited number of categories in CCM. Contemporary Christian Music contained only three categories: N/A, Theism, and Undeterminable. This shows that while not every song was promoting a theistic worldview message, there was not even one song that promoted an alternate worldview or combined with another worldview. Country Music, on the other hand, offered a very wide range of worldview expressions. This is seen clearly in the fact that every single category in Country Music had at least one song in it. While the categories of naturalism, transcendentalism, and Naturalism/Transcendentalism

contained only one song each, there was still representation. The other categories: N/A, Theism, Transcendentalism/Theism, Naturalism/Theism, and Undeterminable each contained four to seven songs over the three year span. This was a surprising distribution.

Another interesting difference in the genres was the change of numbers in the shared categories over time. For example, in the Undeterminable category CCM songs went from one song in 1980 and one in 1990 to a jump to three songs in 2000. Country Music had the exact opposite result. There were three songs in this category in 1980 and 1990, but only one song in 2000. This indicates a possible trend in CCM to having more songs that are vague in worldview expression and in Country Music to be more specific. Another possible trend in Country Music was found in the N/A category. The numbers steadily increased from one to two to four over the three years, spanning two decades, in the study. This could be representative of a trend in Country Music to write songs that simply do not address worldview issues at all.

While a general overview of the similarities and differences over time has been presented, the similarities and differences in the genres according to each specific year under examination are also important. In 1980, the two genres were quite similar in their worldview categorization. Neither genre contained even one song under the Naturalism or Transcendentalism category. Therefore there were neither purely Naturalistic nor purely Transcendental songs in 1980. CCM songs were restricted to theistic or undeterminable, while Country every category except Naturalism and Transcendentalism. Of the 10 CCM songs located for 1980, 9 were found to be theistic and 1 was undeterminable. So, it is clear that for CCM in 1980 theistic lyrics were quite pervasive. On the other hand, Country Music was more evenly distributed among six categories.

The N/A, Theism, Naturalism/Transcendentalism, and Undeterminable categories each had one song and the Transcendental/Theism and Naturalism/Theism each contained two songs.

The year 1990 offered similar results to those of the 1980 comparison. The only major change was the addition of the N/A category for CCM. CCM had one song in this category, while Country Music increased from one to two. An increase in theistic songs for Country Music and a small decline in CCM were noted in 1990. The theism category slipped from nine to eight songs for CCM, and Country Music increased from one to two songs. This further established the theism category significantly ahead of the others for CCM and indicated a definite trend in a theistic worldview preference for CCM. The categorization for Country Music in 1990 indicates a fairly even distribution of songs throughout the five categories. For the year, there were three categories containing two songs, one containing one song and one containing three songs. This gives further indication of a trend for theistic based lyrics in CCM and a broad range of lyrics in Country Music.

More differences were found between the genres in 2000 than in either of the previous years. CCM went back to only two categories, as in 1980, with the vast majority of those songs falling into the theistic category and a few in the undeterminable category. Country Music, on the other hand, made major changes. This year contained at least one song in seven of the eight categories. The only category left untouched in 1990 and 2000 was Transcendentalism/Naturalism, which slipped to contain zero songs in these years. Once again the N/A category increased by two, Naturalism and Transcendentalism were added with one song in each, and the Transcendentalism/Theism category went back up

from one song in 1990 to two songs in 2000. The other categories went down in number to support the increase elsewhere. Theism dropped back down to only one song and there were no entries in the Naturalism/Theism category as there had been in 1980 and 1990. Also, the Undeterminable category went down to one song from the three it had contained the two previous years studied.

In this section, the researcher analyzed a total of sixty songs, thirty from each genre. After analyzing its lyrical content, each song was placed in one of the eight pre-established categories. The researcher looked for key worldview words such as truth, reality, right, wrong, God, Lord, or Jesus. When these words were not explicitly found, the researcher looked for lyrics that offered answers to any of the four worldview questions mentioned in chapter three. Every song was categorized and the researcher was able to establish trends for both genres. The categorization followed the guidelines laid out in chapter three.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Having completed the research project and analyzed the results, two previously undocumented conclusions were drawn. These are how Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music have changed in their projection of worldviews over the last 20 years, and what this information tells us about philosophical communication in these genres of music.

Country Music

We now know that the top 10 Country Music have changed some in almost every category. While it must be noted that many of these changes were minute, often only changing by one song, they were representative of what might, in a larger sample, prove to be significant.

First, there was a steady increase from 1980 to 2000 in the number of songs in the N/A (not applying to worldviews) category. This shows a movement in Country Music to produce more songs that do not deal with philosophical worldview issues at all. The reason for this shift is not yet known; however, it could be due to a lack of deep philosophical thought in the music as time has gone by. Artists may not feel inspired to write on these issues or the audience is beginning to demand songs that do not touch these issues. According to Wells and Hakanen (1999), people choose to listen to music with which they can identify. So, if the audience is thinking less about worldview issues, then their desire to hear lyrics about worldviews would decrease. Another study would be needed to thoroughly examine the reasons for this trend.

A second item of note in the changes from 1980 to 2000 was the inclusion of naturalistic and transcendental songs in 2000. The fact that a song in each category was produced in this sample for 2000 and not in the previous years may be a reflection of the time in which we now live. The broadening of accepted philosophical views in the United States has been on the rise for decades; however, it may now be finally penetrating the traditionally protestant community of Country Music. Although there was only one song in each category, the fact that these totally non-theistic categories both contained a song the same year, when they had both previously contained none, carries more weight than it would if it had been only one category alone. Once again, it would be necessary for a more in-depth study to be conducted to learn if the appearance of these two songs in 2000 was merely the luck of the draw. Two questions remain if more songs were analyzed: Were there songs in these categories prior to 2000; and Does the percentage these songs indicated in the current study accurately reflect the actual number of naturalistic and transcendental songs in the year 2000.

The categories of Theism and Transcendentalism/Theism were shown to fluctuate by one song from 1980 to 1990, but return to their original number in 2000. This fluctuation is likely simply due more to minor variation in the years studied than major philosophical changes.

The sudden drop in the Naturalism/Theism category from 1980 and 1990 where there were two songs each year to 2000, which contained zero songs was interesting. If this drop were truly indicative of a decline in this type of worldview being presented in Country Music, it would be interesting to investigate why this happened. Was it because there was a decline in Theism in addition to a rise in Naturalism? It is possible that the

combination of both changes was enough to eliminate dualistic songs in this category.

Future research studies should investigate this issue.

The final category analyzed for Country Music in this study was the Undeterminable category. The results from this category almost mirrored those of the previously mentioned category. There were three songs from both 1980 and 1990 with a drop to only one song in 2000. This category, containing the greatest total number of songs from this study suddenly dropped. There could be several explanations for this phenomenon. One is that Country Music artists are getting much more clear when discussing worldview messages. The year 2000 was quite clear in its categorization. There were four songs that were determined to be N/A, a higher number than ever before, while the undeterminable category went down. Also, the addition of the Naturalism and Transcendentalism categories show a very clear trend toward definite worldviews being presented clearly enough to categorize, even if that category was N/A.

Contemporary Christian Music

Regarding changes over time in Contemporary Christian Music, this genre has remained relatively unchanged in its worldview projection. There was never even one song that fell in to the category of Naturalism, Transcendentalism, or a combination of Naturalism/Transcendentalism. Thus, CCM has remained consistent in its projection of a Theistic worldview. One song in 1990 offered a claim to the N/A category. This showed that not every CCM song was projecting a Theistic message; however, this song certainly did not offer any lyrics that were contrary to Theism by indicating support of another worldview philosophy.

The only other noteworthy change over time was in the Undeterminable category. This category showed a jump from one song in 1980 and one in 1990 to three in 2000. This indicates that CCM is now offering music that does not specifically have to be interpreted as Theistic. This may be due to the crossover artists who desire to have their music played on secular radio as well as Christian so whom they are sung to or about remains ambiguous. When these songs are heard through the context of Christian radio or church, and knowing the artist comes from a Christian label, it is assumed to be referring to God or Jesus Christ. However, a person hearing these lyrics out of context or not understanding the context could interpret them as lyrics pertaining to a person. This interpretation could leave worldview origins open to suggestion. When interpreted from a Theistic perspective, these songs, if not theistic, would certainly be placing a person at a level equal to the place of God.

Limitations

As with all research studies, there must be some limitations. In this work, the fundamental limitations included the two genres chosen, the years researched, and the number of songs analyzed. Country Music and Contemporary Christian Music enjoy popularity in the southeastern United States. The idea was to compare and contrast two types of music, which often share an audience to see what philosophical, worldview similarities and differences might be uncovered. However, this decision, by default, excluded all other genres that offer vastly different worldview perspectives. For example, if genres such as Rap, R&B, Rock, Pop, Heavy Metal, or New Age were studied, there would be many more worldview perspectives to study. It would be hypothesized that Rap Music might present a more naturalistic perspective while new age would present

primarily transcendental philosophy. This lack of variety in worldviews was a limitation to this study because there was not a striking contrast between Country Music and Contemporary Christian that would likely exist between Country and Rap or Contemporary Christian and New Age. This wide spectrum would provide a better idea of what worldviews are being communicated in the music industry as a whole, rather than in just a small segment.

Another limitation was the particular years chosen to research. Originally, the author chose 1980, 1990, and 2000 as the years to be studied because a several decade time span was desired to show any changes that might have occurred over time. The beginning date of 1980 was chosen because it was a round beginning of a decade and because an earlier date would not provide enough Contemporary Christian songs, as this genre has not been in existence as long as Country Music. By picking these three years, the author had to exclude songs from all nine years in between each sample. This left out many, many songs that were popular within the genre. This was a limitation to the study because these years in between the years studied might have provided a different outlook on worldview trends.

The top ten songs chosen for each year were decided to be the top ten because they were the top ten songs according to sales. The limitation inherent in this is that the top sales songs may not necessarily be the top ten songs played on the radio. So, just because the top ten songs used in this study sold the most copies does not mean they were the ten most heard songs by the Country audience for the years in the study.

The lack of official Top Ten 1980 song list for CCM was also a limitation of the study. Instead of the top 10 songs of the year, the researcher relied on top songs from

popular artists. Although the songs chosen were documented as chart toppers for Christian Music, there is no way of knowing if the songs in the study were the actual 10 most popular songs from 1980. If a later starting year had been chosen, the study would not have had the advantage of analyzing some of these early, formative songs.

The final limitation of the study discussed here is the bias of the researcher. The subjective nature of the categorization of song lyrics must introduce an element of bias from the research. Great lengths were taken to control for this factor by analyzing top-10 songs from three evenly spaced years. This was done to keep the researcher from hand picking songs for analysis.

What's Left to Find Out?

Many fruitful avenues for future research were included in the discussion. These ideas centered on answering deeper questions that the current work brought to light. However, there are some areas for future research that have not yet been mentioned. For example, an additional study of Folk Music would add an unexplored perspective to this study of music that is widely popular in the southeastern United States.

Another direction that future research could take is intercultural comparisons. Adding music that is more representative of other cultures, whether inside or outside of the United States, would offer worldview perspectives not seen in this study. For example, R&B, Rap, Pop, Rock, Heavy Metal, or New Age would be predicted to offer vastly different philosophies. The reason for this predicted difference is the difference in regions and groups predominantly associated with this music. They tend to come from different ways of life, living, and looking at the world (Hakanen, 1995; Wells & Hakanen, 1999).

Within the Country Music genre, future research should shed more light on the trends uncovered in the current study. One interesting direction would be to study the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on Country Music. Country Musicians and fans alike are by and large very patriotic and the attacks spawned many songs about the United States that included references to theistic faith. Hakanen (1995) would no doubt agree that these songs grew in popularity most likely because they touched the emotion and beliefs held by a majority of the listening audience. An in-depth look at the songs produced between September of 2001 and the present would likely reveal much insight as to the attitudes, values, and beliefs of this Country community.

Another enlightening way to study these genres would be to do in-depth artist studies. Studying the most influential artists from several genres over time would reveal if and how they have changed. Their consistency or changes would give further indication of where the genre as a whole stands on worldview topics.

Grouping the study in different ways would be another avenue for future research. For example, instead of using 1980, 1990, and 2000, the years could be 1984, 1994, and 2004. This might provide an actual top ten list for CCM and would bring the study up to the current year. Another way to group the years would be to study years closer together. Taking a lyrical sample from every five years or every other year would offer a better idea of real trends in the music lyrics as well as provide the researcher with a larger sample size.

CCM maintained mainstream views of theistic, Christian doctrine. Country Music, on the other hand, had a wide variety of ways God was portrayed. Interesting

future research could dig deeper into this issue to find out the spectrum of ways God is portrayed in Country Music and how that compares to Contemporary Christian Music.

Finally, including an analysis of the musical score of each song would be a helpful area for future research. It would show, according to each genre studied, if the song interpretation is influenced more by lyrics or the musical score. This additional study could be done with the current study or any of the other variations of the study recommended here.

Conclusions

Several conclusions became evident in this research. First, both Country and Contemporary Christian Music are making philosophical, worldview statements in the vast majority of the songs they produce. This means that when people turn on their radio or pop in a CD, they are getting more than just entertainment. They are getting a message about truth and reality. It is now known that when a radio dial is set to a CCM station the most popular messages from 1980, 1990, and 2000 the listener receives are either promoting theism or, at the very least, not promoting any other worldview. Most likely, the listeners can now enjoy CCM knowing they will not be hearing any messages that conflict with theism and strongly encourage the belief in God. One reason for this could be explained by the fact that the CCM audience is very cohesive. The reason that the audience chooses CCM is because of the lyrics. The same sound in music can be found in the secular market, but only CCM offers such a strongly theistic message throughout the range of artist.

We now also know that when listeners turn on a Country Music station, they will hear a much greater variety of worldview messages than on the CCM station. Country

Music contains lyrics that support ideas of theism as well as, even through to a lesser degree, naturalism, transcendentalism, and mixtures of all worldviews. This genre also contains a growing number of songs that do not comment on worldviews at all. So, if a person desires to hear life portrayed from a variety of philosophical perspectives, Country Music can rise to the occasion. If a person wishes to hold onto a specific worldview, not every Country song coincides with that set of beliefs. This could help the Country Music audience listen with more intention and awareness.

CCM has remained fairly consistent in the philosophical content of the music it has produced over the last 20 years. The CCM audience continues to grow, so it seems unlikely that the genre will change its strategy anytime soon. A growing number of songs may not contrast theism, but are written in such a way as to be open to interpretation regarding if they are talking to or about God or another person. This movement in some CCM artists appears to be a trend to be established as a cross-over artist and have their music played on both Christian and secular radio.

Country Music, on the other hand, has been experiencing changes. There seems to be a shift to Country Music embracing naturalism and transcendentalism more as the years have passed. This shows us that CCM is a genre defined primarily by its lyrical content and Country Music is defined more by something else. Another study would need to be conducted to determine what this something else might be; however, it is more likely the established musical score and tradition than the actual content of the lyrics (Sartwell, 1993).

One of the objectives of this study was to determine if Country Music listeners share a common standpoint. The broad range of philosophical ideas presented in this

study suggests that it is not philosophy of truth and reality that binds these music fans together. It is much more likely to be musical score or even values. As Chesebro et al (1985) suggested, country music reflects “older values.” It is possible that newer artists are reflecting newer values. This could possibly divide Country fans into two standpoints, one reflecting older values and one reflecting newer.

Uses and gratifications theory says audiences are active and goal-directed in meeting their media needs (Littlejohn, 2002). This theory has proven to be another useful way of examining the results of this study. It would make sense that CCM fans, being very concerned with lyrics, would actively seek music that offered lyrics consistent with their worldview. Their goal is to have music that is contemporary and expresses their theistic views toward God and Jesus Christ. The goal of Country fans is less defined. However, since Country Music does not cater to a purely theistic audience, it is not limited in the ways it portrays truth or reality. It actually portrays reality in a wide spectrum of ways. Thus, it is assumed that Country Music gratifies its audience in a way other than consistent philosophy.

This study examined lyrics of 30 Country songs and 30 Contemporary Christian songs over a period of 20 years to understand how ideas of truth and reality are portrayed. Contemporary Christian songs were found to communicate a Theistic view of truth and reality every time worldviews were brought up. This means that anyone listening to a CCM station will likely be receiving Theistic messages. In Country Music it was found that truth and reality were interpreted in a broad spectrum of ways. When a person turns on a Country radio station, there is no way of predicting if the song will have worldview implications. If the song does discuss worldview, there is also no way of predicting which

worldview will be promoted. Examples of every worldview category and combination were found in the 30 songs analyzed, so it is clear that listening to Country Music will inevitably provide some songs with which a person agrees, some with which a person disagrees, and some that cause a person to stop and reevaluate beliefs. Is there an objective Truth to be discovered within music lyrics, or is reality created through our perceptions and interpretations? The answer you receive might well depend on the worldviews promoted in the music on your radio dial.

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Vita

Karen Legg was born in Greeneville, TN on December 20, 1979. It was in Greeneville that she received her pre-college education beginning with home schooling by her mother through the first grade. She attended Towering Oaks Christian School from second grade through the eighth grade and graduated from South Greene High School in 1998. After graduation, she went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2002.

Karen is currently pursuing a Master's of Science in Communication Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.