

ABSTRACT

The Relational Ethics of Church Music

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Music is an “indispensable” aspect of Protestant Christian worship, to use Brian Wren’s term (2000, 48). Yet it is also perceived as one of the most divisive aspects of that activity, with scholars, practitioners, and congregants alike contributing to this perspective. As scholars such as Donald Hustad (1993), Harold Best (1993, 2003), J. Nathan Corbitt (1998), Brian Wren (2000), James K. A. Smith (2009), and Jeremy S. Begbie (2011) have similarly noted, music connects people to each other and enlivens our emotional and relational convictions. This reality strongly suggests that music has ethical significance; if music is so emotionally and relationally powerful, and can be a source of unity and division, then it should be examined from within an ethical frame. It is surprising, however, that few scholars of Christian worship have attempted to consider music’s way of being in the world from an ethical perspective.

This dissertation argues that a central problem in scholarship on music in Christian worship is that the ethical significance of church music has been

sidestepped, ignored, or generally undertheorized. Using a multidisciplinary methodology drawn from ethnomusicological fieldwork at three Waco, Texas, Baptist churches and synthesizing theories of discourse, formation, and care ethics oriented towards restorative justice, I argue that church music is ethical when it preserves people in and restores people to just relationships with each other and, when applied directly to ecclesial settings, relationship with God.

The Relational Ethics of Church Music

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A Dissertation

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Accepted by the Graduate School
August 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No project is ever the work of a single person; despite some academic remnants of the Romantic figure, toiling alone on a “work” such as a dissertation, honest reflection reveals that this is never the case (although any lapses, errors, or infelicities are indisputably my own). I am deeply indebted to the efforts, energies, and expertise of my faculty and colleagues who have so generously given of themselves in offering feedback, suggestions, and encouragement throughout this process. I am especially grateful to Monique Ingalls, my advisor, for countless hours of reading, reviewing, deliberating, and guiding me in this process. I am also indebted to my committee, Paul Martens, Jeremy Begbie, Randall Bradley, David Music, and Laurel Zeiss, for their help and guidance at various stages along the way. Other faculty at Baylor have similarly aided my efforts, and I am also grateful for the contributions of Jean Boyd, Natalie Carnes, Alfredo Coleman, Elise Edwards, Horace Maxile, and Jonathan Tran to both this dissertation and my development as a scholar and human. Todd Johnson, Joy Moore, Tommy Givens, and James Bradley at Fuller gave vital encouragement and guidance during my time there. Dave Wilmo inspired much of my thinking on this and other topics. I am also thankful for my kindergarten teacher, Dorothy Brinkman, who told my parents that I would one day get a Ph.D.

My colleagues in the doctoral program at Baylor have been exceptional, making this a collegial and inspiring community of scholars. Rob Karns, Maria Montiero, Joe Noelliste, and Jacob Sensenig have been excellent conversation partners, extending hospitality and insight in myriad ways. Sam Eatherton, the “definitive” member of the triumvirate, has exemplified the life of a father, minister, and scholar in more ways than I can count, and I am grateful for his friendship. Marcell Steuernagel has been a true friend, encouraging and challenging me as both a scholar and a person in profound ways, making each day “value added.” He also grills meat like no one else — *parabéns idiota*.

My family has been a constant source of patience and encouragement throughout my life, and this dissertation is no exception. My Mom, Dad, Anna, Shane, Matt, and Shelbi are the greatest family I can imagine, and I am so grateful to have grown up with you. My in-laws, Mike, Aileen, Grannie and Granda, and Malcolm, who left this world much too soon, have continually encouraged me along this path. My children, Ford and Hasley, have inspired me in ways I could never have dreamed while simultaneously forging me in the sleepless crucible of writing a dissertation with toddler and newborn in tow. My indescribably amazing wife, Lesley, who never gave up on me or us, and whose unflinching love makes life complete: “who starts a business and does a Ph.D.?” We do.

DEDICATION

To Lesley, Ford, and Hasley

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: The Problem of Church Music

In Austin, Texas, during the annual South by South West (SXSW) festival of 2017, I sat under a tarp in a makeshift seating area near several food trucks. I was speaking with Lacey and Heather,¹ two twenty-something white women, who were at SXSW with Fuller Theological Seminary's Theology and Popular Music immersion course. My intention at SXSW was to interview seminary students in a non-liturgical environment concerning the relationship between music's way of being in the world² and its way of being in church. In response to my question, "What does music do?", Heather responded, "Music unlocks emotions in me that I didn't even know were possible. It makes me more emotionally intelligent, more emotionally aware of myself, while connecting me to others." Lacey echoed her: "[Music is] an emotional experience. Music is audible emotion. It's people's heart and feelings that you can hear and empathize with." Heather and Lacey went on to extoll the virtues of music as being politically important and capable of impelling social change; as contributing to human well-being and human

¹ These are pseudonyms. In adhering to Baylor University's Institutional Review Board's privacy policy, none of my interlocutors' real names are used, excepting when they are a public figure (such as a pastor of a church) whose identity cannot effectively be hidden.

² I draw this term from phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger and others, although I first encountered it in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* (1955 [2005]). By it I mean the "activity of existing;" the phenomenological existence of something as it is encountered by other somethings in time and space; its dynamic and discrete ontology. In saying this, I do not mean that music is a self-sustaining entity or moral agent, but rather that it occurs in real life and has effects that are experienced, interpreted, and remembered bodily, such that music is also always a relational something. See Heidegger (1996), c.f. Phillips (2015) and Wheeler (2017).

flourishing; as capable of healing. However, the tone of our conversation shifted drastically when I asked them to focus their reflections on church music.

“So... what does music do in church?” I asked, the breeze ruffling the tarp strung overhead. A short silence ensued. “That’s a loaded question,” Lacey said, frowning. “I’ve served on worship teams for years. I feel like worship [is] fakey. We talk about creating these emotional arcs for people... and [it] is just manipulative.” Heather added, “I’ve been wrestling with [that] too. I love Hillsong, and they totally do that [referencing the emotional arc]. But, surely God did create the emotions, so surely they do have a role, so I want to have grace.”

Trying to tie these reflections back to their earlier comments about music connecting people in emotionally important ways, I asked “Does music connect people in church?” Lacey’s response was ambivalent: she first responded by saying that it does, citing a friend who had lost her faith and still wanted to sing in church, but then she noted that many churches problematically treat musical worship as a way to disconnect from others, while connecting to God. Heather agreed that church music does connect people, but differed from Lacey in that she felt more connected to others in churches that sang “individualistic” music as opposed to the more liturgical church Lacey now attended. Hoping to get at something that was underlying our conversation, I asked: “Does music in church contribute to your sense of well-being?” Lacey answered definitively, “No. No. In fact, I try to not show up until after the music is over. Even though [the worship leader] is a good friend of mine, and I know her heart, the music is

just too much for me. I have such bad memories of it, and I still feel cynical about a lot of it. I'd rather not have it."

Music is an "indispensable" aspect of Protestant Christian worship, to use Brian Wren's term (2000, 48). Yet it is also perceived as one of the most divisive aspects of that activity, with scholars, practitioners, and congregants alike contributing to this perspective. As my interlocutors noted above, and scholars such as Donald Hustad (1993), Harold Best (1993, 2003), J. Nathan Corbitt (1998), Brian Wren (2000), Jeremy S. Begbie (2011), and James K. A. Smith (2009) have similarly noted, music connects people to each other and enlivens our emotional and relational convictions. Music's inherently relational nature strongly suggests that music has ethical significance; if music is so emotionally and relationally powerful, and can be a source of unity and division, then it should be examined from within an ethical frame. It is surprising, then, that few scholars of Christian worship have attempted to consider music's way of being in the world from an ethical perspective. On one hand, the work of several praxis-oriented scholars has ethical overtones, but those overtones are not explicitly theorized.³ On the other hand, several liturgical scholars work on worship and ethics, but completely ignore church music – the most widespread and significant

³ J. Nathan Corbitt's *The Sound of the Harvest* (1998) is a prime example of this kind of scholarship whose intention is to provide a practical resource for church music practitioners, rather than to theorize about music and ethics.

participatory activity of Protestant worship – in their analysis.⁴ Ethical questions related to church music abound when considered through the lens of the brief interview relayed above: How is it that two seminarians can speak so glowingly of music’s power for good in general, yet have such strong reservations about music in church? What are we to make of those who are so hurt by the music of the church that they abandon that ecclesial activity altogether, citing manipulation and inauthenticity, thereby negating church music’s discursive⁵ participation in justice by way of non-participation? Is there something that we, as scholars and practitioners, are missing in our understanding of music for Christian worship that impels this reaction? Is it possible that the way we treat the activity of musical worship has neglected something vital about its way of being in the world?

These questions point towards what this dissertation argues is a central problem in scholarship on music in Christian worship: that the ethical significance of church music has been sidestepped, ignored, or generally undertheorized. Further, scholars’ and practitioners’ failure to pay attention to the ethical dimension of church music has had divisive and destructive results.

⁴ James Frank Caccamo’s dissertation (2004) is a notable exception to this trend, and is considered further in chapter three.

⁵ I am using this term to invoke the discourse ethics of Jürgen Habermas. If one refuses (tacitly or otherwise) to participate in the act of communal discussion and agreement of rights and goods, then discursive ethics are non-functioning. Timothy Rommen (2007) and Mark Porter (2017) elaborate on Habermas’ ethics in their monographs engaged below. See Habermas (1990) for more on this.

Complicating matters, earlier scholars of church music have often cast their work in light of many polemic texts surrounding debates about the appropriateness of musical styles for Christian worship without paying more than lip service to the way music functions in people's everyday lives (for example, Johansson 1984, 1992; Lovelace and Rice 1976; Routley 1978; Mitchell 1978; Baker 1985; Frame 1997; Hamilton 1999; Moser 2015; etc.). An ethical account of music in worship must be able to critically engage affective, relational dimensions of musical activity *before* offering theories about which styles of music ought to be used in worship. The importance of addressing these questions is significant. As scholars such as C. Randall Bradley have pointed out, the music of U.S. evangelical Protestant churches has undergone a series of crises in the past few decades; conflicts rage over style and genre, media and technology, performance and pedagogy, commerce and ownership, and theology and polity – often with issues of power to control lying at the heart of these conflicts (2012, 14-47). Unfortunately, the ways that scholars and practitioners of church music respond to these crises have often had unintended destructive consequences; my interlocutors' negative reaction to my suggestion that church music might have a positive effect on human relationships represents a widely-held conception: that even when church music *sounds* good, churches do music badly. This belief, while lamentable, indicates that church music is ethically powerful, and as such needs examination that pays attention to its ethical dimensions.

In addressing the ethical significance of church music, this dissertation accomplishes two things. First, it articulates how the ethical significance of church music may best be understood through the lens of “care” with an orientation towards “justice.” By care I mean a responsive, reciprocal, and restorative posture towards relationships both near and distant that attentively acknowledges the contributions and capabilities of each as agents within systems of power (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984; Friedman 1987; Tronto 1989; Hoagland 1991; Jaggar 1995; Held 1995, 2006; Farley 2002; Nussbaum 2002, 2011). Within such a frame, I take relationships to be ontological for human beings – meaning that humans are inherently relational creatures – and demonstrate that relationships are intimately bound up together with affection. If music does, as many scholars suggest and my interviewees attest, interact with and form emotional postures and affections (for example, Saliers 1980, 1994, 1998; Corbitt 1998; Becker 2004; Rinderle 2011; Will and Turow 2011; Cobussen and Nielsen 2012; Warren 2014; Cheng 2016; Myrick 2017), then an ethical account of music must consider affect in the context of relationships, and care ethics provides a means of accomplishing this without devolving into a determinative system. However, while affect, responsibility, and relationships are crucial to how music functions ethically in human experience, when considered in the context of lived reality explored through ethnography, these ideas begin to illuminate how healthy relationships need not only to be caring, but also just. Relationships cannot be said to be “good” or “healthy” if they are unjust; affections can be

violated by unjust manipulation; responsibilities can be corrupted when uncoupled from orientations towards justice.

Yet justice is not as neat or clean a concept as the preceding lines suggest. Instead, it is contested and debated; justice for whom? Who gets to decide what justice is? What kind of justice should be enacted? Is it just to violate the ontology of human relationships in retributive ways, or is justice subject to the claims of those relationships? It is here that musical care has something to contribute to the debate: when responsibility and reciprocity are considered within a relational frame, a consideration of justice emerges that is restorative rather than retributive. In this frame, ethical music is music that preserves people in and restores people to just relationships with each other and, when applied directly to ecclesial settings of church music, relationship with God. This relational restoration does not sidestep justice, but rather requires it; human relationships are severed by oppression and injustice, so an ethical account of relationships requires an account of justice oriented towards restoring those relationships, which in turn are only restored when they are just.

The second goal of this dissertation, proceeding from the first, is to re-frame conversations about what makes church music “good” by highlighting the importance of ethical awareness to music’s way of being in the world; of how people make and encounter it. In distinction to typical criteria of “good” church music, such as singability, propriety, simplicity, adherence to certain aesthetic sensibilities, conformance to given notions of taste, and even theological

orthodoxy (Hastings 1822; Pemberton 1975, 1992; Hustad 1993; Best 1993, 2003; Brown 2000; Rienstra & Rienstra 2009, Cherry 2016, for example), I suggest that consideration of church music's ethical power is crucial to any criterion of goodness. Not that the previously mentioned qualities are unimportant, but rather that as normative frames they fail to account for the ethical significance of music implied by my interlocutors above – sometimes with destructive consequences. Instead, I suggest that ideas about style, taste, propriety, simplicity, singability, etc. – and especially the values that impel these ideas – are themselves formed and informed by ethical concerns. In plain terms, care ethics as I am constructing them provides a means of determining propriety, taste, singability, and, if I may be so bold to say, theological orthodoxy. I include theological orthodoxy here because abstract ideas about doctrine are often difficult to distill from the discrete musical practices of singing congregations, evaluations of lyrics notwithstanding; as Joshua Busman has pointed out, the musical setting may radically alter the theological meaning of the lyrics (Busman 2015). Rather, in such cases, theological orthodoxy may better be determined by an examination of results from an ethical perspective; does it invoke love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), to list just some of what might be considered the fruit of orthodox belief? If we take the Bible as normative, then surely emotions such as lament, anger, doubt, remorse, and a desire to repent are also orthodox responses to musically invoked emotions. When ethical concerns are considered, other

musical qualities are of secondary import; to borrow from 1 Corinthians 13, just as without love our greatest achievements are of no account and our most profound pronouncements a noisily amplified theatrical voice (Music 1998, 20), so the most singable, appropriate, beautiful, or orthodox music is of little value if practiced without justice through care. Or, to paraphrase Jesus' words in the synoptics, all the law and the prophets rest on the greatest commandment: love God and neighbor with all our abilities; read through the lens of Matthew 24-25 and Romans 12, to love God through care for our neighbor – “the least of these.”

The most immediate question that arises from this line of thinking is, “what does the music of the church have to do with loving our neighbor?” My contention is that it plays a crucial role in orienting our affective postures towards care – as I have just described it – for the needs of others, “the least of these,” who may be least or greatest at various times throughout our communal lives, thus necessitating the attentiveness I mentioned above. I argue further that such affective orientation is configured in relation to both how musical activity means and how it feels; we reason through and with what we love and desire, and that through musical activity in Christian worship these converge in human bodies. Crucially, this kind of just caring is attentive to the real differences that exist between individuals and Christian communities, acknowledging that the Body of Christ is made up of profoundly diverse members whose contribution of faith and flourishing will by definition vary from place to place and person to person (1 Cor. 12, Romans 15, for example). This care for the needs of others is

ethical when it is bound up together with orientations towards justice in our congregations and societies. In orienting our affective postures towards justice through caring, church music can be understood as ethical.

Understanding church music through an ethical frame is not without its challenges. It is useful to point out two hidden dangers in exploring church music's ethical significance. First, when music and ethics are considered together, there is often a temptation to identify what music is or is not ethical. I am in no way attempting to determine which musical styles or genres are or are not ethical and therefore appropriate for use in Christian worship, as I argue that, due to the complexity of how musical meaning is created, ethics cannot be evaluated based solely on generic or stylistic criteria. Rather, my approach to identifying ethical church music is contextual and situational. I hope to tease out and illuminate salient aspects of musical life that are common to the discrete contexts I am studying in hope that by foregrounding the affective and formational capabilities of musical worship, all musical activity in Christian worship may be practiced in more just and caring ways.

Second, I am not suggesting an ethical system, in the sense that ideas or concepts proceed from one another in a linear fashion. Nor am I creating a constellation of reified ethical principles with which to hold church music captive. Instead, in accordance with facilitating more just and healthy practices of musical worship, the theories this dissertation develops will make clear *how music has ethical power and what the results of that ethical power are for the benefit of*

both scholars and practitioners of church music. As such, this project is neither purely *prescriptive* nor *descriptive*, but rather *inscriptive*, that is, it is aimed at writing into what is already happening with the intent to clarify and illuminate. This intent does not preclude a thesis, however, and I do argue for a way of understanding musical worship's ethical significance such that we may evaluate that activity from an ethical perspective. What my intent does preclude is a step-by-step, "how-to" manual that treats church music as a static repertoire and ignores the fact that it can constantly be (re-)contextualized into each new setting that it enters. Instead, I offer a theoretical construction that can be applied with varying amounts of modification to the contexts I study which clarify and offer language for addressing the ethical aspects of church music.

Literature Review

The question of music's ethical significance in worship has yet to be addressed theoretically or substantially from within the academic field of church music; as a result, in order to locate my project within current academic discourse, I draw broadly but carefully from beyond the immediate bounds of my home field. Therefore, this literature review recounts the ways in which scholars from various disciplines and methodological practices related to church music have examined the relationship of ethics to worship and music. From liturgical and moral theology, I draw the idea that the practice of regular worship forms persons in ethically significant ways. From liturgical theology, as well as

sociology, I draw the idea that worship services are political activities, and therefore have discursive function within a given society that forms communities. From musical disciplines, I draw on research that theorizes music's ethical significance to show *how* music functions in ethically significant ways. By weaving these discursive threads together, my literature review surveys the terrain and lays a foundation for where I will construct my dissertation argument.

Worship as Ethical Formation

The theological connection between worship and ethics has been well established in recent years (Arndt 1960; Sayres 1961; Kadushin 1963; Hauerwas 1974, 1975, 1981, 2015; Rossi 1979; Saliers 1979; Bayer & Suggate 1996; Purcell 1997; Wannaenwetsch 1997, 2004; Suggate 2002; Müller 2006; Hauerwas and Wells 2011). In fact, a significant number of scholars have located the roots of *any* Christian ethic explicitly within the rituals of ecclesial gathering for prayer and celebration of the sacraments: "How we pray is linked to how we live – to our desires, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and actions" (Saliers 1998 [1979], 16). Indeed, the worship service is a primary location "where responsible people are formed [and] character is cultivated, articulated, narrated, and celebrated" (Müller 2006, 645). It is "the activity where the moral character of Christians is developed and learned" (Rossi 1979, 240), and is "the central means whereby humans are called to their proper fullness in society and the world" (Suggate 2002, 56).

As Irma Fast Dueck (2006) has pointed out, worship and ethics have been conceived of as being linked in two ways. On the one hand, ethicists such as Stanley Hauerwas have posited that the ethical shaping of virtue and Christian character is contingent upon the formation of cognitive understanding of the self in relation to the Christian Narrative. This theo-ethical paradigm has been extended well into the realm of liturgical theology by Don Saliers in his 1979 essay “Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings,” as well as subsequent works. On the other hand, and slightly modifying this narrative ethical formation, worship and ethics have been connected symbolically. As symbol, worship presents the worshipper with an ideal picture of the world; of an “alternative vision” of reality, one which requires different ethical responses from the worshippers. This symbolic ethic is connected to the Eucharist as a paradigm for social justice and economics (Dueck 2006, 215-217).

Ethics-as-character-formation through worship draws heavily on the theories of virtue ethics that can trace their origin to the ancient Greek philosophers Damon, Plato, and Aristotle, through the patristic Augustine, medieval Aquinas and the philosophy cum doctrine of *ethos* as reinterpreted by the modern philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (Caccamo 2004; Ursu 2009; Hauerwas 1974, 1975, c.f. 2015; Seasolitz 2012). This understanding of ethics as character places the emphasis of ethical scholarship and praxis on the practices that build character, not the crises that define it (Hauerwas and Wells, 2011). The worship service plays a foundational role in this development of character in that it is a

regular ritual that has definite and explicit moral values built into it by both association and representation. In a mutually constitutive way, worship is ethical in that it forms ethical character and fulfills ethical responsibilities (Arndt 1960; Sayres 1961; Saliers 1998 [1979]; Hauerwas and Wells, 2011; Seasolitz 2012). Additionally, virtue formation through worship establishes the worshipper's perspectives and relationships; to each other, to the world, and to the divine (from a Christian perspective, Suggate 2002, 56; Müller 2006, 645; from a Jewish perspective, Kadushin 1963, 5-6, for example).

Scholars differ, however, as to how this ethics-as-character formation occurs. On the one hand, some posit that Christian character is formed by listening to the stories that inform the faith, particularly the homily, and orienting the self towards living into these stories (Rossi 1979; Saliers 1979; Müller 2006; Hauerwas and Wells 2011, for example). On the other hand, other scholars emphasize that ethical character is formed through participation in the ritual and activity of the worship in the celebration of the sacraments (Wannenwetsch 2004 [1997]; Suggate 2002, for example). Hauerwas and Wells connect both as activities of formation; as action and as listening (2011).

This thesis of activity for ethical formation is approached differently by other authors. For instance, Alfred Sayres, in "Worship and Ethics in the Ministry" (1961) argues that the natural response to God's activity in the world is worship (38). In this way, worship is *itself* an ethical activity, in that it fulfills a response requirement for humans towards God. As such, worship is not only

formative, but is responsorial; is an ethical good unto itself. Max Kadushin extends this argument to say that worship is the means by which the sin of idolatry is rectified in that it requires adherence to the first commandment of the Decalogue, and thereby is a fundamentally ethical activity (1963, 57).

Difference remains over whether the events of worship may be done in an ethical or unethical manner. On the one hand, Bernd Wannewetsch does not consider worship to be ethical or unethical; it is ethically significant, but Wannewetsch does not wish to subject worship to ethical criteria (2004, 5). This does not lead to “quietism,” or the passive support of the status quo for him, but instead posits worship as in the fullest sense a form of human life (6). On the other hand, Elmer Arndt’s “Worship and Ethics in Theology” (1960) assumes that there may be ethical or unethical worship services (279). He distinguishes between worship and ethics (that is, he does not assume that worship is already ethical), and argues that both worship and ethics bear witness to the faith of the Christian church (281). Further, he argues that the worship and ethics of the church are responses to the activity of God in God’s self-disclosure through Jesus and the Holy Spirit in whom God’s purposes of judging, reconciling, and renewing the world is known (284). Thus, ethics and worship are united in their common purposes and functions. “Worship is fully ethical, and the ethical becomes worship” (289; Saliers 1979, 16-17).⁶

⁶ The question of whether worship itself can be evaluated by ethical criteria is illuminated when considered in the light of relational power dynamics, and is unpacked further

A more existential philosophy of ethical formation in worship is offered by Michael Purcell in "Liturgy: The Divine and Human Service" (1997). Purcell sees the liturgy as a crucial movement of the self toward Other which never returns to the same; more precisely, it is a move towards and *for* the other (144). Drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, Purcell suggests that in the act of worship the liminal boundaries of existence are transcended, and the self is able to exist ethically in this liturgically formed activity (150). This Eucharistic ethics effectively orients the self towards the other: "The movement out of self – liturgy – is at one and the same time worship and ethics, an ethical worship, in which justice is rendered both to God and to the other person" (160). Central to this formulation is the idea of "gift." There is no gift to the Divine other: only a participation in the divine intention. The gift is God's towards us; the response, the service of the people, is ethics; is about being for the other human in cooperation with God's being for us.

B. A. Müller extends this idea in a practical manner by combining the thrust of Purcell's argument with the theories of character formation. In his 2006 article, "The Role of Worship and Ethics on the Road Towards Reconciliation," Müller suggests that the ethical significance of worship is linked to its ability to inspire action in the worshippers. As such, "*lex orandi – lex credendi, Lex convivendi, that is, lex bene operandi,*" or, the law of praying is the law of believing,

in chapters four and five. Kurt Keljo (2000) makes a similar critique of *Liturgy and the Moral Self*.

becomes the law of acting; becomes normative (646). Müller draws on this aphorism that seems to have originated in Don Saliers' important essay, "Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings" (1979, attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine in Wainwright, 1984), and has been developed by many of the scholars cited in this review. This pithy turn of phrase serves to illuminate a crucial absence in much of the literature on worship and ethics: an orientation towards something concrete.

Worship as Political Activity and Discourse

The activity of worship is also understood as a political action—both in terms of its educational formation and in terms of its agency in the world. Bernd Wannewetsch, in *Political Worship* (2004), argues that worship is the "well-spring" of Christian ethics; it is the place and activity where the Christian encounters the good and intentions to bring that good into the world (4). He does so initially by articulating what this proposal *is not*: it is not an "ethicization" of worship, nor a "quietization" of ethics; nor the "politicization or idealization" of worship, nor is he arguing for an "ethical stance or meta-ethic" (4, 4-14). Instead, the ethical wellspring of worship is such in that it motivates the worshipper to be an agent for a religiously constituted good; a religious polis in full view of the public society. This motivation is to be understood as "sanctification," that is, as "the empowerment for political life." This empowerment is generated through worship's regulated character, which models for the worshipper the method in

which this agency for the good is employed (11). This is worship's ethical "input" (26).

Worship is political in two ways. The first is by way of formation and agency on the part of the worshipper ("Action"). Agency, in this sense, is the means of understanding worship's political import by those who participate in worship themselves. Such empowered agency manifests itself in myriad manners of public life: care for the needy, advocacy for initiatives that facilitate the good as demonstrated in worship, and legislative activity by those who have the power to do so. The second way worship is political is by way of relationship, that is, as observed from the outside ("Information"). Such understandings of worship politics are derived from the observed impact the worship activity has on the lives of those who participate in it and the effect those lives have on those around them (Wannenwetsch 2004, 26-31, 77-78).

Agreeing with and in some ways extending this idea, Brian Kaylor's book, *Sacramental Politics* (2015), suggests that much of the energy exercised in worship are politically meaningful. Citing several case studies that articulate his use of the term "political," Kaylor offers compelling evidence of political activity in worship – from prayers for the world to writing letters to congressional leaders or joining rallies and demonstrations in support or opposition of various social issues – such as immigration legislation and marriage equality. Worship is political in that it is rhetorical, communicative, public, and active (17-19, 96).

Whereas much of the literature on the ethical significance of worship focuses on the formation and exhortation of individuals who attend the service, Kaylor extends this ethical scope to include its impact on the society in which it occurs (as does Wannenwetsch). However, religious worship is, in this sense, a form of public policy promotion, in that the learning and formation that occurs in the activity of worship necessarily has political consequences (2015, 96 ff). Moreover, worship is political rhetoric, in that what is said and done is observed by the society in which it is said or done and communicates a political agenda – even if that agenda exists in perception only (113-148). Worship is political action in that it establishes moral norms that the faithful are expected and exhorted to live out in their communities – as well as the broader society. Finally, worship is politics in that it is a manner of living with one another in a certain space that is then extended to include all spaces inhabited by people. Thus, the political ethics of worship is to be a public voice and institution that proclaims to society a particular ethical paradigm through its rhetoric, rituals, and communal activities that include individual acts of political importance (Wannenwetsch 2004, 358-359; Kaylor 2015, 234-235).

Where Wannenwetsch and Kaylor differ is in their conclusions. While Kaylor suggests that the acts of worship make Christians political citizens that advocate for a particular kind of ethical good (235), Wannenwetsch concludes that worship will inevitably make Christians exemplary citizens (359). As such, Wannenwetsch's conclusion is woefully under supported, and, while he takes

steps to mitigate against this (such as his extended reflections on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 24-5, 102-3), his conclusion seems to work against an ethic of anything beyond affirming the status quo – despite his assertions to the contrary.⁷ What of societies whose polity is at odds with the good as revealed in Christian worship? While Wannewetsch’s confidence that history will render the worshipper whose actions oppose the prevailing social climate exemplary, such future historical certainty offers little by way of compulsion for good activity in the face of popular injustice.

Kaylor’s thesis and conclusion are less troubling for an ethical reflection, in that they stop short of making claims about the inherent nature of the worshipper’s political activity, having greater contextual points of contact with Dueck’s “eucharistic” worship ethics. However, these insights are almost too obvious to need stating; it seems abundantly clear that there are worshipping congregations that engage in political activity in such a way as to make the act of worship itself a political activity. Indeed, this has been the claim of theologians and Christian ethicists for at least fifty years (as the literature referenced above demonstrates). Yet, the ready acceptance of Kaylor’s small advances indicates that his work has contributed something meaningful to the field that I wish to highlight, and that is the comprehensiveness of the ethical significance of worship; not only does it form individuals and communities for ethical political

⁷ This critique is affirmed by Nicholas Sagovsky’s review of Wannewetsch’s book (Sagovsky 2005).

engagement, it is *itself a political activity* that then becomes subject to ethical reflection by virtue of the results it renders. Against Wannenwetsch, Arndt, Rossi, and to some extent Hauerwas, Kaylor's thesis exposes exactly how and why the worship service needs be subject to ethical interrogation – because it does something profound in society.⁸

In this thesis that worship is ethically significant, either in itself as a response to God's love, or as an activity wherein virtuous Christian character is formed through participation in the stories and sacraments of the faith, or as a ritual that orients the intention of the self towards ethical conduct for other humans as an act of participation in God's work in the world, or as a political activity unto itself, none of the authors studied in this literature review to this point address the ethical significance of *music* in worship. However, several scholars have made explicit connections to sound and music in affecting the ethical significance of worship and political agency for the worshippers, and it is to these I now turn.

⁸ There is a danger in making this claim as I have (and that Kaylor has not), in that such claims may precipitate a future loss of freedom for ecclesial bodies in terms of political agency. This reflection and observation indicates that the separation of church and state in the USA will be an ongoing source of conflict in the years to come. While I believe an investigation into this potentiality will be fruitful, it falls well beyond the scope of this investigation into the ethics of music in worship.

Affect and Ethics in Worship

The specter of emotion and affective understanding often lurks in the margins of worship and ethical investigation. While scholars such as Saliers, Wannenwetsch, Hauerwas and Wells, Bayer and Suggate, and others mention the emotional import of worship in their studies, the connection between emotion and character formation in their work remains underdeveloped. However, scholars such as Max Kadushin, Mary McGann, Charles Hirschkind, and Timothy Rommen all included nuanced understandings of the role of emotion and affect/affection in the ethical significance of worship. Crucially, both Rommen and McGann connect the ethical significance of music in worship to affection. This section will articulate and synthesize the various arguments of these authors and put them in dialogue with the literature on worship and ethics discussed previously.

In his important 1963 volume *Worship and Ethics*, Max Kadushin lays out a robust framework for the ethical function of worship in rabbinic Jewish worship. He examines the ways in which worship is ethical, or how it performs ethics; how it is concerned with the ways of being and doing: “worship has ethical concomitants and is filled with ethical motifs” (5-6, 6). These concomitants and ethical motifs are manifest through the ethical themes displayed in worship rhetoric, the activities that result from these displays, and in the formation such activities initiate and foster (7-17). Crucially, Kadushin locates the impetus for such constructive ethics in the emotions of the worshippers: “Moral acts have an

emotional, not only mental aspect to them, [and] are propelled by inner drives” (19). These acts are derived from the felt import of ethical values (20-26), and are conveyed in worship through matters of emphasis (26-31). As such, morality becomes a means of establishing normative modes of behavior oriented towards the good of the world (40-43). This “good of the world” is centered on the *Shema*, which symbolically indexes the Deuteronomistic law and the admonitions of the prophets to live justly in the world as an application of the *Shema* (82).

This emotional and affective emphasis on the ethical character of worship and its formation of the worshipper is developed and explicated in Charles Hirschkind’s ethnographic study of the phenomenon of tape-recorded Islamic sermons on the character and moral identities of Muslims in Egypt, *The Ethical Soundscape* (2006). In it Hirschkind argues compellingly for the primacy of aural stimuli in matters of ethical import, “the politics of sound” (6). He suggests that an aural investigation of ethics through taped recordings of sermons requires a confrontation with the inadequacies of our binary constructs: moral/political, disciplinary/deliberative, emotional/rational. It is a highly affective way of listening that “recruits the body in its entirety” (12, 25). Those who listen to recorded sermons do not listen to hear an argument stated and then expounded, but rather to the tones and passions in the speaker’s voice that incite a moral and ethical passion in the listener. These tones and passions are musically discursive, yet

... this musicality is not an aesthetic gloss applied to a discursive content but a necessary condition for sermonic speech and for ethical action more generally, as the expressive repertoires learned through repeated listening to [the sermon recordings] were integral to the forms of sociability and practical reasoning among many Egyptian Muslims (13).

Hirschkind further argues that, within a receptive theoretical framework, the primary means of moral political orientation in relation to the recorded sermons was the *ear*: "Listening recruits the body in its entirety" (25). Drawing from the tradition of examining morality aurally initiated by Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau together with his ethnographic data, Hirschkind examines all of life through an acousticological paradigm, and concludes that what humans hear is as, if not more, important than the perceptions of other senses in the construction of moral laws and ethical principles. In this he draws heavily on affect theory, and distinguishes affection from sentiment and feeling; affections are the uniquely ethical lifestyles of "caring, arguing, loving, and listening" (200). In this his definition exhibits clear parallels to Saliers' understanding of affections as "the motives and wellsprings of desire and action" (1980, quoted in Anderson and Morrill 1998, 8-9).

While Hirschkind's monograph is littered with musical illustrations, the subject of his inquiry is not music per se, but rather the speech patterns of Islamic preachers who transmit their sermons via audio cassette. He notes that it is the *particular musicality* of the speech that seems to inspire the strongest affective response from the audience, and so articulates his thesis that it is the affective and not the cognitive that has the most prevalent ethical significance for worship.

Hirschkind's inquiry is not aimed at music, but I find that his suggestions offer tantalizing possibilities regarding the role of music in the ethical significance of worship.

In relating sound or music and affect, the work of Don Saliers should not be overlooked. He, too, posited the importance of affection as central to the generation of ethical considerations in and through worship (Saliers 1980, 1996, quoted in Anderson and Morrill 1998, 8-10). Saliers' work has informed much of the scholarship cited above on the ethical import of worship, and his ideas have shaped the course of liturgical inquiry into worship and ethics. Mary McGann, writing in 2002, picks up on the importance of affection in worship, and connects it explicitly to music (35-36). She states that "[m]usical forms carry implicit ecclesiological messages about relationships within the worshipping community. Music inhabits acoustic space, affecting how persons feel united or isolated within the community and the action" (36).

Saliers does not connect ethics through affection to music in worship, and McGann does not connect affection through music in worship to ethics. Yet both seem to imply the other's thesis. In a similar vein, Paul Westermeyer has noted that Protestant hymnody has often had a strong orientation towards social or political justice, but he spends no more than a page on the topic of music and affect or emotion (1998, 95). Liturgist James F. Caccamo (2004), in his 2004 dissertation, "The Responsorial Self: Christian Ethics and Ritual Song," argues that because of this connection of affections to music and of formation to

worship, “ritual song and the moral life sit side by side” (217). Caccamo rightly pushes back against what often becomes an overly deterministic account of formation in worship by acknowledging ritual song’s ability to metaphorically represent a diverse and individually performed identity that retains an emphasis on individual responsibility (218-9). He argues that ritual song (his category) influences morality through symbolism (the interpretation of lyrics through emotion and vice versa), divine meeting (the interaction of humans with God during the liturgy where the divine will is made known), and performance (learning through acting out a pattern or “score,” 219-26). In these ways, he argues that ritual song can teach worshippers to “respond well to God – to be Responsorial Selves” (226).

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, Timothy Rommen, in his 2007 book *Mek Some Noise: Gospel Music and The Ethics of Style in Trinidad*, argues that the musical styles performed as normative worship reflect in one or more ways the ethical values that the congregation hold as foundational, and serve as means by which vetting for music in worship is accomplished. Rommen articulates the discursive function of certain styles within the genre of Gospel music and the ethical perspectives demonstrated thereby in Trinidad. Rommen suggests that certain styles of music are rendered problematic not necessarily because of aesthetic, political, or even commercial interests but because of what Rommen calls the “poetics of conviction,” the associations made between real beliefs and musical activities (27-28).

Rommen establishes this claim by observing that, within the Trinidadian communities he studied, ethical considerations are established before aesthetic considerations. Here, the lifestyle associated with the musical style matters far more than what the music sounds like. However, it is significant to note that Rommen found the actual lifestyle of the performer of the music was secondary to the lifestyle associated with the musical style. This seeming contradiction is resolved by an ethical valuation of truthfulness; if you are performing the style of music associated with immoral living while living morally yourself you are being untruthful through your performance.⁹ Stated differently, the musical style proclaims to the congregation what lifestyle the performer values, and if the performer does not in fact value that lifestyle, then he or she should not be engaged in the musical style associated with it. While being careful to avoid an ethics of utility, Rommen posits that (in the context of Full Gospel Churches in Trinidad) “musical style is being put to use in order to achieve certain goals... that are informed by personal convictions” (28-29, 35).

However individual these convictions may be, they are formed in the context of community and are inextricably concerned with the flourishing of that community. Just as music is at its core an ordered relationship between pitches, timbres, metrical units, etc., so the ethics of style and the convictions that inform it are inherently relational. As Jeff Warren points out in *Music and Ethical*

⁹ So Rommen suggests members of the Full Gospel Community in Trinidad understand the ethics of style.

Responsibility (discussed in detail below), the relational component of music in itself, coupled with the necessarily relational activity of music making, establishes the context wherein music and musical style carries ethical import for its participants. Such responsibility transcends the marketplace notion of paying for musical artifacts and reaches into the world examined by Rommen; musical style has a discursive ethical element that is activated and empowered simultaneously by the relational power of music and the subsequent engagement with it by individuals who are communally and relationally responsible to each other.

In short, the literature of worship and ethics establishes *where* I will build my thesis. However, the role of church music in ethical considerations has not yet been explored (Caccamo's work notwithstanding – though understanding ritual song as a metaphor can only be extended so far, as musical activity has a host of other ways of making meaning beyond metaphor), and so I devote the remainder of this review to that body of scholarship in hopes of beginning to answer the question of *how* that thesis is to be built. While the *where* is vital to any successful construction project, the *how* requires greater precision, and it follows that my analysis of the scholarship on music and ethics will be more detailed than my locational evaluation in the remainder of this dissertation.

Music and Ethics: Relational, Hospitable, and Responsible

The intersection of music and ethics is a growing area of interest for several academic disciplines, with anthropologists, sociologists, and musicologists joining philosophers in contributing to the conversation of music and ethics. While most work in this area is not focused on music in Christian worship, many aspects of this non-liturgical work are important for church music scholarship.

In his critical defense of music, *Why Music Matters* (2013), communications and media scholar David Hesmondhalgh provides an important theoretical frame for considering both music's way of being in the world and why that way of being has ethical significance from the perspective of communication studies. His work paves a helpful path, and I build on his theories and observations at many points in this dissertation, applying them to contexts of church music and Christian worship with a theological eye.

By foregrounding music's affective capabilities, Hesmondhalgh argues that music is "intensely and emotionally linked to the private self... [while concurrently is] the basis of collective, public experiences... [and] represents a remarkable meeting point of intimate and social realms ... where self identity... [and] collective identity" are formed and negotiated (1-2). Drawing heavily on the work of Martha Nussbaum, Hesmondhalgh connects music's distinctive relationships with affection to ideas about human flourishing that give accounts of social justice, and are therefore ethical (5-6, c.f. 11-17).

From the discipline of music philosophy, Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen seek to “unravel ‘ethical moments’ which involve both ethical issues that warrant musical discussion and ... musics that invite ethical explication” (2012, 1). In *Music and Ethics*, Cobussen and Nielsen have argued that music’s ethical significance lies in its inherently hospitable nature; in music, the other is encountered in a manner that allows for shared experiences without reducing that other to same. Jeff R. Warren picks up this hospitable and relational reality in *Music and Ethical Responsibility* (2014), arguing that this relationship invokes ethical responsibility in us for those others with whom we engage in music – the artist, the performers, our fellow listeners. However, Warren goes no further in articulating what this responsibility might be; he is after broad ethical principles, not concrete morality – a distinction suggested by Emmanuel Levinas, with whom Warren and Cobussen and Nielsen interact.

Both *Music and Ethics* and *Music and Ethical Responsibilities* have focused on philosophically interrogating music as a general activity of humanity, and have not further focused their investigations on a specific context or type of music. So, while many of their observations and reflections can have direct impact on musical worship, their focus was not on that milieu. Offering concrete evidence of music functioning ethically in a quasi-religious context, Melinda Latour-O’Brien’s dissertation (2016), “Music and Moral Repair in Early Modern France,” argues that in response to the “wars of religion” during the 16th and 17th centuries, sacred musical forms became laden with such moral baggage that they

were no longer able to facilitate worship without stoking the flames of anger towards “other” Christians (Protestants versus Catholics and vice versa). In response to this reality, a new category of music developed: moral song. These songs fitted into the gap between Catholic and Protestant sacred repertoires and provided a means of recovering musical (and human) relationships. Her work provides a historical account of music functioning in concretely moral ways.

Mark Porter, in his 2017 monograph, *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives*, focuses explicitly on an ecclesial context. He argues, along with Rommen, that music functions as a discursive means of negotiating ethical values and commitments. However, Porter has noted that while music generates allegiances by virtue of its affective power, those allegiances do not necessarily translate into a preference for one style of music over another in ecclesial settings. Instead, Porter’s fieldwork at St. Aldates church in Oxford, UK, indicates that parishioners are able to articulate a distinction between their own discursive ethical values and those displayed by the music of the church. To riff on Porter’s dissertation (2014) title, “that’s not *my* music, but it is the music that *we* gather to sing.” As such, the music *we* sing creates an alternative set of affective ethical commitments that becomes a discursive element in the ethical convictions indicated by the musical identities of individual congregants; musical “cosmopolitanism.”

Porter constructs his reading of discursive ethics alongside that of Cobussen and Nielsen, on the assumption that

...not only is music a vehicle for a range of meanings but that many of these meanings are in some manner associated with particular values and that, within the context of a community of diverse and different individuals, these will inevitably be subject to negotiation as to their appropriate functioning within that community's ongoing life (49).

Porter unpacks this rather complex sentence by describing how these ethical values and commitments are negotiated as processes rather than static goods, and how ethics are differentiated from – while related to – “taste” in the aesthetic sense:

If taste becomes something that can operate in a variety of ways, with modes of attachment taking on their own varieties of significance, then we can start to investigate the ethical significance of some of these modes, not necessarily as a matter of right or wrong, but in the ways they can contribute to or become problematic in relation to particular kinds of good (61).

Through affection, musical taste is bound up together in the processes of identity formation, and these processes and their attachments are intricately bound up together with ethical commitments and convictions. Yet what makes Porter's work so compelling is that these observations do not result in fractious relationships for the congregants he studies, but rather are the meta-contexts for the ethical transcendence of Buber's I-Thou/I-It as individuals and communities; personal identity through musical affinities is – to an extent – suspended for the purpose of communal belonging in the worshipping body. In the process, this suspended affective preference becomes a new room in the house of personal identity; what was once *not* my music becomes *one* of my musics – “cosmopolitanism” – even if not explicitly in accordance with my aesthetic taste

and the values associated therewith. As such, the identity of the congregants grows to include these musically represented values and ethics and in turn is affected by it/them, and in double turn affects the congregational negotiation of ethical significance of music (185).

Porter's work offers a valuable and helpful means of explaining how the activity of congregational singing and participation in the musical life of the church contributes to the formation of identities and the ethical commitments those identities engender, and is able to provide something concrete rather than abstract in answering the question of how virtues are formed through participation in ecclesial life. Porter, by placing the agentive emphasis on the individual humans who comprise the church he studied, has avoided being prescriptive in his account of how ethics and church music relate. His in-depth, contextual study has left the door wide open to ask how the church itself can respond to the ethical realities of music he has highlighted. Is there an ethical paradigm that can orient the church and its music towards the myriad goods that Porter has outlined?

A final text that offers important insight for this study of worship, music, and ethics, is William Cheng's *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (2016). Cheng argues that ethics of discourse should be understood from the perspective of *care*. Drawing from John Rawls, Cheng constructs musical *care* as a matter of fairness and justice. He further suggests that justice can accommodate both reason and emotion (10). Thus stated, care ethics must necessarily consider the

affective efficacy of action as understood through the lens(es) of *affect* theory, which he couples with the twin virtues of love and beauty, in order to work towards a goal of repair. Cheng is careful to acknowledge that even love and beauty can become impediments to an ethics of repair if they are divorced from goodness and care. Musical beauty for its own sake is shown to be vacuous and self-serving by the reception theories of feminism and disability studies (48-49). Such a call for reparative care is thrown into sharp relief when the needs of those whose physical, mental, and emotional needs and functions fall beyond the pale of normative. Cheng brings this reality into sharper focus by reading reparative care through the lens of queer theory. With its concern for the value of non-normative identities and modes of being, queer theory affords Cheng the ability to clarify the who and where of the reparative project he is proposing.

Cheng's *Just Vibrations* has suggested a means of furthering the ethical understanding of music in worship. And while he treats his chosen subject, academic discourse surrounding music, comprehensively, he does not extend his argument for an ethics of care very far into the realm of music-making. And it is a shame, as his work would seem to add so much to the conversation of music and ethics: *the inherently relational nature of music affords hospitable space for meaningful contact with the other wherein ethical identity formation arises where responsibility to justly care for the other is understood as a primary virtue* would have been a significant intervention. However, Cheng's formulations of care and repair as ethical purposes and as evaluative criteria for music offer helpful

insight for the relationship of music and ethics in Christian worship; an insight that I develop into an argument for an ethics of care in musical worship in Chapter Four.

This literature review outlines complementary theories from a variety of fields that, taken together, suggest that the music of the church is ethically significant in profound ways, affecting as it does the formation of individual and communal character and identity, perceptions of public policy and social values, and the means by which ethical commitments and aesthetic affinities are negotiated with an eye towards the good – for individuals, communities, and societies. Articulating and developing these areas of overlap and salience into a comprehensive ethical discussion applied specifically to church music will be the focus of my dissertation.

Methodology

Methodologically, my two goals of constructing an interpretive frame that foregrounds the ethics of church music and reframing conversations on “good” church music are accomplished by applying a triad of research techniques. First, I employ participant/observer ethnographic research methods, including interviews, focus groups, and audio and visual documentation, at three churches in the Waco, Texas area: Lake Shore Baptist Church (Lakeshore), a primarily white, progressive “mainline” style Baptist church with a traditional Baptist music style; Harris Creek Baptist Church, a moderate, suburban, Modern

Worship style multi-campus church with multicultural aspirations; and Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church, an urban, African American gospel church with a social justice and holiness tradition. These three fieldwork sites, described in further detail in the following section, ground my theorizing of music and ethics in lived reality, and are compared and contrasted to one another to reveal how church music's ethical power is manifest in discrete settings. Additionally, research conducted among Fuller Theological Seminary students at South by South West (SXSW) provides an extra-liturgical perspective, complementing the data gathered by my research in local churches.

The contribution of ethnography in this project is that it uncovers the gaps between scholarship in the abstract and everyday life. As Christian ethicist Elizabeth Phillips (2013) has argued, theological ethnography is an important means of theorizing effectively, because while doctrines and theories "can be stated propositionally, they must be tested through contact with lived experience" (98). Following Phillips, I conduct my analysis and draw my conclusions in keeping with her proposed methodology of attentiveness, critical inquiry, and faithful description of what I see and hear. Crucially, my ethnography also highlights the differences of musical understanding that exist between church leaders, who are often the ones writing the books on church music, and the laity. It uncovers that while church leaders speak primarily of church music's significance as one of didacticism and meaning-making, congregants overwhelmingly emphasized music's affective properties as

primary. This gap between the musical understanding of “elites” and regular church-goers was clearly illuminated by my ethnographic work among Fuller Seminary students at SXSW; as seminary students, they occupied a liminal space between congregant and church leader, and as such were able to speak of both musical meaning and affect in the same breath.

Second, I engage in close reading of critical theories drawn from a triad of academic disciplines to illuminate music’s way of being in the world and the ethical implications of this being; 1) Practical Theology, including theologically informed scholarship on church music, 2) Music Studies, including ethnomusicology and the philosophy of music, and 3) Ethics, particularly American Christian and Feminist Ethics. These theories are also used to analyze and interpret some of my field research findings.

Third, in theorizing from both my fieldwork and critical analysis, I employ a constructive methodology to stitch together strands of each in a way that aspires to give an account of the breadth of human experience of church music and ethics. As such, my dissertation can give a robust account of the theological cum ethical significance of music in churches, paying special attention to ground my theorizing in observations derived from my fieldwork. In this way, I hope to be able to offer something that is philosophically sound and concretely grounded in lived reality.

In order to accomplish this triadic configuration of methodologies, I employ theory synthesis as proposed by Loraine O. Walker and Kay C. Avant

(2011). Drawing from sociological approaches to medical research, they argue that theory synthesis affords stronger modes of understanding than concept or data synthesis. Broadly stated, theory synthesis entails identification and description of the salient features (“focal concepts,” 147), surveying the literature on the stated salient features, (“identify related factors and relationships,” 148), and illustrating how the points of convergence carry the discourse forward (“integrated representation,” 149). While the concrete application Walker and Avant have in mind is medical research, the basic tenets of the methodology are sound and work well for my purposes here. Each of the following chapters follow this methodology to varying degrees, as the literature studied requires a certain way of reading for musical study. I synthesize the ethical theories of musical discourse, liturgical character formation, and personal responsibility to argue that musical worship may be ethically understood through the lens of care oriented towards restorative justice.

Description of Fieldwork Sites

In order to give both focus and diversity to my fieldwork, I have selected three congregations and a para-liturgical focus group as the subjects of my field research. It is important to give a detailed description of each site because, despite shared allegiance to a broadly “Baptist” polity (“evangelical” for the para-liturgical site), each had a particular demographic and theological composition. Additionally, my relationship with each fieldwork site differed,

and in order to understand both the strengths and limitations of my research, a description of each site together with my relationship to it will illuminate how I analyze my data and draw my conclusions.

Lakeshore Baptist Church. Lakeshore is a congregation of some 500 members formerly affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), and currently affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), and the Alliance of Baptists, in Waco, Texas. The primarily white, middle class, and highly educated congregation prides itself on being a hospitable and inclusive fellowship, and Lakeshore's music may best be described as traditional Baptist congregational singing; that is to say, it utilizes a choir and electric pipe organ (although a piano is sometimes substituted), performs choral introits and Anglican-style anthems, yet draws much of its hymnody from the American folk and white-gospel hymn repertory. Furthering this discursive mix of musical styles, Lakeshore does not use one of the standard Baptist hymnals, but rather uses the *Chalice Hymnal* published in 1995 by the Disciples of Christ denomination. The *Chalice Hymnal* is unique in that it has re-texted several common tunes from the folk hymn tradition, and updated the language of many classics to be gender inclusive while also eliminating many of the more militant and violent lyrical imagery. Weekly services follow the liturgical calendar, and are planned by Pastor Kyndall Rothaus with input from staff, and the four or five songs often align with the lectionary and homily for the week.

As suggested by Philips (2013, see above), an ethnographic study of a congregation requires more than just a few snapshots that provide a “theological thick description,” but instead requires being involved in the life of the congregation outside of the weekly gatherings. In agreeing with this statement, I have given Lakeshore a central place in my investigation, because it is the congregation I know best, having been a member there since 2015.



Figure 1.1. Inside Lakeshore’s Sanctuary. Photograph taken by Author, 02/26/2017

Harris Creek Baptist Church. Harris Creek is a mostly white, middle class congregation whose demographic skews slightly younger than Lakeshore’s. As

such, there are many families with young and teenaged children, and digital technology plays a more prominent role in their musical worship. Affiliated with the BGCT, CBF, and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), Harris Creek has a weekly attendance of around 2,000 persons across four services and two locations. Their main campus, Sunwest, is located off US Highway 84, just outside the Waco suburb of McGregor. The spacious worship center is rapidly becoming too small to accommodate their weekly attendance, and during my fieldwork the church had begun constructing a new worship center directly adjacent to their present building. A typical worship service at Sunwest begins with three or four songs interspersed with (seemingly) extemporaneous and intercessory prayer. The liturgical calendar is considered, although not explicitly followed to the extent that it is at Lakeshore. Moreover, as one of my interviewees noted, the elements of the Christian year that are embraced by Harris Creek are often unnoticed by the congregation, as they are interwoven with the more typical Celebrity Model (Myrick 2018b) structure of Modern Worship.¹⁰ The musical portion of the worship service is followed by offering and announcements, and eventually by the homily.

Harris Creek's downtown location, the Hippodrome theater and restaurant, follows the same order of service, with both gatherings meeting

¹⁰ One unique feature of Harris Creek's Sunwest campus is the presence of an armed guard in the fellowship hall and patrolling the grounds during the services. While interesting and surely of impact on the worship service, an analysis of this phenomenon falls beyond the bounds of my research and will have to be left for future studies.

concurrently. Because of this, while the three or four songs are the same at each site, the musicians differ, such that each has its own unique “flavor” from week to week. The sermon from the Sunwest Campus is simulcast at the Downtown campus so that the didactic content does not differ and the meeting times may be consistent at each location.



Figure 1.2. Inside Harris Creek's Sanctuary. Photograph taken by Author, 11/05/2017

Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church. Greater Ebenezer is a historic African American Baptist Church most prominently affiliated with the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas. It is also loosely affiliated with the BGCT.

Weekly attendance varies, but averaged approximately eighty persons during my fieldwork there. Located in the immediate shadow of I35, and directly across that thoroughfare from Baylor's main campus, Ebenezer's is a thoroughly urban church building. It was founded in 1915 on Oak Street as "Oak Street Baptist Church" (some 2 miles North of the present location), and moved to its current plot in 1925. During the construction of I35 through Waco (1958-1972), Ebenezer's location was one of contention. During the 1950s, Waco was firmly in the grip of Jim Crow laws, and when the federal government's surveyed route for I35 through Waco (it was initially planned to circumvent the city) threatened a city landmark, the Earle-Napier-Kinnard House (built in 1858, reportedly the second oldest brick house in Waco), the city council and officials petitioned for a new route. The new route went right through the heart of Waco's thriving African American business district (Gyuere 2009). The church was able to remain at its location, but many of the other business and homes were unable to do so. Today, the church is immediately surrounded by construction sites, as shopping centers, restaurants, and apartment complexes are being built as Waco works to renew its urban core. This renewal is, once again, at the expense of the lower income families who have occupied the neighborhood on Dutton Avenue where Ebenezer sits, as the ramshackle homes and business that surrounded Ebenezer are being demolished in favor of newer Baylor-friendly establishments.

As a nod to their heritage, Greater Ebenezer still uses the National Baptist Hymnal (1993), even though it is no longer associated with the conference.

Weekly services are highly musical, and song makes up the vast majority of the worship gathering. On a typical Sunday during my fieldwork there, seven or eight songs would be sung, including as a part of the sermon. The service would begin with a welcome and scripture reading, followed by two or three songs led by the choir or praise team (Ebenezer has three choirs and a youth praise team that rotates Sundays throughout each month, such that nearly every member of the congregation is involved in the musical worship at least once each month, either as a leader or in the choir). This set is followed by a responsive reading, two or three more songs, a benevolence offering, a formal welcome to visitors, another song, the offering and offertory, the sermon (a portion of which is often sung), a call to discipleship, a final song and a benediction. I asked Pastor Kerry Burkley about the particular musicality of both the service and the sermon, and he said it is a continuance of a tradition from the “plantation” years where “praise and worship would often be used for encouragement and direction as to what to do.”

Relationship of Researcher to Fieldwork Sites

My fieldwork positioned me as both an insider and an outsider on several discrete spectrums of identity, and revealed how a researcher is always some degree of both in nearly every circumstance. First, I am a member of Lakeshore, and serve on both the music and finance committees, in addition to operating the sound system during the worship services. In this way, I am afforded easy access



Figure 1.3. Inside Greater Ebenezer's Sanctuary. Photograph taken by Author, 02/04/2018.

to pastors and congregants, and would consider many of my interlocutors to be friends. This position presents both an advantage and a challenge to my ethnography, as some may try to answer my questions based on what they know of me or my project rather than on what I am actually asking them. As such, I have paid close attention to how I ask my questions and how I code and analyze my interviews, being careful to distinguish between accommodation and like-mindedness on the part of my interlocutors. At both Harris Creek and Greater Ebenezer, I am almost a total stranger, although I have a casual relationship with Pastor Kerry Burkley at Greater Ebenezer and worship leader Drew Greenway at Harris Creek (both have partnered with the Baylor Center for Christian Music Studies in the past). I have also supplied electric guitar at Harris Creek once when Drew was on vacation. It should be noted that, at Greater Ebenezer, my subject position as a white male has posed some challenges. I have been asking questions of a predominantly black congregation who has contended mightily against gentrification and attempts by developers to “squeeze them out” of their location in what was once the heart of Waco, and I feel a sense of responsibility to do more than simply “not harm;” I do not wish to be yet another white person who wants to take something without giving back. In light of this and other considerations of their social and geographic location, I have endeavored to be extremely sensitive in my research and faithful to offer this congregation (as well as others, but specifically this one) something that they may determine is of value. I have offered to provide a service such as compiling an oral history of the

congregation or some such means of demonstrating my gratitude, but Pastor Kerry has insisted that a copy of the dissertation will be a sufficient form of gratitude. Finally, as an alumnus of Fuller who has “gone on” to a Ph.D. program at Baylor, I am both an insider (with knowledge of the program and the sorts of questions it generated) and an outsider (I did not know any of the students prior to joining them at SXSW), and as such symbolized a unique convergence of knowing and questioning: in a word, I was “safe.”

A final aspect that needs to be addressed is the effect an ethnographer can have on his (or her) fieldwork sites. The impact of my research was especially pronounced at Lakeshore, where I attend and am a member. After I conducted the first round of interviews with the pastoral staff, I began to be asked to lead in various capacities, first on the music and finance committees, then as the interim chair of the music committee and chair of the search committee for the new director of music, and finally as an ordained deacon. By serving in these capacities I altered the landscape of Lakeshore’s music in ways that might not have occurred had I not so served. Yet as Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (2008) point out, there is no way of avoiding this impact. Further still, during his keynote address at the 2017 Annual Meeting at the Society for Ethnomusicology’s Southern Plains chapter, Barz argued that ethnographers have an ethical responsibility to advocate on behalf of their conversation partners as they are able: a “response-ability,” as he put it. In fieldwork sites where the researcher is an insider, this response-ability can also manifest itself as advocacy

and influence in the community itself. Tying back into Barz's and Cooley's initial observations of the unavoidability of one's impact on a research site, it follows that such an impact can be, in a sense, curated through responsive advocacy. Such impact must be disclosed in relating the research findings as a way of mitigating against misrepresented findings, and I do so here in relation to my interviews with several of my interlocutors. On the other hand, after my impact on Lakeshore, as a fieldwork site it seemed to contain too many traces of my activity, and I ceased my research there earlier than at the other two fieldwork sites so as not to inadvertently record too many of my own "shadows" within this writing. Nevertheless, my shadows undoubtedly remain in many ways unobserved by me.

In addition to participant observation, my fieldwork is based on interview data collected over the course of interviews with thirty congregants and church leaders from these fieldwork sites. In each interview, I asked the following set of questions in approximately the same order, although circumstances occasionally dictated an adjustment to the order:

- What does music do?
- How do you experience other people through music?
- Does it make you feel responsible for them?
- Does music do something political?
- Does music influence your sense of wellbeing?

- Can music heal?
- What makes music “good?”

I then repeated the questions, asking my interlocutors to contextualize their answers with the qualifier, “in church” – for example, “what does music do *in church?*” This second round of questions was often followed by a free-flowing conversation about my work or the subject of my research.

I crafted these questions to relate directly to ethical theories regarding music that have been put forth in recent years. Drawing from Cobussen and Nielsen’s argument that music’s ethical metaphor resides in its hospitable nature, I asked “How do you experience other people through music?” Thinking with Jeff Warren’s suggestion that music invokes ethical responsibility among its participants, I asked “do your experiences of other people in music make you feel responsible for them?” With Bob Darden’s words in mind, and thinking of Timothy Rommen’s and Mark Porter’s work, I asked “does music do something political?” Finally, remembering the work of David Hesmondhalgh and Tia DeNora, I asked “does music influence your sense of wellbeing,” and “can music heal?” (Rommen 2007; DeNora 2011; Cobussen and Nielsen 2012; Hesmondhalgh 2013; Warren 2014; Darden 2014; Porter 2014, 2017).

Since I ground my theoretical reflections in the lived reality uncovered by my ethnographic research, I intersperse excerpts from my field notes and interview transcriptions throughout the body of the chapters so as to more clearly show the connections I am making.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, including this Introduction and the Conclusion. The second, third, and fourth chapters are oriented around the major ethical theories I am synthesizing: *discourse*, *formation*, and *care*, with the fifth chapter situating my argument for care and restorative justice in the theological traditions of response ethics.

Chapter Two engages the discursive problem of church music both in popular and academic literature, and, using ethnographic evidence gathered from my fieldwork sites, shows that musical meaning is determined and simultaneously configured via linguistic and generic means. I suggest that one of the ways communities form is around shared understanding of musical meaning, and that for my interlocutors, musical meaning is determined largely by generic understandings; that musical genres often function discursively for North American Baptists. Using musical discourse ethics frameworks such as Rommen's "ethics of style," and Porter's "cosmopolitanism," I argue that generic musical meaning is imbued with values and convictions, and that these values and convictions are negotiated as kind of discourse ethics. By applying discourse ethics to the "worship wars," I uncover how the intensity and fervor that characterized these discursive barrages is attributable to the moral meaning ascribed to certain genres and styles by the combatants. However, my research further shows that these generic understandings of meaning are unstable. This instability precludes ethical theorization on the premise of discourse alone, yet

indicates that the discourse that takes place both around and through musical worship is ethically important and should be taken into account in any moral theory that gives an account of church music.

Chapter Three continues this line of thinking on ethics and music beyond discourse and meaning, and, drawing on ethnographic evidence from Harris Creek and other sites, together with theoretical considerations drawn from the work of Jeremy S. Begbie (2011), James K.A. Smith (2009), David Hesmondhalgh (2013), Martha Nussbaum (2001), and Charles Taylor (2007), argues that the second way that music builds community is through shared experiences of emotional orientation. That is to say that musical activity forms communities through its ability to marshal human emotions and orient emotional postures towards or against ideas or objects. We encounter and experience the emotions and feelings of others in profound ways through music; through contour theory, CRE, and other ways. These encounters and experiences of others' emotions influence our thinking, and when taken together with the argument of chapter two suggests that musical worship is a site where meaning and emotion intersect in important ways. This intersection of meaning and emotion is intensely formational, and my participant-observation at churches along with participants' own descriptions of their experiences reveals how emotion and reason converge in human bodies. In this way, music forms affective communities, and when we consider that we are formed most profoundly by what we love and desire, it

becomes clear that music plays an important role in the formation of both reason and relationships.

Chapter Four continues this affective, formational trajectory, and, placing the work of Cobussen and Nielsen (2012) into conversation with feminist ethicists such as Martha Nussbaum (2002, 2011), Margaret Farley (2002), and Virginia Held (2006), argues the specifics of what care will entail in the context of Christian worship, both by way of what care ethics address and where it may be directed. I couple this interrogation of musical ethics with a concern for restorative justice (Zehr 1990; Braithwaite 2002; Boyes-Watson 2013; Johnstone and Ness 2013), and conclude by weaving together the threads of ethical significance considered in the dissertation to articulate how the music of the church is being enacted ethically together with what some criteria of ethicality in musical worship might be.

Chapter Five picks up on this responsive thread, and, interweaving theological reflections from the traditions of American theological ethics and Jeff R. Warren's (2014) music philosophy with research at Greater Ebenezer, show how an ethic of responsiveness makes claims upon participants in the activity of musical worship, and argues that caring responsibilities that arise from musical worship will require attentiveness to both relationships and justice. I further argue that this kind of care oriented towards restorative justice is a Christian response to Jesus' depiction of "the greatest commandment[s]" in Matthew 22 considered in the light of Matthew 24-25. I then offer some examples of how this

just and caring responsiveness in musical worship may be enacted, concluding with an affirmation of the centrality of relationships for human beings.

A final chapter (Six) summarizes the argument of this dissertation, clarifies the significance of this study, articulates its limitations, and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Discourse: The Worship Wars and the Meaning of Musical Genres

Introduction

This chapter examines how music may be considered as discourse, and how its discursive functions may be understood from an ethical perspective. I argue, first, that what is communicated through musical genre – however complex or contradictory – has profound ethical significance in churches. Employing ethical theories of discourse applied to music, such as Timothy Rommen’s “ethics of style” and Mark Porter’s cosmopolitan discourse ethics to unpack ecclesial and personal musical identity, I tease out how musical genres, like languages, build communities around shared convictions and values by insinuating musical meaning. Thinking with Rommen and Porter, I suggest that the U.S. Protestant “worship wars” were not merely conflicts over style, but rather over the ethical values and convictions projected onto the generic meaning of the music by the combatants. Though musical styles can themselves convey certain shared associations, the meaning of genres and styles of music is often determined and negotiated by linguistic means. In other words, we decide which values and convictions are represented by certain musics by talking about them. So, I suggest, secondly, that how people talk about music in churches is ethically significant. Drawing from philosophers such as Stanley Cavell, I argue that the

present-day genre discourse of music in much Protestant worship was formed in destructive ways by the use and popularity of the term “worship wars” itself. Further, thinking with scholars such as C. Randall Bradley (2012), and Lester Ruth (2017), I contend that inasmuch as the communities formed around the different genres engaged and constructed in the affair are antagonistic to each other, they work at cross purposes to the moral vision laid out in scripture of the church as a united body of Christ (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 14-15).

Though American Protestantism may be entering the “post-war” period (Ruth 2017), the collateral damage wrought by the linguistic barrages of the worship wars is ongoing. As demonstrated by my interlocutors, the lived reality of those who witnessed the worship wars has spawned deep distrust of the sincerity of worship leaders and music ministers, pastors, and the institution of the North American Protestant church. However, my ethnographic research shows that such systems of generic meaning making, while very real, are inconsistent and subject to widespread misunderstanding and subsequent warfare. This leads to the central argument and conclusion of this chapter: that musical genres are not ethical systems, but are rather a means of discerning what ethical system(s) lies behind a discrete musical practice, albeit in ways that may only be determined contextually.

Musical Mediation, Communication, and Connection

During my fieldwork, one of the answers I consistently heard in response to my question “what does music do?” was that it connects people in various ways. For instance, my first interview for this project at SXSW with Fuller students began during the two-mile morning commute from our billets at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to the Austin Convention Center, where many of the key-note sessions were held. As the taxi driver (and owner) of one of the three cars among the Fuller cohort, I was tasked with shuttling students to and from the parking structure at St. David’s Episcopal Church, where they (and I) would walk to the Convention Center. In lieu of monetary payment, the fare for my taxi services was an interview.

My passengers that first morning were three distance education students who had flown to Austin to fulfill the “in person” requirement of the course: Samantha, Ron, and Nick. Samantha, a finance technology manager from Atlanta, Georgia, was the first to respond to my initial query of “what does music do?”

“Oh, interesting. I think it ... connects.”

Ron, a music and arts pastor from Oakland, California, added:

“It unites.”

This conviction was expressed by nearly every person I interviewed in my subsequent work among congregations. However, beyond "connection," my conversation partners had diverse ideas about how that connection occurred.

Bev, a choir member at Lakeshore and a librarian at Baylor University, understood this connection to be inspirational and ineffable: "It is where words stop." By contrast, Lakeshore's Associate Pastor, Sharlande Sledge, noted that music connects people to one another *because* of the words, although she pointed out that this connection was not entirely cognitive: "The words are very important...[the] main role of music in the church is that it is something that people can do together... in congregational music we all sing together. So, we are singing words of faith that we [may] not understand at the time." Others, such as Heather and Lacey, the two Fuller students discussed in chapter one (and later in this chapter), noted that music connected people emotionally:

H: I think, for me, when I hear music it unlocks emotions in me that I didn't even know [were] possible... I think music makes me more emotionally aware. And maybe even... 'emotionally intelligent.' I think it ... makes me more emotionally aware of myself, but it also connects me with other people."

L: [Music is] an emotional experience. Music is audible emotion. It's people's heart and feelings that you can hear. And empathize with.

Still others, such as Stan, an English professor at McLennan Community College and member of Lakeshore, noted the expressive nature of musical connection: "I think that it allow[s] people ... to express themselves as individuals [that] are part of the collective."

These brief examples illuminate the diverse, complex, and profound ways that music connects people. The essence of these reflections may be summed up

singularly as “communication:”¹ music connects through expressing “inspirational, ineffable” thoughts and “emotions” through words and sounds that are “audible” and able to be “empathize[d] with.” This synthetic statement drawn from across my interviews represents the diversity and complexity of my interlocutors’ experience of the communicative power of music, while underscoring their commonalities. While topics such as “emotional intelligence” and ineffability will be picked up in a subsequent chapter (three), examining the many ways that music communicates provides both a frame and lens through which to understand music’s connective way of being in the world. Further, as the preceding interviews demonstrate, communication is *one of the most obvious ways that music connects people and builds communities.*

Contextual Frame: The Worship Wars

In order to understand the ethical import of musical worship, both as discourse and as constructed by discourse, it is important first to understand the context in which such discourse takes place. With this contextual import in mind, I begin with a description of a widespread conflict that engulfed church music in recent history. The “worship wars” were a series of ecclesiological disputes over

¹ I use “communication” here to connect more concretely to the idea of music as discourse. Anna Nekola’s use of “mediation” (2015), as that which mediates between ideas and concepts and people, is perhaps a better term for describing music’s mode of communication. However, because I am engaging musical “meaning” from the perspective of discourse ethics, I use communication to more clearly connect to that body of work.

musical style, genre, and instrumentation that transpired among evangelical and some mainline protestant churches during the 1990s and 2000s (Nekola 2008, 2016; Justice 2012, 2017, Lim and Ruth 2016; Ruth 2017a, 2017b). Anna Nekola notes that the term may have been coined by Lutheran theologian Ted Peters' article "Worship Wars" (1994), and suggests that Peters' article connected conflicts over musical style in worship to the "culture wars" of the 1970s and 80s, and terminologically helped to associate the debates over music with the gravitas of warfare (Nekola 2008, 105). She further states that the conflicts were also over understandings of ecclesial purpose: were evangelical churches an evangelistic institution, or were they discipleship oriented (2008, 1)? Deborah Justice (2017) agrees, and argues that the conflicts were also indicative of social-economic differences that were latent in the combative churches. Terry York (2003) adds to this description by drawing attention to the generational and theological differences that also contributed to the conflict, while arguing for a cessation of hostilities.

While each of these accounts of the motivations behind the worship wars are surely correct in degrees, they each acknowledge and assume that on the surface the conflicts were over what certain combinations of relational musical sounds meant. Some who opposed "praise choruses," (what came to be called "Contemporary Worship Music," see Ingalls 2008, 2016; Ingalls, Mall, and Nekola 2013; Lim and Ruth 2017; etc), such as Calvin Johansson (1992), saw in them the advance of secularism into the church. Others, such as John Frame

(1997) saw Contemporary Worship Music as symbolically breaking churches free from their old legalism and irrelevance. Others were more charitable towards the other side of the conflict. However, the ongoing effects of the worship wars are such that musical style matters in churches, and it matters morally and ethically for many people. What lies behind the associations that these various styles took on? How did musical style come to be so morally imbued, and how may we address the challenges of this reality without falling into the same pits that have ensnared previous generations of church music scholars? In order to understand and chart a path through this mine field, I begin my ethical examination of musical worship by peering through the lens of discourse ethics offered by Timothy Rommen (2007) and Mark Porter (2017).

Theoretical Frame: Discourse Ethics and Congregational Music Making

Discourse ethics is a moral philosophy developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas in the mid 1980s (Bohman and Rehg, 2014), and has been extended and expanded by John Rawls and others. Rawls in particular has suggested that consensus is necessary for establishing and maintaining communities in liberal democracies (Rawls 1999, 263, 581, c.f. Love 2006, 13-14). For my purposes here, discourse ethics is concerned with providing and protecting acceptable means of declaring personal conviction, values, and identity. It is furthermore concerned with establishing the criteria of flourishing, and the means by which the people most directly affected by the topic of

deliberation thereby negotiate the power to say how they understand themselves to flourish. Stated differently, discourse ethics is concerned with the ability to declare your convictions and values, putting those expressed needs into conversation with the needs of others and thereby negotiating differences and similarities.² Discourse is a means of declaring convictions and values, and the ethics of discourse is concerned with establishing or protecting the right of individuals to declare these markers of identity (see Habermas 1990). Further, these declarations of values, convictions, and identity is vital for communities to form and flourish, as truthful declarations provide the materials for honest consensus between individuals (see Rawls 1999).³

Recent scholarship in ethnomusicology and Christian congregational music studies has noted the helpfulness of discourse ethics in evaluating the ethical meaning of music. Timothy Rommen, in *Mek Some Noise: Gospel Music and The Ethics of Style in Trinidad* (2007), draws heavily on the work of Habermas to argue that musical style has discursive characteristics, although Rommen notes

² Porter offers a compelling and contextualized suggestion of the ways that musical styles are negotiated in churches and the effect these negotiations have on the identities formed in those congregations.

³ Some clarification of the term “discourse” is needed here, as the moral character of Christian music—both of the congregational and devotional varieties—has often been thought to be determined by the lyrical content alone. This assumption, obvious as it is, often fails to reckon with the relationship between the lyrics and the musical performance, on the one hand, and the relationship between the musician’s actions and the lyrics and sound on the other, and the relationship between the lyrics, score, presentation, and the agency of the congregation on still another (this is a multi-handed monster). Discourse, then, is not merely concerned with the lyrics, but must be understood to encompass both the verbal and stylistic/generic activities of congregational song more broadly.

that Habermas does not offer a “theoretical model to which I am unequivocally drawn or which I can use in an uncomplicated way” (30). He goes on to note that while Habermas “attempts to ground discourse ethics in a carefully argued and universalist approach to justice, his model itself is predicated on a procedural approach to consensus through communicative action whose susceptibility to the individual, personal, ethical thought-life of subjects is illustrated in the very ambiguity that often surrounds attempts at moral discourse” (32), Rommen sees in this gap the space for music’s discursive function to flourish, albeit in ways that interrupt the flow of Habermasian discourse ethics (34-36).

Mark Porter, in his monograph *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives* (2017) continues Rommen’s methodological approach, and similarly builds on the foundation (cracks and all) that Habermas and Rawls laid. While Porter affirms Rommen’s thesis of an ethics of style in certain contexts, he notes that the values and convictions associated with certain styles of music in the everyday lives of his conversation partners was not necessarily the same as those within the music they worshipped with in church, and in large part they did not perceive the difference as presenting a problem. Instead of reinforcing the “sacred/secular divide,” such “musical cosmopolitanism” afforded hospitable and charitable negotiations of individual identities and ethics while

simultaneously allowing for those values and ethics to be expanded and enlarged (50-52, 153-154).⁴

That congregational song has a discursive ethical dimension should come as no surprise to church music scholars; however, few have endeavored to examine and theorize about its significance. As suggested by Porter, discourse ethics provide a helpful paradigm for evaluating the negotiation of both ethical values and ethical identities (152). When we sing together we proclaim our beliefs and values, embodying with our voices the perspectives of good belief and practice conveyed by the musical texts. Discourse, then, is an apt paradigm with which to begin constructing an ethics of congregational song.

Music and Language: Different in the Same Kind of Ways

Part of what makes the application of discourse ethics to musical activities so difficult is the tantalizing similarity yet profound and even irreconcilable differences between music and language. As Steven Feld and Aaron Fox have observed, music is “typically, syntactically far more redundant and overdetermined yet semantically far more diffuse and underdetermined than

⁴ While I affirm Porter’s use of cosmopolitanism as a theory in his chosen congregational context, my research suggests that not all churches and congregants share the cosmopolitan ethos he identifies. In Waco, Texas, for example, the residual of the “worship wars” remains like a thick coating of cedar pollen on the hearts and minds of many congregants. Indeed, musical style is very much a bone of contention for worshippers in this and other parts of the United States— including such cosmopolitan places as Los Angeles (Myrick 2015, see below). Yet my point is not to quibble with Porter’s conclusions (I agree with him that “cosmopolitanism” as he describes it is a more ethical means of negotiating differences in identity, values, and convictions), but rather to interpret my own research through the lens he offers and see how that vantage point advances my inquiry.

language" (1999, 159). Nonetheless, Feld and Fox conclude that music and language share communal communicative worlds (162). A key feature of these shared worlds is the voice as "representational trope for social position and power" (1994, 26). The challenge to evaluating musical communication within a discursive ethical frame is that, as noted above, music and language do not share the same methods of determining meaning: how can you determine the ethical merit of a music if you do not know what it means? Furthermore, as Anna Nekola has noted, music's communicative, that is, discursive activities are often unnoticed (2015, 2). Nekola argues that applying communication paradigms to music is tricky, as music does not transfer meanings in a one-to-one fashion, but rather mediates between ideas, concepts, and people in various and sometimes contradictory ways. Indeed, she argues that the use of a "transmission model" of language in music is ill-advised, as music does not, in actuality, "transmit" discrete messages that have only one meaning. She helpfully summarizes the transmission model as having a problematic tendency to "focus on communication as a direct process of information encoded by a source and sent to a receiver to be decoded" (2015, 8). Instead, Nekola argues that meaning and messages are "mediated" in multi-locutionary forms; through words that afford certain meanings; through gestures that determine the apparent meaning of those words for listeners and congregants; through the type of audio or visual media used to present lyrics or amplify sound; through locally-inflected musical stylings that situate the meaning of the music and lyrics relationally to one

another and the specific congregation in question. This reality has ethical implications for how people engage and understand music's communicative (that is, mediating) power in congregational settings.

Musical meaning lies at the heart of music's discursive function in lived reality. As Porter points out, much recent scholarship in musicology and ethnomusicology has shifted the locus of emphasis on how musical activities make meaning away from notions of "absolute music" and towards the diverse ways that *all* music makes meaning, and how that meaning is socially constructed (2017, 32). However, scholars working on church music still differ in how they treat the communicative function of music. Christian worship scholars such as Debra and Ron Rienstra employ a transmission paradigm to understand how music communicates, assuming that words have established meanings and reliably communicate the intention of the speaker to the listener (2009, 36).

Focusing on the lyrics of music for worship as the primary means by which a message is transmitted and a community is formed, they argue that great care and attentiveness to the words of the song as well as the words chosen to direct the congregation needs to be exercised in order to form authentic Christian communities (36-53). Other musicologists, such as Allan F. Moore, suggest that music within Christian worship communicates in diverse ways that are not always determined or reliable. Giving an account of how singing is a different locutionary function than speaking, Moore examines how the performative actions of the worship leader further affect the meaning of the words, and how

music might play a role in determining those actions (2015, 185). Modifying Rienstra and Rienstra's suggestion that "words are performative; as we speak them, we are doing what we say" (44), Moore argues that the words themselves are only one aspect of the communicative function of music in Christian worship; the posture, dress, mannerisms, and behavior of the worship leader can modify the meaning of the spoken or sung words in a wide variety of ways (188-189). The way church music displays convictions is important communally because of the relational nature of music; each takes ownership of the activity and consequently of the perceived meaning of the music. The discursive ethics of congregational song are not configured by musical style and lyrical text alone, but also by the "performative utterances" (Ingalls 2018, drawing from Austin [1967]) employed by the congregation and its leaders in the ritual negotiation of power dynamics in the activity of congregational singing. Indeed, the bodily interactions of the musical participants with each other as well as the music contributes significantly to the discursive power of music in worship. Monique Ingalls has suggested that an important aspect of the efficacy of congregational singing is the use of "authenticating gestures" by worship leaders and music ministers (Ingalls 2008, 2011). These gestures "perform into being" an affective attitude that facilitates the full involvement of the congregation in the activity of communal music making.

Music is encountered in myriad ways, and may be understood as an activity, a text, a context, a performance, an artifact, or as all of the above (see

Cook 2014). Moore's distinction between language alone and musical performance allows space for distinction between words and their meanings. While Moore agrees that some words in worship are illocutionary (that is, they do what they say), he argues that musical worship is non-illocutionary, in that it is *mediated*. Indeed, his examination allows space for disagreement and miscommunication, and for reception to matter as much as delivery in determining musical and linguistic meaning. Nekola further argues that it is largely through reception that the meaning of the mediated information is created, and that receptive acts are in turn the means by which communities, cultures' and societies are made (2015, 11-14). These considerations related to music and meaning point to the need to ask, "what if we are lying in what we say to God and others during worship; what do our words do in music and worship if we are untruthful?" I point this out not to rehash settled arguments or invoke well-worn clichés about authenticity or the importance of faithful leadership, but rather to draw out how music's communicative faculties are *ethically significant*.⁵

⁵ While many scholars of Christian worship have stressed the importance and effect of words on worshipping bodies, this chapter focuses on other aspects of how music communicates and thereby makes meaning. I find myself in something of a conundrum here: on the one hand, I do not wish to argue against those who place the inflection on the lyrics of musical worship, as I agree that these are important. However, I emphatically contend that the lyrics alone are a profoundly unreliable determiner of musical meaning; musical worship does not mean merely what the lyrics seem to mean. Joshua Busman (2015) makes this point explicitly in his comparison of the Blue Tree and Chris Tomlin versions of "God of This City."

In summary, we can see that the musical life of a congregation has a discursive function in how music provides a space for the negotiation of values, convictions, and identity – ethics, of a kind. Through communal participation in congregational singing, the convictions of the individual members are given voice – should the convictions present in the music resonate with those of the individual.⁶ Therefore, it is not just the lyrics of the song that proclaim ethical convictions and values, but also the style of music that accompanies them, along with all the gestural and technological accoutrements necessary for performing that style. Musical genre and style are thus important ways that music's discursive ethical power is encountered, as they embody, enact, or symbolically represent values and convictions in easily experienced and examined ways. However, significant differences remain in how given communities interpret specific values and convictions in a given musical style.

Musical Genre and the Construction of Meaning in Religious Settings

Although musical genre is complex and contested, it is still a useful starting point for this discussion of meaning in musical discourse, as it frames the ways that people both talk about music and how they choose to participate in musical activity. Indeed, an almost universally repeated response by my

⁶ For further discussion on the complexity of enculturation and its efficacy on congregational development, see Myrick 2017. As Porter draws out elegantly, many congregation members are happy to engage – and even appreciate – music that is not of their own personal “style,” but rather represents a value shared by the community (Porter 2017, Conclusion).

conversation partners during my fieldwork was that different genres communicate different values and convictions. This assertion is supported by numerous authors and scholars of music (Harris 1992; Floyd 1995; Frith 1996; Cook 1998; Moore 2001; Reed 2003; Holt 2006; Cobussen and Nielsen 2012; Warren 2014; Porter 2017; Dueck 2017; etc). Simon Frith argues that a musical genre's meaning and the verbal discourse surrounding that genre are co-constitutive (1996). As such, musical genres are an important way that people both identify and negotiate moral and ethical issues in churches; indeed, both Rommen and Porter connect musical style and genre to discourse ethics directly (Rommen 2007; Porter 2017).

Broadly, musical genres establish a categorical methodology by which musical meaning can be triangulated, both sonically and socially (Fabbri 1982; Frith 1989, 1996; Cook 1998; Moore 2001; Holt 2006). Genres provide rules that govern a given music's participation in that mode of meaning making. Allan F. Moore argues that genre and style are different from each other yet are related in "orthogonal" ways, meaning that they intersect in a manner similar to matrices. Moore further argues that generic categories provide the context through which musical gestures make meaning: "style refers to the manner of articulation of musical gestures and is best considered as imposed on them, rather than intrinsic to them. Genre refers to the identity and the context of those gestures" (2001, 441). This is to say that within the affordance of a genre, the style of the music performed – that is, the concrete elements of notes, chords, tempi, timbre,

rhythm, etc. – contribute to the configuration of meaning in relationship to the socially accepted values of the genre, although thinking with Moore I agree that these are not “nested” terms and concepts. For example, in the genre of Western art music at the turn of the 20th century, the compositions of Claude Debussy were rightly understood to be a critique of the Romantic values inherent in the genre at that time (Auner 2013), though they are now categorized within Romanticism. To offer a more prescient yet hypothetical example, a worship band performing hymns in the style of punk rock in a congregation that valued traditional piano and organ accompaniment and simply sung American folk tunes would be understood as performing a critique – and possibly a violation – of the values espoused by that congregation, whereas performance adhering to the established style of the genre (of traditional instrumentation and folk tunes performed in an unadorned manner) would be understood to support those values.

This way of thinking about musical genre communicating values and convictions is helpfully revealed in – and in turn helps to clarify how I interpret some of – my fieldwork. Later in my interview with Samantha, Ron, and Nick during our commute to the Austin Convention Center at SXSW, our conversation turned to music in church and worship. The reflections of my conversation partners illustrate how genre and style may communicate in ecclesial settings, and begin to uncover something of the ethical importance of generic communication.

S: you know [music is] powerful, or it can be something that is so bad or so foreign to them that it distracts them from the greater purpose. So, my church is a bunch of old white people...it's an Anglican church, if I were to go in, and do a rap song ... It wouldn't be good for them, because they're just gonna get irritated. And the end goal is for them to be able to assent and to commune, and that is not where they're at. And so I think in terms of curating music it's important.

R: That's your responsibility as the curator, but if I go to your congregation, I prolly wouldn't feel any responsibility to those people. I would in *mine*, singing with people I'm gonna see next week, and the next week after that.

N: But there is some sense of communal aspect through the music. I dunno if I feel it, but I mean, church services historically were designed that way; there's a reason that churches follow a lectionary, so that churches all over the map are one in spirit at the same time, or roughly the same time each day. We're reading the same prayers or singing the same songs, even though we're separated by miles and miles and miles, we are one.

As the group's comments reveal, the values and convictions communicated by musical style and genre depend in large part on the meaning attributed to them by the community – sometimes over and against another such community. As Samantha's remarks indicate, her white, Anglican congregation in Atlanta, Georgia would feel that their trust in her as a worship leader was violated if she were to perform a hip-hop song during morning worship because of the convictions and values that hip-hop represents to them. Thus, performing hip hop would constitute a violation of her responsibility to them (the theme of responsibility generated by music will be examined further in chapter five). However, as Ron's comments indicate, there are limits to the ethical responsibility invoked by congregations on their leaders (and vice versa): as a

visiting artist or leader, he would have no such obligation to maintain stylistic trust in that way, and would therefore be free to perform a hip-hop song in Samantha's congregation. In view of the power dynamics Samantha mentioned, Ron's comment implied that as a leader coming into a congregation from outside, he would have greater freedom to confront systemic racial injustice that the values and convictions of the genre of hip-hop confronts (see Todd Boyd 1997, 2002).⁷

Nick's final comment draws out some of what informs the ethical dilemma surrounding musical genre and style in worship: do the commitments of a leader to a specific community dictate the terms of her ethical responsibility to them, or are Christians held to a broader standard of ethical responsibility as being of a single, diverse community of faith that makes claims upon their allegiances—sometimes in spite of their commitments to a certain ethnic or economic community? Stated differently, an underlying concern for all three of my conversation partners was whether or not it would be “good” for the congregation to disrupt their patterns of worship with a musical genre that they understood as opposing the values of the majority of the congregation. In this particular example, the question of generic disruption is framed as an issue of race: Samantha’s is an “old, white” congregation. As Emilie Townes observes, whiteness carries with it connotations of power, privilege, and systemic control

⁷ I return to this topic and conversation in chapter five.

(2006, 109): therefore, would it necessarily constitute an ethical act if a “white” congregation were confronted with the critique that would be offered by rap music? I will let these questions hang for the moment (although they will be further explored in the coming chapters) as my purpose in asking them is to draw out both the ethical significance of musical style and genre *and* to interrogate the value of such discourse for ethical deliberation; the second of which requires further examination.

The Ethics of Genre and Style for Waco Baptists

I sat in Alpha Omega, a small Greek restaurant in Waco, with Bob, a white male in his mid 40s who attended Lakeshore and sang in the choir, serving as interim choir director at various times. Bob had been at Lakeshore for 13 years, and was well acquainted with the church’s musical life. Our conversation about music’s way of being in the world focused on Lakeshore’s values of hospitality and inclusiveness, and I asked Bob how he thought Lakeshore’s music reflected those values.

B: I can give you a mixed answer. In terms of being sensitive to gender and other kinds of social issues, the music at Lakeshore really excels at that. On the other hand, the fact that Lakeshore has a tradition of using western art or high church music or what have you, depending on your perspective, that could be seen as not as inclusive. I know that we have tried at various times to incorporate other types of music. We do have a lot of old traditions mixed in with more traditional Western art type worship music. But I know that with the nature of our church, with lots of people that are highly educated that the music overall, I think, tends to reflect the typical tastes, if you will, of those people.

Bob's reflections reveal how musical style and taste is almost inextricably associated with certain socio-economic class status; his linking more traditional styles of music to "highly educated" people's tastes was a common refrain for my interlocutors. I asked Bob whether or not he thought musical style communicates different things to different people, and he responded by telling a story of a friend who had moved away before I came to Lakeshore:

B: He had been away from the church for 40 years before he came to visit Lakeshore and came along with some relatives. When he first came he had a negative experience - he eventually joined but had a negative experience at first because *they played a hymn tune that he recalled from his childhood that brought back a lot of negative memories.*

Bob's reflections indicate that musical style has profound discursive power in part because it is tied foundationally to social identities (such as socio-economic class) and to personal memories. Timothy Rommen articulates the discursive function of certain styles within the overarching genre of Trinidadian gospel music and the ethical perspectives demonstrated thereby which illuminate Bob's reflections. As I noted in chapter one, Rommen suggests that certain styles of gospel music (such as Gospelypo) are rendered problematic not necessarily because of aesthetic, political, or even commercial interests but because of what he calls the "poetics of conviction," the associations made between real beliefs and musical activities (2007, 27-28). Rommen establishes this claim by observing that ethical considerations are established before aesthetic considerations. For example, the lifestyle associated with the musical style of calypso music is one of sensuality and debauchery; Gospelypo, as a Christianized version of calypso,

sonically represented those same values to some church leaders. For those leaders, the lifestyle associated with what the music sounds like matters more than how the performers actually live. In this way, the actual lifestyle of the performer of the music is secondary to the lifestyle associated with the musical style (Rommen's interlocutors comprise both sides of this debate, and he does not argue for the merit of either, but rather demonstrates that musical style is ethically significant for what it represents to the listeners). This seeming contradiction is resolved by an ethical valuation of truthfulness; if you are performing the style of music associated with immoral living while living morally yourself you are being untruthful through your performance.⁸ While being careful to avoid an ethics of utility, Rommen posits that (in the context of Full Gospel Churches in Trinidad) "musical style is being put to use in order to achieve certain goals... that are informed by personal convictions" (28-29, 35).

To return to my earlier interview, Bob's friend had an adverse reaction to the style of Lakeshore's music because of the convictions he associated with it due to his previous experience in Southern Baptist churches. However, that Bob's friend eventually joined the church indicates that the discursive value of musical genre was not the final word on the matter for him, although it can be for others. One such example is CJ, a white male in his mid 30s who attends Harris Creek and was interviewed during my fieldwork there. CJ and his family visited

⁸ So Rommen suggests members of the Full Gospel Community in Trinidad understand the ethics of style.

Lakeshore, and while they appreciated the teaching, community, and theological position of the church, they ultimately decided that they could not worship there due to the style of music. CJ and his family had moved to Waco the previous year for work, and had done some of the proverbial “church shopping” – which he lamented, as he believed it demonstrated a lack of commitment on his part – upon their arrival. Knowing from a previous conversation that they had visited Lakeshore but ultimately chose to worship elsewhere, I asked CJ what went into that decision for him.

CJ: I didn't grow up in the church. The first church that I went to didn't sing hymns- it wasn't until I went to Covenant Bible college after high school [that I] first experienced hymns. And it was crazy because other people [grew up singing] hymns and everything; they had their favorites, and I'm like, “I have no idea what we're singing.” So [Lakeshore's music] was just different than [what I'm familiar with]. I get it, but it's harder for me to connect. It takes more effort to do that. It's not natural for me...Harris Creek is definitely more contemporary; it's more like a three or four-piece band, a couple of people singing, it's more – I don't want to say 'relevant,' but just more recent music. So [I'm] coming from a different kind of tradition and [Harris Creek has] more contemporary versions of music. It's less about quality and more about just comfort. Being able to connect.

Author: Does that style of music that Lakeshore does communicate something to you? Does that represent something either historically in your life or just sort of something that you think of in society?

CJ: I think it's really, well, yeah. It does communicate something. I think the thing that it communicates to me is, well, it let me know that I'm in Texas; that I'm in the Bible Belt. I'm from the left coast or the West Coast. So, it communicates to me that and it feels- It was confusing. You had this traditional way of worship. But then there was a woman who's a pastor, which I think is awesome, but it just is like "wait, what?" OK, so we're still here in this way (music), we're so progressive in this way (female pastor), I was like, “I don't understand. I like this part, and it's not that I don't like this, but...” If my family had been onboard I'd be like, “OK I can make

this work. It's not like I can't make this work." But, it communicated that [traditional "church" music]. And clearly there's [sic] people that go there and God's at work in people. But, I would say that I think, for where people are at today and if you're looking to be a place for younger people, this generation or even maybe one generation before, I don't know if that type of music is relevant to people our age, as much. Unless you're fully in church and you grew up in the church and this is your background and everything. [But] if you're not, like myself, not growing up in the church and this your first experience, I think that it can be difficult to [embrace]. I mean, it could [be] twofold – it could also be the exact opposite, that this is a holy place and this is something different, set apart, so we just do things a little bit different here. But, I think it communicates the age of the church, I think [it] communicates the priorities of the church, and it's not necessarily positive or negative but I think it communicates that these are the people, this is where we're at right now. So, we're going to keep [doing] church this way because this is what is comfortable for the people that are here.

CJ's perspective offers crucial insight into the diversity of generic discourses in church music, and suggests that such generic discourse may be insufficient for determining values and convictions. CJ's reflections on his experience of visiting Lakeshore highlight several important facets of musical genre's discursive function in churches. First, and importantly, what is communicated by musical genre depends in large part on the experiences of those who encounter it and the context in which it is encountered: for CJ, the performance of "traditional" hymns to piano and organ accompaniment at Lakeshore "let me know I was in Texas; in the Bible Belt." This communicative function, for CJ, was based on his experience growing up unchurched on the West Coast, and then on his experience of church there after converting to Christianity. Second, the music at Lakeshore communicated traditional values and convictions that emphasized his position as an outsider; implicit in his recognition of "Texas, the Bible Belt" is an

idea of exclusivity, of feeling unwelcome. On the contrary, he found contemporary pop-rock based music at Harris Creek conveyed comfort and gave him the “ability to connect.” Third, though he was put off by Lakeshore’s “traditional” music, his interpretation of Lakeshore as a whole was troubled by the church’s “progressive” theology and politics, with which he was comfortable; he struggled to make sense of the apparent juxtaposition traditional church music *and* progressive theology presented to him.

As Porter helpfully observes, ethical values and convictions do not remain static in relation to the music of the church, but are rather actively negotiated there through ongoing discourse. This negotiation does, I think, constitute something of a formation, as it follows that formation occurs in a progressive manner through ongoing negotiations of meaning and experience. Porter’s point, however, serves to fill in and illuminate the complex – and important – relationship between personal and communal convictions as demonstrated musically. CJ’s interpretation of what the music at Lakeshore communicated about its convictions and values may surprise many among that congregation, as Bob’s comments suggest. Indeed, among Lakeshore’s key values are hospitality and inclusiveness, which is the opposite of how CJ and his family interpreted Lakeshore’s music. However, further conversations among current members revealed that Lakeshore’s musical practices are interpreted very differently by many of its congregants as well. Exploration of this difference reveals how musical genre communicates – and at times fails to communicate – values and

convictions, and how this variance of meaning both necessitates and challenges ethical evaluation.

Lakeshore and the “Fundamentalists” during the “Worship Wars”

The diversity of ways that musical style may be interpreted was demonstrated by an experience I had at Lakeshore when I was beginning my fieldwork there. For Lakeshore’s members, the musical styles that were the subject of the “worship wars” – “traditional” hymnody that espoused a Western art music aesthetic, versus “contemporary” worship songs that followed conventions of pop and rock music – were connected with theological and ethical values. Further, discourse about these values gave rise to divisions over the use of extra-musical material objects (such as digital projectors) that could potentially facilitate “the wrong kind” of musical activity.

Fieldnotes: November 18, 2015, Waco, Texas. *It was my first business meeting after joining Lakeshore Baptist Church in 2015, held after the Wednesday evening meal and prayer service. The topic for discussion was a vote on whether or not to purchase a projector and screen for the church. The proposal had been brought forward by the associate pastor, Sharlande Sledge, and had been taken up by Sam, a middle-aged congregant who was economics professor at Baylor.*

“I’m just afraid that if we get a projector and a screen it will be a slippery slope, and eventually we’ll have drums and guitars and start singing praise choruses,” an elderly congregant said into the microphone. Sam responded, “We wouldn’t use it for

music or worship, but would use it for pictures and presentations. Remember how Bill's⁹ family wanted to have a photographic slide show at his funeral? This would allow us to do that." His attestation that the projector would not be used to show lyrics on the wall failed to convince those opposed to the idea. Sam and others in favor of the projector confirmed that they did not want to have "praise choruses" for worship, and that the projector was merely a tool to enhance the life of the church, but to no avail. The discussion was tense from the beginning, and it was obvious that the projector was a highly contentious issue. One congregant loudly voiced her opposition to the motion in no uncertain terms using language that can only be described as colorful. Others, too, were strongly opposed to the measure, citing fears that it would ruin the aesthetics of the sanctuary, distract from worship, or be a mis-allocation of funds.

The "younger" people (30s and 40s) I sat with during the discussion were equally amused and exasperated by the proceedings; at one point, after a dubious member had continually stated that she just could not picture how the projector and screen would look in the sanctuary, someone remarked – under their breath but loud enough to be heard, "if we had a projector I could show you." In the end, after some two hours of back and forth discussion, the vote went overwhelmingly against the projector, despite broad agreement among the elderly congregants that a projector would be nice for funerals.

Why did a Baptist church of Lakeshore's general description (see chapter one) so vehemently oppose the purchase of a projector and screen? It was

⁹ This is a pseudonym, not the deceased's real name.

evident from the discussion that the projector itself was not at the root of the opposition, as the majority agreed it would be a useful tool, but rather was the association of the projector with “praise choruses” and contemporary worship music, coupled with the belief that a projector’s purchase was a “slippery slope” toward musical change. Why, then, was the congregation at Lakeshore so opposed to “praise choruses,” to the point that it refused to buy a multi-functional piece of technology because it could facilitate their performance?

The answer to that question can be found in how the meaning of musical genre is bound up with both the history of Lakeshore and its relationships to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). During the 1980s and 1990s, the SBC experienced what is known either as the “conservative resurgence” or the “fundamentalist takeover,” depending on the perspective of the one speaking (Hefley 1991; James et al 1999), when the leadership of the denomination began pursuing a more explicitly conservative agenda. Lakeshore’s congregants overwhelmingly consider the event the “fundamentalist takeover,” and stories abound of the leadership of the church “contending against the fundamentalists” during the SBC meetings of the 80s and 90s. Lakeshore formally left the SBC in 2000, when it became clear to them that the “fundamentalists” had indeed taken over.

Interestingly, during the time of my research, the style of music used within worship is one of the most prominent reminders of Lakeshore’s painful break with the SBC. To Lakeshore’s congregants, “praise choruses,” or as

liturgical historians Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth call them, contemporary worship songs (2017), have come to symbolize “fundamentalism.” Just as Lakeshore broke with the SBC, so also did it attempt to expunge any music it felt smacked of fundamentalism. For Lakeshore, moving away from the SBC necessitated a rejection of contemporary worship music. Pastor Sharlande Sledge explained it like this:

20 some years ago we switched from the Baptist hymnal. ... We did a big study of what we were singing and what we were doing in worship, and we had been copying hymns from the book of hymns by Jane Parker Huber ... We ended up with *The Chalice* hymnal, which is the Disciples of Christ[’s hymnal]. [We weren’t moving] towards the Disciples of Christ, we were getting involved in the Alliance of Baptists and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, *moving away from all things SBC*, but trying to stay Baptist.

Perusing SBC hymnals since the split seems to confirm Pastor Sledge’s explanation. Since Lakeshore left the denomination, the SBC’s hymnal offerings have included an increasing number of songs considered “praise choruses” by Lakeshore’s congregants: contemporary worship songs make up no fewer than 189 of the 271 hymns in the *2008 Baptist Hymnal* absent from the SBC’s last hymnal offering before the resurgence/takeover, the *1991 Baptist Hymnal*.¹⁰

¹⁰ I do not count “modern hymns,” such as those written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, in this tally. If those and other similar songs were included the number would be well over 200. In addition to relying on Lim and Ruth’s definition of “contemporary worship songs” as a musical style that adapted the forms of pop, folk, and rock music for use during worship services, as well as using “updated English” rather than the somewhat archaic language of traditional hymns (2017, 8-11), I am also using the criterion of copyright ownership and original method of production in order to distinguish contemporary worship songs from traditional hymns: songs that are copyrighted by a record company and were originally distributed via recorded facsimile (CDs, MP3s, etc.) rather than as scores in a song book are considered contemporary worship here (Ingalls 2014).

While the *2008 Baptist Hymnal* was published some ten years after Lakeshore adopted *The Chalice*, Lifeway, the publishing wing of the SBC that produced the *2008*, did not compile the hymnal by assembling a committee of scholars and pastors to determine which songs should go in the hymnal, but rather developed a market research division, Lifeway Research, to determine which songs were the most appealing to certain age groups (Fultz 2010). Daniel D. Fultz, in his 2010 dissertation “Style Matters: Worship Preferences of University Students Regarding the use of Music and Technology,” noted that during the process of developing the *2008* hymnal, Lifeway Research published a series of articles claiming that while 70% of 16-year olds attend worship services at least twice a month, only 31% of 19-year olds do so. While the percentage of church goers recovered slightly as respondents aged, the conclusion drawn by Lifeway Research was that young people were leaving the church and, for the most part, were not returning (Fultz 2010, 10). As Fultz notes, Lifeway and other similar denominationally affiliated businesses accepted (or indeed, developed) the idea that musical style was an important means of retaining their members (11-13); it was this impulse that led Lifeway to place such high emphasis on contemporary worship songs in the *2008* hymnal,¹¹ as those were the songs that young people were listening to and enjoying as evidenced by their popularity

¹¹ Much more can be said about this development, including the rise of *Passion* conferences and other such extra-denominational events that helped to popularize the new worship music. For more, see Ingalls 2008, 2011 and Justice 2012.

and commercial success. The reasons for this connection are two-fold: first, as Fultz's work argues, people who use digital technology more in their daily lives are more apt to appreciate its use in worship, and second, the people who use technology more in their daily lives are primarily younger (93). As contemporary worship music is by and large a technologically driven activity in ways that extend beyond the boundaries of the "technology" of hymnals, organs/pianos and voices, it follows that younger people who appreciate the increased access to congregational music that newer technologies afford will be more appreciative of newer musical offerings (interestingly, Fultz states that the use of electronic technology such as a projector is associated with contemporary worship music across much of the Midwestern United States (10), perhaps revealing some of the reasons for Lakeshore's reticence to acquire one¹²).

As Philip V. Bohlman writes, "Music accumulates its identities... from the way it participates in other activities" (2000, 288-89). For Lakeshore's congregants, the SBC's move towards fundamentalism is symbolically represented by the SBC's concurrent embrace of contemporary worship music, and subsequently contemporary worship music symbolizes the SBC's turn toward fundamentalism to Lakeshore's congregants. However, For CJ and others, Lakeshore's musical genre communicated values of exclusion and out of touch traditions commonly associated with stuffy, dogmatic churches (later in

¹² For further discussion on the use of technology as a marker of musical genre in churches, see Lim and Ruth 2017 and Ingalls 2018.

our conversation, CJ and I noted how the genre of music at Lakeshore is often used in films to represent churches with backwards ways of thinking). Yet, Lakeshore's pastors and many of its congregants understand the values and convictions communicated by their musical genre as being progressive and inclusive; antithetical to their perception of SBC fundamentalism. These competing understandings of musical genre's discursive properties begin to illustrate how musical meaning, and subsequent ethical discourse, is often understood in very different ways. Yet this is, in some ways, unavoidable and even obvious, as people tend to gather with those who share their values and convictions; what it illuminates is how people gather around shared understanding of *the ways those values and convictions are expressed*. Often, agreement upon what these genres mean is configured in response to the negotiation of power that Samantha, Ron, and Nick discussed above. Another example will help illuminate the ways that communities are formed around agreement of generic musical meaning in response to power structures.

The Dingman Hypothesis: Musical Genre as Indicative of Exclusion or Inclusion on the Basis of Sexuality

During the spring of 2014, shortly after my first child was born, one of my wife's best friends came to visit us in Los Angeles, where we were living at the time. After church one Sunday, we were discussing some of what we had experienced and, as was our custom, "debriefing." Our friend, Tara, who is a married lesbian Christian, noted with some sadness that she knew she would

never be fully welcomed in the church we attended. This came as something of a surprise to us, as we were unaware of any position on the matter of LGBTQ affirmation by the church, and so we asked her how she knew. “Because of the music,” she said. Seeing our puzzled looks, she continued. “I liked the music. That’s the kind of music I want to worship to. But I know that churches that play that kind of music are not gay affirming.”

“The Dingman Hypothesis,” as we came to call it in honor of our friend, impelled my first ethnographic study of music in churches. During the winter and spring of 2015, I visited the 25 most popular non-denominational churches in Los Angeles as rated by YELP. I chose YELP as a way of gaining a cross section, and non-denominational because denominational churches tend to make their positions on human sexuality public. What I found was that the Dingman Hypothesis was 95.34% accurate (2 churches asked to be excused from the study, 2 churches had made public statements opposing same-sex relationships and prohibited LGBTQ persons from membership, and 1 of the remaining 21 did not match the prediction based on genre). Those churches that were not affirming of queer identities performed contemporary worship music (more specifically the subgenre of Modern Worship as defined by Ingalls, Mall, and Nekola 2013), and those that were affirming performed more traditional music, with only one exception. Further, during interviews for that project, I found that Tara’s perception was widely shared by LGBTQ individuals, suggesting that agreement on how genre communicates convictions and values in churches may be

achieved by groups who gather around other sources of agreement first (Myrick 2015).¹³

That communities form around shared conventions of musical meaning is undeniable: yet whether these communities are formed around musical meaning or around a different shared form of life that also informs their sense of musical meaning is less clear. The Dingman Hypothesis would suggest that LGBTQ communities do not necessarily form around a shared understanding of certain musical styles' meanings – LGBTQ persons did not choose to be so because they agreed upon what Modern Worship communicated as a genre – but rather that they agreed upon what those styles and genres meant as a community. Indeed, it suggests that musical communities form within – or in opposition to – other communities that are themselves formed around discursive agreement upon certain values and convictions, although musical meaning is an important site of those communities' discourse.

For congregants whose acceptance in certain churches is less up for debate, the ways in which musical genre and style communicate values and convictions is less dire, but still very important. Later in my interview with Heather and Lacey at SXSW, the subject of musical style came up in response to my question about music's function in church. As referenced in the opening

¹³ This research was conducted during the spring and summer of 2015 in Los Angeles, California. Data collected was analyzed using genre theory, along with qualitative and quantitative methods.

chapter, their responses are telling, and illustrate the difficulty inherent in implying generic markers to determine ethical values and convictions, and a closer examination of their comments will help draw this out.

L: So, when my parents told me as a kid, "Okay, you're a music major, you have to sing Christian music and that's how you worship God with your talents. That's how you give it back." And I thought that was so fucking boring, because all that music was so boring ... there's no emotion there. It's so completely lifeless." And so, "regular" music, you could say it saved me in that sense. It was like, I saved myself from death, constantly searching for new all the time, the way other people were searching in the Bible for answers, I was searching for music. I've served on worship teams for years, and it wasn't until I was on worship teams that I felt like worship was fakey. We were talking about creating these emotional arcs for people, like, 'we've got this fast song and we ramp them all up, and then we bring it into the really moving, orchestral pieces,' and then we'd slow it down for prayer, and during altar calls there's this background music that's supposed to, like, make you feel contemplative. [It] is just manipulative I still have a lot of cynicism about that, and I still serve on like, every month or two, my church does a contemplative service and that's the only time that I really participate in that kind of thing, because it's difficult.

H: That's what I've been wrestling with too. I come from a place of ex-cynicism. I love Hillsong, and I remember going to these church services and again, they just had this set playlist, and it was just, 'rise to the climactic moment, then downfall.' I guess where my tension comes in is, 'Ok, what's important in this? Is the intelligence important, is the emotion important?' Like, surely God did create the emotions, so surely they do have a role, so that's where my questioning is coming in where I want to have the grace."

Several things stick out about Heather and Lacey's exchange that will help this account of musical genre's discursive function. First, while both women are of similar age and background, each interprets the meaning and function of the same musical genre differently: Lacey feels that contemporary worship songs are "fucking boring," "fakey," and emotionless, causing her to become deeply

cynical, while Heather, sharing her cynicism, disagrees about the emotional content of contemporary worship music (specifically referencing Hillsong). Lacey's reflections give voice to many common narratives that were popularized during the "worship wars," such as emotional manipulation by worship leaders and contemporary music ministers, and evidence the ongoing destruction of both the "worship wars" discourse and the ways that discourse has assigned certain meanings of value and conviction to certain genres. Against the backdrop of division that their responses had set up, I then asked them, "Does music connect people in church?"

L: Growing up in the evangelical church, I felt like it was meant to be a personal connection between me and God, and they would tell us, 'close your eyes, it's just you and God, sing to God.' [I have a friend who's an atheist now] and she's said, 'one thing I really miss is singing with other people.' I go to the Episcopal church now, and it's like, we don't sing those same types of songs, we sing hymns. And for whatever reason hymns cross the intellectual divide for me, the theology is much richer..., but it's the singing with other people.

Heather tilted her head, thinking.

H: I have heard the argument where, contemporary worship today, in our culture, well like she said, is about you and God. And then you look at the hymns, everybody saying the same thing, it's the same type of tone, or whatever, and that makes it communal. *But for me personally, like I've been in both settings, and in settings where it has been more about the relationship between you and God, and not had the communal aspect, I've actually felt closer community [there]. ...in other scenarios where I've been, where you have the hymns, I personally don't connect with that community, ... I don't personally connect with anyone doing that.*

The effects of the "worship wars" discourse is more fully illuminated by this second exchange between the two women, revealing how that discourse shaped

the way many North American protestant Christians understand musical genres in worship. Thinking carefully about Lacey's comments reveals some of the values and convictions that she considers to be mediated by contemporary worship music: emotionalism divorced from authentic expressions of faith; adherence to unoriginally replicating current fashions and trends for the sake of popularity; hyper individualism; etc. Heather's reflection raises important questions that trouble Lacey's interpretations: is the emotionalism of contemporary worship music necessarily always divorced from authentic expressions of faith? Heather's comment, "surely God did create the emotions, so surely they do have a role," suggests that dismissal of the music on charges of emotionalism is short sighted (as is further evidenced by Lacey's self-contradiction). Against charges of hyper-individualism, Heather contends that she feels "more connected to those around her" in contemporary worship settings, even though worship experience is framed as being more individualistic. Their comments and the arguments implicit in them demonstrate the ideological divide that was a prominent feature of the worship wars, and this perceived dichotomy of emotion/individualism versus intellect/community was a hallmark of the discourse surrounding them.¹⁴

Importantly for my purpose in relaying this exchange, both women believed that the *function of musical discourse and discourse about music is to build*

¹⁴ This perceived dichotomy between emotion and intellect is important for my thesis, and I address it at length in chapter three.

community: Heather said “[music] connects me with other people”; Lacey said, “it’s a shared experience... people’s heart and emotion that you can hear and empathize with.” It is here that music is most like language, as Feld and Fox suggest; they fulfill humanity’s need for connection even as they generate that need (1994; 1999, cf. Cavell 1997). It is this deep need for relationships that gives music its power both to create and destroy. Music is not the only significant discursive means by which participants negotiate the relational power structures, nor is genre as I have just described it the only way to think about musical meaning making. Indeed, non-musical language surrounding musical genre – the means by which genres are often determined in actuality – is as important as the sonority of the music itself, often being the means by which generic meaning is established. Drawing from Porter again, the way we *talk about* music is often as ethically significant as the music itself. As philosopher Stanley Cavell argues in his epochal tome *The Claim of Reason* (1997), human beings fulfill their basic need for community via language; societies and communities are built around shared concepts and the words which are their forms of life. He draws this out with his humorous example of the man who calls his hamsters by making the sounds and expressions commonly associated with pain (88-89). In so doing, Cavell presents us with the underlying human need for language and communication by asking rhetorically: why are we so unsettled by the idea of someone who seems to violate the conventions of communicating pain by applying these same utterances to summon hamsters? It is because we need language in order to form

relationships, the core of what it is to be human (93-98). Yet language is profoundly unstable, and as the example of “hamster man” suggests, we experience great anxiety about our inability to control the meaning of words. Tragically, such anxiety often compels us to engage in destructive discursive – and indeed, even physical – practices. We need agreement in order to form relationships and develop communities, yet we cannot ultimately control the agency of the other people with whom we desire to have relationships. So, often, if there is misunderstanding or disagreement over what language means, then relationships are severed. Furthermore, distrust and anxiety may *cause* such misunderstandings and agreements, as Cavell’s analysis of Othello’s killing Desdemona because of his inability to control or fully know her (beyond what he knew of himself) in the final section of *The Claim of Reason*, “Between Acknowledgment and Avoidance,” suggests.

Cavell suggests that our words at once reveal us and open us up to the possibility of others’ self-worlds, challenging our own sufficiency in the forms of life that shared language and musical meaning entails. Our knowledge of the world is also our knowledge of ourselves; varying and constant as our language. Our words, then, confront us with ourselves – with our knowledge of what we know and what we do not know, or do not know we know, or what possible experiences we can have – and expose us to others. Ultimately then, knowledge and language are not ours alone to possess, for that will eliminate our self from our world (1997, 351). Instead, our competency in the shared forms of life that

language demands/facilitates/exposes is configured in the relationships that human beings have with one another.

This realization of the relational need for humans and relational nature of language clarifies what impelled the “worship wars” and what made them so destructive; musical discourse and discourse about musical meaning *built communities that were, by their very nature, mutually exclusive, because they were interwoven with peoples’ deepest values and convictions, on one hand, and the subsequent fears and anxiety over issues of control and agreement about meaning, on the other.* When values and convictions were ascribed to certain genres, relationships were formed or severed. More than that, the term “worship wars” and its attendant martial metaphors (barrage, assault, winner/loser, camp, marched, and so on) contributed to this destructive milieu.¹⁵ However individual these convictions may be, they are formed in the context of community and are inextricably concerned with the flourishing of that community – sometimes in opposition to others. Just as music is at its core an ordered relationship between pitches, timbres, units of time, etc., so the ethics of style and the convictions that inform it are inherently relational. As Jeff R. Warren points out in *Music and Ethical Responsibility* (2014), the relational component of music itself, coupled with the necessarily relational activity of music making, establishes the context wherein music and musical style carries ethical import for its participants (1-11).

¹⁵ For example, Peters 1994; Hamilton 1999; York 2003.

Such responsibility transcends the marketplace notion of paying for disposable musical artifacts and reaches into the world examined by Rommen; musical style has a discursive ethical element that is activated and empowered simultaneously by the relational power of music and the subsequent engagement with it by individuals who are communally and relationally responsible to each other. But when this responsibility is placed into conflict with responsibility to other convictions and commitments, especially theological and ethical claims, as is common in worshipping communities, unethical relationships result. Indeed, the suggestion that congregations were at war with each other (or within themselves) provided a violent impulse towards those who identified with a different set of sonic and social values and convictions. Yet thinking with Cavell reveals that these verbal acts of world-making often have tragic, destructive consequences. Ironically, when considered through the lens offered above by Porter it becomes clear that the *language* used to demarcate the battle lines was a part of the problem. Ted Peters may or may not have coined the term, but his eponymous article certainly propelled the term into popular and academic usage. Many others took up the moniker and its attendant terms: Marva Dawn's *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* (1995) extended the metaphor, although she rightly pointed out that the "worship wars" were a bad idea;¹⁶ Michael Hamilton's 1999 article in *Christianity Today*, "The Triumph of Praise Songs: how

¹⁶ The title of her book has its own set of combative implications.

guitars beat out the organ in the Worship Wars,” used terms like “revolutionaries” to describe the people whose identity was built around popular musical styles and the values associated with them; Terry York decried the militarism inherent in the discourse in 2003’s *America’s Worship Wars*, although he did not refrain from using language like “barrage,” “trenches,” and “assaults,”; even the journal *Liturgy* had an issue titled “Worship Wars” in 2004 (Ruth, 2017a). Yet thinking with Cavell suggests that the kinds of communities built around the language of warfare can only end in tragedy. As my interviewees make clear, the collateral damage of the verbal and musical combat is still present, and the fall-out is very real.¹⁷

Mark Galli’s 2011 article in *Christianity Today*, “The End of the Worship Wars,” claims that the worship wars are over, and Lester Ruth has suggested that we are in an age of “reconstruction” (2017a, 2017b). They may be right, but my point here is that naming conflicts and tensions over music for worship the “worship wars” was a bad idea to begin with, and that like all wars, there were no winners, only losers (Lester Ruth, C. Randall Bradley, and others would agree, see 2017b, 2012, for example). For protestant churches engaged in the conflict, the loss was manifold: first, losses were incurred among the faithful, as

¹⁷ Jonathan Dueck (2017) has argued that for his Canadian Mennonite interlocutors, the worship wars were primarily about an “aesthetics of encounter,” where embodied relationships were negotiated in theologically and even ethically loaded ways through music (5-6). I will discuss his work in coming chapters, although his robust and rigorous description of aesthetics and that descriptions attendant argument will have to be engaged at greater length in future research.

individuals and families left those churches who chose a different camp than the one with which they personally identified. Second, and perhaps more far reaching, the loss of integrity and esteem suffered by institutions continues unabated: terms such as “worship wars” suggest to outsiders a community more invested in triumph than in love, joy, goodness, or peace, for instance. This is not to say that real differences of preference or aesthetics should be paved over in the quest for unity. Rather, differences in taste, style and the values and convictions that they represent need to be recognized and affirmed, perhaps in the cosmopolitan manner that Porter suggests. Yet we need an ethical paradigm that moves beyond cosmopolitanism, and the coming chapters present a model for doing so.

Conclusion: From Communication to Community; Music's Way of Being in the World

Because music opens us up to ourselves and to others in ways that are relationally important, when considered in conversation with Cavell's account of language as community, music may be considered to have linguistic properties. Yet such conflating music and language fails to account for their differences: language is not music and music is not language, although each interprets the other in important ways. Such "reading" necessitates a differentiation that precludes any symbiotic conflation of music with language. Commonalities must also be acknowledged, however; music, like language, forms us, and initiates us into forms of life – communities with discrete values and convictions – through

providing mental constructs that are mutually encountered (Feld and Fox 1999), as Samantha, Ron, CJ, Bob and other suggest. These forms of life have the ability to create shared worlds and communities that are ethically significant. In a similar way to that of language, musical genre and style communicate values and convictions, although these are not universally agreed upon (Cavell 1997; Feld and Fox 1994, 1999). Agreement on the values and convictions communicated by specific genres and styles makes space for relationships and communities to form. Yet thinking with Cavell reveals how musical genres, like language, are unstable systems for meaning making, and thus cannot carry the weight of our human need for relationship. In the same way that language produces unstable communities which are ultimately tragic in that they *by necessity* exclude, so musical genres also exclude by necessity. But exclusion is not the sum total of the tragedy involved; as the worship wars demonstrate, assigning fixed moral meanings to musical genres produced communities that are constituted destructively towards each other.

This exploration of church music and – and as – discourse has revealed that musical genre indeed does have ethical power. When the meaning of musical genre is considered through the lens of Rommen’s ethics of style and musical discourse ethics as suggested by Porter, we see why the worship wars occurred in the first place, and why they were so destructive. They occurred because theological and social values and convictions were inconsistently ascribed to styles as inherently what they meant. Consequently, this loading of

ethical associations onto certain genres, as my interviews and observations suggest, raised the stakes of the discourse surrounding musical meaning, such that the communities formed around the various styles were framed in mutual opposition to one another. Also, and importantly, examining church music as a product of discourse reveals that any fixed definition of genre that does not take into account its ongoing discursive construction is unreliable and ultimately unsatisfactory. Moreover, genres do not determine ethical significance in and of themselves, but rather are bound up together in the various and diverse forms of life that constitute being human, needing in turn to be evaluated themselves in an ethical frame. As the discourse of “worship wars” suggest, the way we talk about musical genre is as impactful and ethically important as what the genres themselves communicate, particularly because they contribute substantially to what a given genre means. Musical genres, then, are not ethical systems, but are rather a means of discerning what ethical system lies behind a discrete musical practice, however unreliable that systematic means of discernment may be.

Many questions still remain: If discourse ethics are ultimately insufficient, are there ethical systems that will allow us to evaluate music’s way of being in church? Are there ways beyond commitment to a shared genre around which music communities may form? What kind of formation—whether individual or communal—occurs through musical participation, particularly in church music? Are the relationships and communities formed more than the sum of their

agreed upon meanings? It is to these questions that I turn in the next chapter,
“Formation.”

CHAPTER THREE

Formation: Musical Worship Constructing Affection

Introduction

This chapter examines music's particular contribution to the individual and communal formation that takes place during Christian worship. Drawing from my ethnographic research, I argue that music's formational power in worship is affective and emotional as well as intellectual, and relational as well as individual. This is to say that, while these elements are often separable for the sake of analysis, they are not separated in real life; in the same way that heart, lungs, and liver are analytically understood to be different, yet none can perform its function alone. Extending the metaphor further, it is quite obvious that if one or all three were removed from a body, that body would die. In the same way, while bad analysis fails to recognize difference, bad theorizing fails to recognize how concepts, elements, or experiences relate. Musical worship forms intellectually, but doctrinal pedagogy and intellectual formation alone do not account for all of the ways that we are formed in musical worship. This chapter adds the significant component of affect to the formative equation. I insist that both meaning (discussed in depth in chapter two) and affect are important for understanding music's way of being in the world (DeNora 2011; Partridge 2017). I suggest that music forms what some of my interlocutors call "emotional

intelligence”¹ in worshippers; that is to say, music helps to develop awareness of one’s own emotions and empathy for others’ in Christian communities.

Synthesizing approaches from the theological work of Don Saliers, James K. A. Smith, Jeremy S. Begbie, James F. Caccamo, and others, and from the musicological work of Jonathan Dueck, David Hesmondhalgh, Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen, and my own previous work, I further demonstrate that music uniquely forms “feelingful” (Dueck 2017) communities which are configured within and subsequently configure social and cultural “imaginaries,” to draw from Charles Taylor’s adaptation of Benedict Anderson’s formulation.

Music and Moral Agency

I must mention something here as a way of explaining my understanding of “music:” in this chapter, following Christopher Small (1998) and Monique Ingalls (2015), I am considering music as first an activity, then a text (record), of human volition. Christopher Small coined the neologism “musicking,” in order to emphasize music-making as an activity and to expand the purview of that activity beyond the creation of sound to any activity related to musical performance (1998). In the context of music in Pentecostal-charismatic worship,

¹ To be clear, emotional intelligence is a dubious term, and assumes a reason/emotion binary. However, the idea came up often enough in my interviews as to warrant addressing the idea specifically in this chapter. Read through the lens of Charles Taylor’s “social imaginaries” (2007), as the ways in which human beings imagine and understand their relationships with others and consequently how those relationships play out, the idea of emotional intelligence makes sense for how people experience others through music, and consequently how human agency marshals music’s moral agency in ethically important ways.

Ingalls (following Small), defines music making as “the broad range of activities that entails the creation, circulation, and reception of musical sound” (2015, 4), and I am defining it in this way as well. Music can also be understood as a context, a recording, a performance, or a “track” (Zac III 2001, Turino 2008, Hesmondalgh 2013, for example), and examining music as one or all of these will certainly yield fruitful insights. However, it is as an activity of human volition that can be made to leave a textual record that I consider it here. I do so because my concern is to examine music’s ethical significance. From an ethical standpoint, music is not a moral agent, that is, it is not responsible for how humans engage with it, although it may influence human agency in important ways.² In Christian ethical discourse, an agent is one who is capable of making decisions based on her understanding of right and wrong (Niebuhr 1963; Gustafson 1981; Hauerwas 2015, for example). Music is not a moral agent because music, that is, the relationally ordered sounds themselves, cannot be held responsible for the effects of their occurrence; you cannot prosecute a harmonic triad or melodic sequence in a court of law in the same way that any

² It should be noted that from other perspectives music may be understood to have agentive qualities; perhaps even to have a kind of non-human agency. For example, Bernd Brabec de Mori argues for an understanding of music as agent against Euro-centric understandings of both music and agency. Using Gell’s (1998) definition of agency as any entity that breaks the chain of causality, Brabec de Mori points out that many musicians from both Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric traditions often attribute their inspiration to non-human agents, such as deities and muses. Furthermore, drawing on Levinson’s (1990) “persona theory,” he observes that listeners often identify emotional personas as agents in the music, and attribute something of their emotional responses to that agency (often attributed to the author or performer of the song by my conversation partners). See Brabec de Mori 2017.

other sort of non-human agent cannot be so held accountable.³ Neither, therefore, can music be considered an “agent” from an ethical perspective, as to do so would be to suggest that the musical sounds themselves may be morally culpable, and therefore regulated (Cobussen and Nielsen 2012; Warren 2014).⁴ To give a specific example of how this is so, Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is not agentively responsible for how the Nazi torturers used it in Dachau; neither is the genre of heavy metal music responsible for its tortuous use by American interrogators in Guantanamo Bay (Warren 2014). As is clear from these examples, music is not a moral agent because it cannot be proven to be self-generating or directing, but rather requires the agency of another for its causality, that is to say, it is not volitional.⁵ In another sense of the word, music may be considered to

³ The example of trying a mis-behaving dog in medieval courts would be laughable save for its implications (see Taylor 2003 for more). This particular line of thought raises different ethical questions relating to ontology: is a “good” dog one who does not bite, or is the “good” dog the one who does? Does it depend on what the purpose of a dog is and how well it fulfills that purpose? To further illustrate this point, substitute the word “wolf” for “dog;” what is a “good” wolf? Is it one that behaves as wolves ought, hunting and chasing and biting? Or is it one that abandons those activities and conforms to human standards of “goodness?” My point in this is that even when we may put a violent or ill animal down for its own good or the good of a community, we are not ascribing moral culpability to it on its own terms, but rather on ours, thus establishing ourselves as the moral agent in this sense.

⁴ This presents something of a challenge in analyzing my ethnographic interviews, as many of my interlocutors speak about music as if it is an agent, or an abstract principle. For instance, during my fieldwork at SXSW, a Fuller student said that music “makes meaning” in the context of a discussion about what music does.

⁵ However, music affords certain effects and uses; just as a chair affords sitting (Cavell 1997) or a doorknob affords turning (Gibson 1979), so music affords affective responses. There is not space in this dissertation for an argument about whether or not these criteria hold for humans as agents as well. Theologically, I do affirm that in the truest sense, only God is an agent. Yet drawing from theologians such as H. Richard Niebuhr and James M. Gustafson, I affirm that human agency is a limited affair, with constraints placed upon them by God and other. See Niebuhr 1963 and Gustafson 1981.

have a non-human agency (Brabec de Mori 2017), in that it elicits certain sensations, ideas, and affects among individuals who have been socialized previously to its accepted meanings within a given society. But, because I assume that music influences human agency, yet is not a moral agent itself, I treat music as an activity that has formative properties, meaning that its way of being in the world influences human agency and volition by stimulating or perhaps even engendering emotion and affection within a given context – effects which, in turn, form individuals and activities.

This chapter demonstrates through engagement with scholarly literature, ethnographic inquiry, and theological reflection that emotion and affection are a) formed and developed through action and participation in musical worship, and b) employed in the process of configuring relational moral postures and attitudes towards self and others, and therefore influencing human volition and agency. Having drawn this out into the open, I show how this kind of formation has ethical implications, yet is not an ethical theory unto itself. Further, ethical theories such as “narrative formation ethics” of Christian worship and practice, as put forward by Stanley Hauerwas and others, do not account for the affective and emotional importance and power of music, and are subsequently limited in their scope. I similarly contend that narrative formation ethics are overly deterministic, and do not account sufficiently for human volition and agency: formation is not an ethical theory, per se, as ethics are concerned with determining the goodness of what we are being formed into.

Terminology. Before I begin, a few words about words, rather, terminology, are in order. This chapter deals with emotions, feelings, affections, and desires, and the relationships between these concepts/experiences/states and music, and there is often significant overlap between the meanings and uses of these terms. Drawing from music psychology and neuroscience, I take emotions and feelings to be synonymous, and mean by them the instinctive mental states that arise in response to physical and relational experiences and stimuli, as distinct from “mood” by virtue of their responsive relationship to causes and effects (Nussbaum 2001; Roberts 2007; Begbie 2011; Hicks 2016; Partridge 2017). From liturgical and ethical theology, I mean by affection the intrinsic loves that drive human desires and move us towards action (Kadushin 1963; Saliers 1979; Hirschkind 2006; Smith 2009; Hauerwas and Wells 2011; etc). By affect, I mean the causal relationship of one thing (whether this is a concept, object, person, or idea) to another, especially as it pertains to emotions and feelings (Saliers 1979; Nussbaum 2001; Becker 2004; Hesmondhalgh 2013). For example, Hesmondhalgh says that musical activity (making music, listening to music, dancing to music) is profoundly affective in that it engenders feelings and emotions in response (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 2-4).

Affection, Reason, and ‘Emotional Intelligence’

As I noted in the introductory chapter, the difficulty of relating music (especially church music), worship, and ethics, is that they are seldom treated

together at length in scholarly work. However, treating them together is necessary for two reasons: first, my ethnographic research suggests that people experience music, worship, and ethics together. Second, scholars frequently treat two of these topics while leaving out the third. Yet, the points of overlap between these scholars (as well as others) coupled with the accounts offered by my ethnographic conversation partners suggest that these topics must be treated together in order to make sense of music's ethical way of being in the world – and especially its way of being in church.

Music and emotion are often linked in popular discourse. In addition to connecting through discursive communication, and in contrast to the responses offered by the church leaders I interviewed, the comment that I heard most often from my lay conversation partners was that music engages human emotions. In response to my question, "what does music do," Bev, a middle-aged choir member from Lakeshore, said "Music is for inspiration; it is where words stop... Starts to tap into the emotional side [of human life]." When I asked Mary, a Fuller student interview at SXSW, if music influenced her sense of well-being, she noted that music can uniquely *express* emotions: "sometimes that's the only medium where people authentically express emotions," and because of that unique expressive ability we are able to feel alongside others, "it gives me a snapshot into ... the emotions that [the singer or writer or performer is] feeling."

Others noted that music was able to invoke emotions, both positively and negatively: even Lakeshore's Senior Pastor, Kyndall Rothaus, responding to the

question of well-being, said, "Music ... unlocks emotions in me that I didn't even know [were] possible ... There are certain songs that makes you cry... [but] in terms of emotional well-being, I think that music can reach a place that words can't reach yet." Still others, such as Aaron, a hospice chaplain in his early 30s who attended Lakeshore, said that music both expresses emotion and also invokes emotion: "it's a way that we're able to express ourselves, to emote in a lot of ways. It can also be a source of comfort. So, it is a way that we emote but it's also a way that we kind of can bring emotions into our lives. We can be affected by music as well, which can change our disposition in one way or the other."

It was overwhelmingly clear that music was *valued* by my research participants for its ability to engage human emotions on a level that words cannot. This valuation of emotion implies that music's value is primarily determined by its emotional abilities for my interlocutors: as Lacey put it, music is bad when it is emotionless; when "there's no emotion," but, as Derek Davidson, Harris Creek's youth director said, it is good when "it expresses authentic emotions."

In describing music's effect on human emotions, my conversation partners in the field did not stop at the level of the individual. Many, such as Kim, a youth intern and worship leader at Harris Creek in her early 20s, noted that it is this emotional aspect of music that connects us to others in important ways. In response to my question of what music does, she said that music "connects people from different walks of life and brings them together with some

shared experience ... it connects [with] emotions that you can't put words to." I asked her how it did that, and she said, "I think part of it is being able to write about joy, and heartache, and pain, and things that people universally feel. And so [music] brings people together through those emotions." Because of this, she encounters others on "a more vulnerable level," through music, as "[we're] sharing our experience[s] and emotions. And so, there's an element of danger to it" when she performs or leads musical worship."

An essential part of music's way of being in the world, then, is its affective power; as expression, as invocation, and as space for emotional interaction with others. As far back as the Classical Greek philosophers such as Damon, Plato, and Aristotle, scholars have noted that music can elicit emotion and affection; can make people *feel* something emotionally, which led Plato in particular to famously imagine that music should be regulated in an ideal society. More recently, Peter Rinderle has argued that music's emotional power is ethically significant by virtue of its ability to enliven the listener's imagination and therefore form how he or she understands him or herself (2011).⁶ Rinderle builds this claim by arguing that music's most important feature is its ability to express emotions, which he terms its quality of "expressivity" (21-33). He further connects this expressivity to emotion by way of aesthetic pleasure; human

⁶ Rinderle connects this emotional power to its aesthetic influence, arguing that both read each other in ethically important ways. His ideas about the relationship of music, emotion, and ethics to aesthetics are intriguing, but fall beyond the scope of this dissertation, and must be left for future research.

emotions are elicited when aesthetic beauty is encountered. He concludes by claiming that such emotional expressivity forms one's "private and public orientation" (21).

However, many church music scholars have downplayed this aspect of music's way of being in the world. For instance, Harold M. Best, in *Unceasing Worship* (2004), emphasizes the didactic "nature" of music in worship over and above its affective nature (146-150). While he acknowledges that there may be emotional aspects to music's "nature," he argues against their importance in worship, and warns against confusing emotional states with God's presence (149-50).⁷ Others echo him, and indeed the trend in much scholarship on church music until comparatively recently has been to downplay the emotional aspects of music in Christian worship⁸ (for example, Johansson 1984, 1992; Routley 1967, 1978; Mitchell 1978; Lovelace and Rice 1976; Hustad 1989; Best 1993, and others).⁹

⁷ Best also notes that music is not "morally or spiritually causal" (148), however, he takes this lack of causality to indicate a lack of moral significance for music.

⁸ This trend reflects broader trends in musicology to reject "emotionalism" in art in general and music specifically. Early 20th century composers and scholars alike decried the emotionalism that they believed led to World War I, with Igor Stravinsky famously saying that music was "essentially incapable of expressing anything" such as feelings or emotion (1963, 53). Eduard Hanslick is equally famous for his argument against emotion in music in *The Beautiful in Music*, and while his text was published in 1891, and therefore predates the World War I justification for a repudiation of emotion in music, it seems to have paved the way for the backlash that followed that particular cataclysm. However, more recent scholarship has begun to seriously examine music's emotional aspects, with Leonard B. Meyer's *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956) often being cited as reviving this scholarly interest. See Auner 2013 and Budd, 2002.

⁹ Hustad in particular does note the importance of emotion in musical worship, but does so with an unqualified priority of cognition and intellectual meaning, arguing that emotion becomes mere sentimentality if it is not embraced with a proper understanding of the text and meaning of the song (31-37).

Still, the question of how exactly music engages human emotions remains unsettled, and there is much debate over this connection: how, exactly, does music engender human emotions?

Several scholarly accounts in the last decade, ranging from music theology to communication studies to moral philosophy, shed light on this question.

Jeremy S. Begbie, in his chapter “Faithful Feelings: Music and Emotion in Worship,” (2011) argues that a fruitful way of disentangling the web of thought that surrounds music, emotion, and reason may be that of “contour theory,” where the sounds of the music mimic the bodily gestures associated with certain feelings, such as “cheerful” music being loud and in the upper registers, whereas “sad” music is slow, soft, and in the lower registers (342).

Begbie begins his argument by providing a thorough review of scholarship on emotion from anthropological, psychological, neuroscientific, and philosophical disciplines (324). He notes that, despite heated debates within the various disciplines, basic human emotions such as fear, happiness, sadness, anger, and disgust are usually “gleaned” from observing the “classic triad,” described as “involving the interplay between *conscious experience*... expressive *bodily behavior* ... and *physiological activation* (325, *italics original*). He goes on to argue that emotions are not only private affairs, but are intensely social experiences, in that people recognize and relate to the emotional states of others. This points to an understanding of emotion as being integrally aligned with cognition; that is to say, emotion and reason are not opposed to each other.

Instead, they are mutually constitutive (326-329). Our emotions are profoundly influenced by what we believe, that is, what we understand to be true about the world, and in turn our beliefs are influenced by our emotions, by what we feel (330-1); we think about and with our feelings and feel about and with our thinking. Begbie continues this line of reasoning and suggests that we evaluate our emotions based on their truthfulness, that is, based on their relationship to real objects (331). An emotion or feeling that is not connected to an object (or experience) is an “ill-founded emotion,” or, “inappropriate” while an emotion that is connected to an object or experience is “well-founded,” or “appropriate” (333). He goes on to argue that these connections between emotions and reality are (at least partly) manifest in the human body, as the “classical triad” suggests, thus bringing him to contour theory (338-340).

He strengthens this argument for contour theory by pointing out the rhythmic characteristics that human bodies share with music, such as heartbeats, and regular breathing (344), and the ways that musical harmony mimics the human need for relationship (345-6). In thinking about music as a metaphor for human relationships, Begbie suggests that dissonances and consonances may generate some of their emotional efficacy by virtue of their association with resolution or distress (347). To this I might add that the physical sound waves jostling for position as they move through time and space – bouncing into one another – may also give an account of the bodily sensation of dis-ease that often accompanies dissonant harmonies.

Begbie is careful to note that there are some drawbacks to contour theory, such as a tendency to assume that the correspondence between musical sounds and certain behaviors implies an association by way of resemblance; instead, he suggests that the similarity occurs at the level of neurological processing (347-8). He goes on to note that contour theory may be too restrictive, as in some instances music may invoke more than memory of public bodily movements (such as the desire to move bodily). Further, he notes that just because a song sounds sad, it may not invoke an emotion, but may only make us *think* of sadness as a concept (348).

In concluding “Faithful Feelings,” Begbie hints at how music in worship may enliven our emotional and relational lives, and thereby discloses some of God’s self to worshippers. Yet, he scarcely touches on how this emotional enlivening and renewal may be formative, although he does note that musical worship unites people and builds relationships (337, the idea of formation seems to be a latent suggestion throughout the chapter). While pointing out that the emotional power of music is profoundly open to abuse, he makes few suggestions for safeguarding against such abuses (he mentions avoiding excessive ornamentations, emotional manipulations, and self-indulgence as practices to avoid, 353). Further, he points out that emotion plays a critical role in moral decision making and suggests that this points to music’s ethical importance. But, as his aim is to give an account of music’s emotional impact, he does not develop this observation beyond making it.

Media studies and communications scholar David Hesmondhalgh, in his monograph *Why Music Matters* (2013), argues that music “enrich[es] our lives via the feelings and emotions it engenders” (11). He argues, as Begbie does, that music engenders emotions by way of imitation or representation, noting that it can also invoke and express emotion (12). He further insists that accounts of musical affect need to move beyond notions of aesthetic experience (such as the concept of “beauty”) and include experiences of non-aesthetic experiences of music, “such as relaxation and invigoration” (14). Yet he applies his work where Begbie suggests others ought: to examining how this affective ontology of music has significance for values and ethics (14).

Drawing on Martha Nussbaum’s assertion that affection must be considered in providing an account of human flourishing (2001), Hesmondhalgh argues that the public enjoyment of music provides the basis for private and public formation. Thinking alongside of Nussbaum’s (and others’) assertion that relationships are ontological for human beings, and therefore that healthy relationships are crucial for human flourishing, he suggests that it is due to this need for good relationships that music’s affective power forms relational identities through habitual music making and listening (14-21, c.f. 109 ff). His argument is a compounding one: we enjoy music, and how it makes us feel, so we enjoy it with others, which in turn makes us enjoy it even more, and we enjoy others because of our enjoyment with music. Our mutual enjoyment spreads, and becomes a public mode of affection, such as popular music concerts or

dances (his examples, see also Frith 1996). However, Hesmondhalgh's argument that music contributes to human flourishing – and is therefore an ethical good – through enjoyment and relationship building does not provide an account of music's ability to influence decision making, and while his defense of music is "critical," his emphasis is on the positive rather than the evaluative.¹⁰

Furthermore, he does not engage musical worship in any sense. He does note, for instance, that the decline in church attendance has precipitated a decline in musical literacy for many (105), and that "music [has the] ability to bridge differences of religion and sexuality" (10), and he draws from Emile Durkheim's suggestion of "collective effervescence" delineating the sacred and secular divide in religious rituals that ostensibly involved music (118), but beyond that he does not engage religious aspects of musical activity.

On the subject of formation through and because of affections, Reformed theologian James K.A. Smith offers important insight for unpacking how affections form moral character. In his 2009 book, *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith argues that people are most profoundly shaped by the activities that they love (46 ff). By using the example of a shopping mall as liturgy, Smith suggests that human beings are formed more profoundly by what they love than by what they think; that is to say, *character is formed by our affections more so than by our reasoning*

¹⁰ Of course, there is a less enjoyable side of music, and Hesmondhalgh is careful to give it address as well: music's affective elements can be marshaled for destructive and non-flourishing purposes.

(47-50). Instead, our reasoning is *informed* by our affections, and we justify that which we love (51-55). While his stated intention was to write a book about formation in Christian education (17-18), Smith connects this formation to the rituals and liturgies of our daily lives (such as the example of a shopping mall), and further applies his theories to weekly worship gatherings, arguing that worship plays an inextricable role in such formation. However, while he mentions music briefly, his interaction with music's formative aspects is largely confined to its didactic and lyrical themes and content; to its *meaning* in a very narrow sense (170-173). Further, while he speaks of bodily sensations, memory, and learning, he makes no mention of musical worship's emotional importance.

Filling this gap in Smith's work, Zac Hicks, in his practical book *The Worship Pastor* (2016), connects this affective formation through music explicitly to the context of musical worship in Protestant churches. He argues that music is "uniquely suited ... to traverse the terrain towards emotional maturity" (149). Further, he suggests that emotional maturity is a means of guiding human affections towards right postures, attitudes and reasoning: quoting Ashley Null (2001), he writes "What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies" (145).¹¹ As Hicks' focus in this argument is on offering practical insight for "worship pastors" (along with arguing for the validity of that term and its attendant concepts), he does not develop this suggestion beyond making it.

¹¹ For further study on the theological importance of emotional formation, see Roberts 2007.

Providing rich philosophical theorization, Martha Nussbaum's work offers a fruitful source for weaving together the threads of music and ethics with emotion and affection.¹² In her 2001 book *Upheavals of Thought* (that both Begbie and Hesmondhalgh build on), she applies psychoanalytical theory to understand how emotions affect human reasoning. She argues that emotions involve important judgements about persons, events, and ideas (19). She further suggests that emotion is meaningless unless it is narratologically constructed, meaning that human feelings are always connected to stories and experiences (236). Intriguingly, she specifically relates narrative emotions and judgment making to music, arguing that music enlivens our deep emotions that influence our thinking and judgments (259-265).

Nussbaum's work is helpful in starting to unpack Heather's comment about "emotional intelligence:" "[Music makes me more] emotionally intelligent. It makes me more emotionally aware of myself, but it also connects me with other people." Simply stated, "emotional intelligence" describes the ability to identify one's own emotions, and to empathetically identify the emotions of another (Salovey and Meyer 1990, 185), and makes an explicit claim to the connection of emotion to reason, and, drawing from Nussbaum, judgements.¹³

¹² I will engage her work at greater length in chapter four.

¹³ The term "emotional intelligence" has been brought to popular attention by Daniel Coleman in his 2006 book, *Emotional Intelligence*, although that book has drawn intense criticism. See Murphy 2006.

Other scholars, such as John Pellitteri et al (1999) have connected emotional intelligence to music. In their article, “Music: The Sounds of Emotional Intelligence,” Pellitteri et al argued that music making and listening can teach emotional intelligence to children and middle schoolers (their immediate subject matter), helping them recognize their own emotions and the emotions of others. Another study by Resnicow et al (2004) concluded from analyzing a focus group that identification of emotion in music corresponded significantly to emotional intelligence (145), although they did not conclude that the correspondence was causal.

Whether or not music has a causal relationship to emotional intelligence (if such a thing even exists, see Barrett 2017), people engage music as if it did. Again and again, my conversation partners described seeing and identifying with the emotional states of others – as well as their own – as being a hallmark of music in general, and church music in particular: hearing the emotions of others, identifying with them, feeling alongside others, etc. The significance of these reflections is helpfully drawn out by thinking with Charles Taylor’s idea of “social imaginaries,” the “ways in which [people] imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go between them and their fellows” (2007, 171). Read through the lens of Taylor’s formulation, the idea of “emotional intelligence,” as expressed by Heather and others, reveals how people imagine music to form and inform their ability to relate to others in emotional and consequently affective ways. Thinking further, the ability to

imagine (rather than to theorize, per Taylor) the social relationships we embody through musical listening and participation allows us to (imaginatively) encounter others in emotionally profound ways.

Compound Ritual Entrainment: Emotional Efficacy and Relationships

The ways that musical activity configures our social imaginaries affectively are complex and multivalent. In addition to contour theory, as laid out by Begbie and Hesmondhalgh, the phenomenon of entrainment is another way of getting at how music engenders emotions in human beings and connects us to others in profound ways, with the added benefit of accounting for the physical existence of music as sound that interacts with human bodies.

Entrainment is the phenomenon of two independent rhythmic oscillators synchronizing their rate of oscillations when in proximity to one another without direct physical contact, provided a suitable coupling factor is present.

Entrainment occurs in human beings in myriad ways, and importantly it can occur when people listen to or make music (Clayton et al 2005, Clayton 2013, etc).

In several laboratory experiments, musical entrainment has been found to activate the area of the human brain thought to be associated with emotions, such that when our brain rhythms synchronize with music we experience emotional sensations (Juslin and Sloboda 2011; Trost et al 2014; Labbe and Grandjean 2014; Aksentijevic et al 2014; Vuilleumier and Trost 2015, for instance). I have argued elsewhere that musical entrainment is important for

understanding the emotional efficacy of musical worship (Myrick 2017). My study of worshippers at the National Worship Leader Conference in Dallas, Texas, showed that successive experiences of entrainment during musical worship heightened the emotional intensity of relational bonds in those communities, but that whether or not those relationships were healthy depended on the negotiation of relational power during and surrounding the musical events. The theory I offered, Compound Ritual Entrainment (CRE), suggests that through interaction with the physical phenomena of entrainment (independent rhythmic oscillatory process adjusting rate and speed [tempo] to match another's) in congregational settings of musical participation, human affections and relationships (and even identity) are formed and informed through regular, ritual participation in the activity of congregational song. In this theory of entrainment and formation, the independent rhythmic oscillations of human beings (biorhythms) become "entrained," or matched up, with those of others in the context of musical participation. In this way, the music acts as the "coupling factor" for the entraining phenomenon; it does not "synchronize" with people, but rather people entrain with other people through the presence of musical rhythms.¹⁴ The quality of this formation is contingent upon the enculturation of the individual (the cultural proficiency they possess) and the negotiation of

¹⁴ It should be noted that people can become entrained merely to the music, but such entrainment does not result in the same meaningful experience as singing together with other people, nor does it construct meaningful bonds of relationship with others in this manner.

relational power dynamics inherent in any ritual activity. Whether the experience is remembered as positive or negative is determined in part by the ritual negotiation of power dynamics in worship: between the people and God; between the worship leader and the congregation; between the congregation members themselves; between the pastor and worship leader; between the pastor and the congregation.¹⁵

The way that musical activity embodies our social imaginaries through entrainment also has an aesthetic characteristic to it that clarifies the points of relational contact between emotion and formation (Rinderle 2011). Jonathan Dueck, in his 2017 monograph *Congregational Music, Conflict, and Community*, argues that musical aesthetics (as distinct from style or theology) “articulate with an individual’s memories of the feelingful social relationships formed around their own history of musical performance and listening” (11). He goes on to ground his understanding of aesthetics in the real world of human musical interactions, examining the “meanings church music accrues through use over time, through individual and social memory” (14). Dueck’s work emphasizes that the primary value of musical worship for his interlocutors was neither the style nor the theology, but rather the social relationships that are formed,

¹⁵ I argued that “when this ritual practice is performed as entraining participation in congregational music making, a further depth of emotional significance may be achieved by virtue of physiological unity. This depth is then indexed symbolically and re-performed into being each time the activity is meaningfully engaged in (depending in part on the negotiation of relational power dynamics), resulting in a cycle of deeper and stronger commitment to the ritual of congregational singing” (2017, 92).

strengthened, and remembered through musical worship (2, 45ff.) These relationships are profoundly embodied, with the physical acts of singing and playing inhabiting an integral role in musical worship's significance – what he calls affect; “embodied feelings” (117). This embodied relationship draws out how in musical worship our social imaginaries are embodied and how that embodiment is fundamental to the efficacy of both personal and relational formation.

Taking Begbie, Hesmondhalgh, Nussbaum, Dueck, and my own previous work together suggests that music interacts with embodied¹⁶ human emotions in at least one of three ways: music is involved in 1) expressing emotion; 2) mimicking emotion; 3) eliciting or invoking emotion – often all at the same time. Furthermore, the emotions associated with music often involve other people, either in memory, in immediate physical contact, in relationships, and in a host of other ways – this is a part of music's way of being in the world. Taking these “social imaginaries” together with Nussbaum's argument that human beings are neither only sentient nor only emotive, but are both at the same time, suggests that the affective aspects of music are ethically significant; reason and emotion converge in human bodies in musical activity. These observations further clarify the ethical significance of music's role in producing affect by highlighting that the way we imagine ourselves to be in relationships with others is oriented by

¹⁶ I flag “embodied” not as a way of distinguishing this kind of emotions from another such kind, but rather to emphasize the point that musical emotions are always embodied.

how we feel about them, which is informed by rationality and affections. Thinking with Smith reveals that we are formed as individuals and communities according to what we love and desire; our affections. When applying this suggestion directly to the context of musical worship as Hicks does, it reveals that music may indeed form ethical emotions – “faithful feelings” – in congregants, and that the “feelingfulness” of musical worship is always and again a relationally formative affair. In order to give some concrete examples of this line of theorization, I turn now to conversations from my fieldwork at Harris Creek Baptist Church to reveal how church music might form us in ethical ways.

Musical Worship and Formation: Music’s Way of Being at Church

As a church that has a long and complex history and a series of tangled affiliations, Harris Creek Baptist Church proved a fascinating lens through which to examine music’s affective formation within worship occurs. Harris Creek is one of the older Baptist congregations in the Waco area, being founded in 1880. The church is affiliated most closely with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), but is also affiliated to a lesser extent with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), although Drew Greenway, Worship and Care Pastor at Harris Creek, says that they are “Bad Baptists,” and that they only send money for missions to these organizations, and do not participate in the conventions or assemblies.

I met Drew for coffee at Pinewood Coffee Roasters in early December, 2017. We had spoken on several occasions before and had developed good rapport with each other. My conversations with Drew, in addition to discussing my primary research questions, touched on his philosophy of music in worship, as well as some of the background of the church. Having served at Harris Creek for ten years,¹⁷ Drew was the longest tenured staff person at the church and was thus able to speak with some authority to both the history and philosophy of worship in the church. In response to my question, “What role do you see music playing in Harris Creek's worship services?” Drew’s first response was “that’s a big question!” After gathering his thoughts, Drew responded that he saw music’s role at Harris Creek as having emotional impact that combined with the meaning and lyrics,

to give people truth to sing throughout their entire lifetime. I use this example all the time; my grandmother had Alzheimer's and died. She forgot- she read her Bible like crazy and she loved music like crazy, and by the end of her life she couldn't remember any Bible verses, she couldn't remember anybody's name, but she would remember lines and lines and lines of hymns and songs. That really helped me define something I already knew, which was, it's our job – liturgy's job is to give people a voice for the different seasons of their life. ... And that's why we're kind of halfway into to the church calendar. I think giving people some rhythm to their lives, some meaning to these services that are kind of added to the normal Sunday routine. [For example] Advent; you know, we never did Advent growing up. I just knew we sang Christmas songs when it was

¹⁷ The relative shortness of Drew’s tenure indicates that the church has recently re-established itself after some tumultuous years, which Drew described during the course of our conversation.

around Christmas time. It wasn't ever this, like, 'Holy expectation [of] Christ coming,' and what he's going to do in the world. That's some cool stuff to give people [to think about].

As was common for church leaders during my fieldwork, Drew framed his comments about music's role in church by emphasizing the didactic nature of musical worship's meaningfulness as being more important than its affective power. While not explicitly addressing formation, his comments suggest at least two significant themes that are both well established and also important for my purposes here. First, Drew's philosophy that liturgy should give people a meaningful, narrative guide throughout their lives agrees with much of the literature on formation in worship: that it is by engaging the Christian narrative and living intentionally into it that the faithful are formed (see Saliers 1998 [1979]; Hauerwas 1975, 2015; Hauerwas and Wells 2011; for example). By embracing the liturgical calendar for its worship planning, Harris Creek (as well as the other two churches studied in this dissertation) has sought to provide a broad, far reaching structure by which its congregants can make feelingful connections between the seasons of their lives and the story and theology of the Christian faith. Considered in the context of musical worship, Harris Creek's embrace of the liturgical calendar merges meaning with affection (although Drew was careful to note the meaning of the songs over and above their feeling). James K. A. Smith's connection of affections to character formation and reasoning help to unpack Drew's reflection on his Alzheimer grandmother's ability to recite lines and lines of hymns even after she had lost her ability to

remember the bible passages she memorized so zealously or the names of family members. Yet his comments also beg important questions that point to one of the central arguments of this chapter: that *music forms and shapes affections in particularly profound ways* – even when those ways are unrecognized or unacknowledged. How is it that Drew’s grandmother remembered the lines and tunes of hymns but not names of family nor passages of scripture? Indeed, it would be dubious to conclude that Drew’s grandmother loved hymns more than her family or more than her Bible. Yes, our affections and desires shape us, and as humans, our reasoning is often in support of what we love (Smith 2009, 51, Caccamo 2004), yet, as Daniel Levitin (2007) and others contend, we remember our loves more clearly when they are accompanied by music (229 ff). Drew’s grandmother had been formed through her habitual love of hymns in such a way that even after many faculties of memory had been ravaged by Alzheimer’s she could still recall and be comforted by the hymns she loved because their lyrics were set to music. Thinking with the scholars cited above, and especially the reflections of my conversation partners, it is music’s ability to engender affections and invoke and enliven emotions that facilitates this deep formation. This connection between emotion and formation was on display in several instances during my fieldwork, and I turn now to my observations of the worship service from All Saints Sunday at Harris Creek to describe one instance of how meaning and emotion converge in human bodies during musical worship that form social and relational imaginaries.

Fieldwork at Harris Creek, November 05, 2017, McGregor, Texas. *The band finishes "Brave" and Rebecca Harris transitions into the next song with "Amen. Let's continue singing this morning." The band moves seamlessly into "O Praise the Name (Anastasis)" by Hillsong Worship (2015), also in the key of Eb. Following "O Praise the Name," Harris reminds the congregation that this Sunday is All Saints Day, a day when Christians remember those who have "gone before" them, inspiring or instructing them either through personal contact or through sharing heroic stories of the saints. The practice of remembering All Saints Day is not common in the Baptist tradition that Harris Creek belongs to, and Harris makes a point to clearly and simply explain the significance of the day. She then invites the congregation to make their way to the front of the sanctuary and place one of the poppy flowers lying on a table in front of the stage into one of the vases on the table during the next song in remembrance of a deceased friend or family member. The keyboardist affects a pad in G underneath this explanation, and holds the pad while Harris leads the congregation through a responsive reading of Hebrews 12:1. At the close of the reading, the band strikes up "Faithful to the End," by Paul and Hannah McClure (2016), joining the pad to play the song. As they do so, two lines begin to form in each of the aisles leading to the stage, as congregants place poppies in the vases in memorial of their lost loved ones. This ceremony continues throughout the song, and I notice that several worshippers are crying as they place their poppies in the vase.*

Perhaps sensing the meaningfulness of the moment, or perhaps scheduled in anticipation of its effect, the band transitions without pause into the final song of the set, "Before the Throne of God Above," a Public Domain hymn texted by Charitie Lees

Bancroft in 1863 and re-popularized by Keith and Kristen Getty, as well as other worship leaders in the early 21st century. The congregation continues placing poppies as they sing heartily along to "Before the Throne." The band vamps on the refrain as the last of the congregation completes the ceremony, and Harris invites us to be seated.

Analysis. There are several aspects of the ritual of the poppies that make it an affective and formative experience. First, the congregation was encouraged to acknowledge and indeed embrace their emotions; to process and grieve the loss of family and friends during the ritual of placing poppies in the vases while singing as a congregation. Second, this encouragement of emotional expression was extended by coupling music with this act of grieving. During my interview with Derek, a youth minister I met during my visit on All Saints Sunday, he explained how the music coupled with that particular ritual to minister to the emotional health of the congregation, and to form (or re-form, as the case may be) healthy emotional postures. In response to my question, "can music heal," Derek responded,

Yes, totally, totally. I can even think of an example of seeing people in church that I know are going through really hard times. Recently there was a 19-year-old in our church that passed away in his sleep. I saw his mom in church next week and as I see her worshipping I can feel that, [I] can see that maybe [she's] singing the things she wants to say or wants to think. And not like ignoring the pain. But like trusting God with the pain. So. Yes, I definitely think music can heal.

Earlier in our conversation (in response to my question "what does music do?"), Derek had spoken of music's ability to influence his emotional well-being, and in

relaying this story, he connected that understanding of music's affective power to the ways that music assists in emotional healing and faith formation during worship, noting that music helps "internalize the feelings ... [of the meaning and ideas] of the lyrics." I am not sure if Derek was explicitly referencing the ritual of the poppies in his example of the grieving mother, but it is evident that Harris Creek's ministerial staff understands music's role in the worship service as one of emotional faith formation.

However, while Drew and to a lesser extent Derek emphasized music's affective aspects in concert with the didactic content of the lyrics, that emphasis was not always shared by the congregation (although none denied the importance of the lyrics). In a follow-up email exchange I had with Carin, a woman in her mid 60s, she noted that while the ritual of the poppies is important for her each year, as she takes the opportunity to remember her mother's family, she did not remember what song was being sung during the ritual I had observed, although she had indeed taken part in it. In Carin's case, the effect of the music during the ritual was more important than the lyrical content of the song, indicating that an emphasis of content over affect in formation may be unfounded, or at least overemphasized. Others shared her sentiment that the content of the lyrics (or even which song was sung) was less important during the ritual of the poppies: Kim, one of the youth interns at Harris Creek who had been playing acoustic guitar and singing on All Saints Sunday, noted that the ritual was beautiful and invoked a strong emotional response in her, but she did

not mention the content of the song – lyrical or otherwise – in her reflection.

Similarly, Tom (whose ideas are discussed below) said he had no idea what the song was during the ritual of the poppies, and although he himself did not lay down a poppy this year, he noted that he was glad that Harris Creek performed that ritual.

This aspect of the explicit formation that occurs in musical worship through the convergence of meaning and emotion is well framed by an interview I had with Tom, who was interviewed at the behest of Drew Greenway as part of the Harris Creek ethnography. Tom is a professor of the sociology of religion at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and as such had a well formed and thought out perspective on the subject of communal formation. His response to my first question, “What does music do?” echoed those of others, and explicated what he meant by music throughout the course of our conversation:

T: I think it connects to the heart in a way that is not linguistic. I think it expresses some of humanity's most compelling emotions.

Author: How does it express those emotions?

T: I don't know. It's one of those things where it's non-linguistic! [Laughs] So, for me music is a heart (gestures to his chest), like physically, I mean it pounds in your chest, vibrates in your chest. In a way that you don't think about verbally. You can FEEL and experience. And it can change emotions.

Tom’s comment that music can change emotions is superficially obvious, but closer reflection reveals that such emotional change has both formational and

moral importance. When I asked him about his experience of others in music, he responded:

T: I think music has the ability to unite a crowd in one solid emotion. It can get us all on the same page. Get us to stop thinking about our individual selves [but to think about] our collected selves. I'm getting into sociology. So, it definitely connects people. It's a connector. I would call it social solidarity. That's the word I would use.

I asked Tom if he thought that this kind of social solidarity had a formative aspect to it, he said, "absolutely." He then went on to explain his understanding in theoretical terms. Drawing from Emile Durkheim, Randall Collins, and others, he noted that ritual activity such as attending a musical concert forms social solidarity, but that in the context of a Brad Paisley concert (which was the example he used in our conversation) the formation that occurs is more ephemeral than long-lasting.¹⁸ When I asked Tom about music's role in this ritual social formation, he answered in affective terms:

T: It turns our heart. Let me think explicitly in the context of worship. So, at church this morning [we sang] 'All the poor and powerless' (All Sons & Daughters, 2012) after a sermon on, 'You must look out for the marginalized.' This idea of looking for the powerless. And it [the song] turned my heart towards them... music can guide our feelings and emotions.

Durkheim, Goffman, Collins, and others are fruitful conversation partners in understanding how rituals form social groups and individual and communal

¹⁸ His point about rituals and sacred objects seemed to have pigeon-holed Durkheim's "sacred object" into an explicitly confessional Christian understanding of religion. Indeed, many popular music scholars such as Christopher Partridge would argue that a "Brad Paisley" concert can be as sacred as any Sunday worship gathering. See Partridge 2017.

identities. However, one important consideration here propels my inquiry beyond their work: I am seeking to describe the role that *music plays* in those kinds of formation. To that end, I will now orient my inquiry towards how the formation that takes place through musical participation – and especially musical worship – may be evaluated ethically.

The specter of liturgical character formation has been hovering over this discussion for some time, and it is necessary to engage it at some length in order to both situate my argument in the broader field of Christian ethics while simultaneously arguing that the particular contributions of musical worship to the discussion of Christian formation have implications for the ways formation is understood, and have been largely ignored. I therefore engage in what can best be described as a “theological excursus.” In this excursus I will engage explicitly with Christian liturgical character formation ethics, and seek to build on the fundamental idea of ethical persons being formed by practice and participation in Christian worship. I suggest, however, that accounts of formation from the perspective of liturgical character formation theory do not go far enough, concluding most often with an uncritical affirmation of ecclesial power under the guise of maintaining theological “orthodoxy.”¹⁹

¹⁹ I am compelled to note that in the excursus that follows short shrift is given to many virtue scholars whose work is excellent and deserves longer treatment than I am giving it here. Indeed, many excellent works are left out of this description, as my focus is on liturgical character formation ethics, rather than virtue ethics in general. I offer the brief treatment of their material as the point of this work is not to fully and painstakingly evaluate Christian virtue ethics, but rather to argue a way forward regarding church music and ethics.

Affirmation and Critique of Liturgical Formation Ethics: A Theological Excursus

Ethical reflection and study from the disciplines of liturgical theology has largely sought to evaluate the character formation that occurs in Christian worship from the perspective of neo-Aristotelian ethics, primarily by taking the formative power of narrative as central to this task. This perspective received much attention in chapter one of this dissertation, laying the foundation upon which to make the argument of this chapter; ritual participation in Christian worship forms Christian character through the process of encountering and embracing the Christian story. My fieldwork affirms this foundation, yet troubles it in ways that suggest that a nuanced understanding of Christian formation requires much more than solely an engagement (no matter how prolonged) with narrative.

Ethics-as-character-formation through worship draws heavily on the theories of virtue ethics that can trace their origin to the ancient Greek philosophers Damon, Plato, and Aristotle, through the patristic Augustine, medieval Aquinas and the philosophy cum doctrine of *ethos* as reinterpreted by the modern philosopher Alasdair McIntyre (Ursu 2009; Hauerwas 1974, 1975, c.f. 2015; Seasolitz 2012). This understanding of ethics as character places the emphasis of ethical scholarship and praxis on the practices that build character, not the crises that define it (Hauerwas and Wells, 2011). The worship service plays a foundational role in this development of character in that it is a regular ritual that has defined and explicit moral values built into it by both association

and representation. In a mutually constitutive way, worship is ethical in that it forms ethical character and fulfills ethical responsibilities (Arndt 1960; Sayers 1961; Saliers 1998 [1979]; Hauerwas and Wells, 2011; Seasolitz 2012).

Additionally, character formation through worship establishes the worshipper's perspectives and relationships; to each other, to the world, and to the divine (from a Christian perspective, Suggate 2002, 56; Müller 2006, 645; from a Jewish perspective, Kadushin 1963, 5-6, for example).

Scholars differ, however, as to how they understand this ethics-as-character formation to occur. On the one hand, Christian character is formed by listening to the stories that inform the faith and orient the self towards living into these stories (Rossi 1979; Saliers 1979; Müller 2006; Hauerwas and Wells 2011, for example). On the other hand, ethical character is formed through participation in the ritual and activity of worship in the celebration of the sacraments (Wannenwetsch 2004 [1997]; Suggate 2002, for example). Hauerwas and Wells connect both as activities of formation; as action and as listening (2011).

The formation of virtue through active engagement with the narratives that establish the Christian faith is supported and challenged by various theses. Stanley Hauerwas, in his recent monograph *The Work of Theology*, argues that the narratological emphasis is predicated on a "thick" understanding of language and discourse that encapsulates both the act of speaking and the ability to understand how what is being spoken may be understood by receivers. This, Hauerwas calls practical reason (13). Further, practical reason is bound up

together in Hauerwas' understanding of theological ethics as being predicated on the Aristotelian qua Macintyrian formulation of virtue ethics (14-16). Such formulation is directed towards the notion that thought is connected to human character (18). Thus, the ethical character formed in worship is formed by the ways in which the discursive self understands that formation upon its ability to engage practical reason (22-31, 70-89).

For many liturgical formation ethicists, this narratological formation is manifest most explicitly in the homily, or the declaration of the "Word" (Rossi 1979, 241-43). Through the communal sharing of sacred stories, the self-understanding of the Christian is formed in relation to the shared narratives of that community together with other communities of faith. However, this narratological character formation does not occur in individual isolation, but is rather the result of sharing in the stories with others, in a community; a congregation (Rossi 1979, 244).

A second thesis that emerges from this literature is that the ethical formation of the congregation (and the individuals within it) is derived from participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and the remembrance of the central Christian narrative inherent in this act (Bayer and Suggate 1996; Coleman 2000, 2001; Suggate 2002; Billy and Keeting 2006; Bieler and Schottroff 2007;). The celebration of the Eucharist in worship is the primary means by which humans understand their "proper fullness in society and in the world" (Suggate 2002, 56), meaning that through participation in the sacraments, Christians are taught

ethical values that orient their political activities. Central to this formation is an understanding of the priority of God's action in the world, of the Eucharist as concrete, worldly, and social, aligned together with an orientation towards eschatology, freedom, and responsibility (Suggate 2002, 56-65).

Irma Fast Dueck approaches this Eucharistic understanding differently. As a Mennonite (an identity central to her argument), she argues that the "real presence" of Christ is not found in the elements themselves, but in the community of people gathered around them. However, this "church as sacrament" should never impinge on the moral agency and responsibility of human beings to follow Jesus in clarity of conscience. Instead, this "ethics of discipleship" informs the ethics of worship in as much as they are informed by it in the lived reality of "gracious love, mercy, and the activity of God." This somewhat pragmatic, ethical significance of worship combines virtuous character formation ethics with eucharistic (little "e") vision ethics in the Mennonite conception of an alternative community that bears witness to the real presence of Christ in the world (2006, 218-222).

This thesis of activity for ethical formation is approached differently by other authors. For instance, Alfred Sayers, in "Worship and Ethics in the Ministry" (1961) argues that the natural response to God's activity in the world is worship (38). In this way, worship is *itself* an ethical activity, in that it fulfills a response requirement for humans towards God (Hauerwas 2004). As such, worship is not only formative, but is responsorial; is an ethical good unto itself

(Stubbs 2004). Max Kadushin extends this argument to say that worship is the means by which the sin of idolatry is rectified in that it requires adherence to the first commandment of the Decalogue, and thereby is a fundamentally ethical activity (1963, 57).

Difference remains over whether the events of worship may be done in an ethical or unethical manner. On the one hand, Bernd Wannenwetsch does not consider worship to be ethical or unethical; it is ethically significant, but Wannenwetsch does not wish to subject worship to ethical criteria (2004, 5). He insists this does not lead to “quietism,” or the passive support of the status quo, but instead posits worship as in the fullest sense a form of human life (6).²⁰ On the other hand, Elmer Arndt’s “Worship and Ethics in Theology” (1960) assumes that there may be ethical or unethical worship services (279). He distinguishes between worship and ethics, and argues that both worship and ethics bear witness to the faith of the Christian church (281). Further, he argues that the worship and ethics of the church are responses to the activity of God in God’s self-disclosure through Jesus and the Holy Spirit in whom God’s purposes of judging, reconciling, and renewing the world are known (284). Thus, ethics and worship are united in their common purposes and functions. “Worship is fully ethical, and the ethical becomes worship” (289; Saliers 1979, 16-17).

²⁰ This is a deeply problematic non-distinction that is addressed later in this chapter.

A more existential philosophy of ethical formation in worship is offered by Michael Purcell in, "Liturgy: The Divine and Human Service" (1997). Purcell sees the liturgy as a crucial movement of the self toward Other which never returns to the same; more precisely, it is a move towards and *for* the other (144). Drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, Purcell suggests that in the act of worship the liminal boundaries of existence are transcended, and the self is able to exist ethically in this liturgically formed activity (150). This Eucharistic ethics effectively orients the self towards the other: "The movement out of self – liturgy – is at one and the same time worship and ethics, an ethical worship, in which justice is rendered both to God and to the other person" (160). Central to this formulation is the idea of "gift." There is no gift to the Divine other: only a participation in the divine intention. The gift is God's towards us; the response, the service of the people, is ethics; is about being for the other human in cooperation with God's being for us.

B. A. Müller extends this idea in a practical manner by combining the thrust of Purcell's argument with the theories of character formation. In his 2006 article, "The Role of Worship and Ethics on the Road Towards Reconciliation," Müller suggests that the ethical significance of worship is linked to its ability to inspire action in the worshippers. As such, "*lex orandi – lex credendi, Lex convivendi, that is, lex bene operandi,*" or, the law of praying is the law of believing, becomes the law of acting; becomes normative (646). Müller draws on this aphorism that seems to have originated in Don Saliers' ground-breaking essay,

“Liturgy and the Moral Self” (1979, attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine in Wainwright, 1984), and has been developed by many of the scholars cited in this essay. This pithy turn of phrase helps to illuminate a crucial absence in much of the literature on worship and ethics: an orientation towards something concrete.

Two things must be said regarding liturgical character formation theory. First, a crucial component to the flourishing of the individual in virtue theory (which liturgical character formation theories draw heavily from) is the flourishing of the community. According to MacIntyre, “...my good as a man is one and the same as those of others with whom I am bound up in community” (193). Second, such a community’s flourishing depends on the formation of virtuous character in the lives of the individuals, rather than on the ability to determine what the moral duty demanded by natural law must be (ibid.).

These two salient features of virtue ethics begin to suggest how ethical formation of both individuals and communities can take place through the activity of musical worship. If our musical discourse and activities construct affective and relational communities even as they proclaim values and convictions, then it stands to reason that such formation contributes significantly to the study of ethics from the perspective of character formation. As James F. Caccamo has argued, “ritual singing itself is a set of particular and regular religiously responsive performances that shape the ways in which individuals respond to God and neighbor outside of the ritual event” (2004, ix) and thus have

ethical implications. Caccamo, in his study of contemporary Roman ritual song's ethical import, describes virtue ethics like this,

[V]irtue ethics focuses on the creation of persons and communities who are able to act dependably in ways that instantiate truth and happiness. Acts are not unimportant in the virtue approach, of course. But the importance of any single action is understood to be subordinate to the extent to which that action both creates and is the result of a person who is attempting to enact ultimate commitments in daily life. The virtue model of the Christian moral life focuses on the creation of people who incarnate Gospel (177).

Drawing on the work of Saliers, Hauerwas, Rossi, and others, Caccamo's work argues for the place of ritual song in the formation of individual moral character and identity, offering much in helpfully moving this discussion forward. He, too, connects the affections engendered by music to character formation, and argues that this is ethically significant. By using virtue ethics, he is able to affirm and support the liturgical practices of the Christian church while simultaneously offering a means of locating music as an equal player in that activity, although he understands music's role to be one of support. Additionally, in his treatment of virtue ethics, he rightly notes that "moral life," as a category applied to the study of character formation arising from liturgical practice, is often far too concerned with personal and "individual action and identity" (22). Instead, he argues that ethical formation (he calls it "virtue") is inextricably social and communal. Finally, he argues that the formation that occurs through practice and participation in ritual Christian worship calls Christians to respond in gospel

informed ways, thereby placing the emphasis on responsiveness in helpful and constructive ways (218 ff).

Narrative virtue ethics opens up our understanding of how individual affections and the affective and relational communities formed in musical worship are ethically significant by focusing our attention on how the development of character is vital for ethical action. Furthermore, the emphasis of communal flourishing and well-being is an important turn away from individuated conceptions of flourishing, although as Caccamo rightly notes the impulse for individual focus remains for many scholars of virtue.

Critique. As helpful as they are, Christian narrative character formation ethics go only part way in providing the foundation for theorization about musical ethics; several critiques of liturgical formation ethics are in need of explication. First, liturgical formation ethics come perilously close to confusing formation with conformity, such that the real differences between communities and individuals is offered only lip service. Secondly, and proceeding from the first, liturgical character formation ethics through worship are often overly deterministic, assuming that if the Christian story is rightly engaged then virtuous character will be formed in the lives of the faithful (Rossi 1979; Saliers 1979; Müller 2006; Hauerwas and Wells 2011, for example). This presents a number of epistemological problems, with perhaps the most significant being, who determines what Christian character is? Certainly, many have laid claim to

this knowledge or one of its analogs, as is evidenced by the sheer proliferation of denominations and sects of Protestantism (to say nothing of the myriad localized Christian communities the world over), each basing Christian character upon its own understanding of “orthodoxy.”²¹ This observation presents another problem that can be framed as the question of how orthodoxy is related to character. Constance Cherry notes the importance of orthodoxy for forming Christian character and impulses for Christian action in her book *The Music Architect: “right worship (orthodoxy...) leads to right action (orthopraxy) which, in turn, leads to right affection (orthocardia)”* (2016, 33).²² While this statement on the face of it seems true and helpful, significant problems arise when we realize that each denomination has a particular claim to orthodoxy that is often constructed in opposition to another such claim, and so appealing to ecclesial authority on matters of doctrine does not give a satisfactory account of the morality of each doctrine that lays claim to “orthodoxy.” Indeed, one of the central problems of claims to orthodoxy is that many authors and leaders often invoke by such claims a universal orthodoxy that precludes all others by definition. Indeed, unless we are able to interrogate ecclesial authority and claims to orthodoxy we will be unable to offer any means of evaluating the ethical significance of musical

²¹ See Stout 2001, for how some virtue ethicists negotiate the problem of culture and context.

²² Cherry is but one of many church music scholars who build their arguments about musical worship from this set of assumptions.

worship beyond affirming that it should be done. Bernd Wannenwetsch's *Political Worship* (2004) is emblematic of this dilemma, and his contention that worship can be neither ethical nor unethical offers no way of critiquing unjust worship, instead concluding that worship will inevitably make Christians exemplary citizens (359). This conclusion seems to work against an ethic of anything beyond affirming the status quo – despite his assertions to the contrary.²³ What of societies whose polity is at odds with the good as revealed in Christian worship? While Wannenwetsch's confidence that history will render the worshipper whose actions oppose the prevailing social climate exemplary, such future historical certainty offers little by way of compulsion for good activity in the face of popular injustice – to say nothing of the need for internal critique of ecclesial politics.

Returning to my bodily system metaphor from earlier in the chapter, in the same way that a human body will die if a heart, liver, or lungs are given primacy over the others, orthodoxy cannot be determined without a thorough account of orthopraxy and orthocardia; the Body will die if its members are broken down to their constitutive parts in isolation. Orthodoxy cannot be the sole interrogator of praxis and affection, but rather each read the other in a mutually constitutive, triadic (trinitarian?) manner.

²³ This critique is affirmed by Nicholas Sagovsky's review of Wannenwetsch's book (Sagovsky 2005).

Third, liturgical character formation ethics seem to take a diminished view of human agency in moral action, on the one hand, while disproportionately elevating that agency on the other. While I affirm without reservation the need for formation before moments of crisis, moral action still requires human volition in that moment of crisis. Indeed, if well-founded then our responses may be more ethical than otherwise, but such an assertion does not offer a means of evaluating context, specifics, and other mitigating factors aside from the assurance that we will know what is good because of our formation as Christians. Moreover, as James M. Gustafson points out, each individual's agency is constrained by the agency of others; by society, by relationships, by power, by access to means, and so on (1981, 174). My ability to act ethically, no matter how well formed my character may be, is limited by my existence in a discrete place and time and by the discrete relationships I need to flourish.

Finally, narrative formation ethics fall victim to the same pitfalls that discourse ethics encounters when musical worship is considered due to its strong reliance on language as the primary means of forming character. In the same way that the instability of language and therefore discursive meaning unsettles our assurance of imaginatively inhabiting shared musical life-worlds, so reliance on shared understandings of the Christian narrative to form character in accordance with "orthodoxy" suffers the same fate. This is especially pronounced when music's affective way of being in the world is considered, as music affects the meaning of the very words that orthodoxy relies on for stability. The mere act of

musical participation in Christian worship where the songs contain orthodox lyrics tells us nothing about the goodness nor justice of the communities that form around these musical acts.

However, I hope that it is evident that I am not proposing to throw out character formation altogether, as its merits are plainly evident. Rather I am proposing that it does not go far enough, and that more needs to be said about *how we can evaluate* the formation that takes place during musical worship. Consequently, this means of evaluation should also afford a means of evaluating the goodness, that is, the ethicalness, of music in Christian worship – and by extension to goodness of “orthodoxy.”

Conclusion: Music's Way of Being at Church

Up to this point, this dissertation has argued that an understanding of music's way of being in the world is crucial for any theorization about music's ethical significance. Drawing on both my ethnographic research and the work of other scholars, I have argued that an essential aspect of music's way of being in the world is its ability to connect people and build communities – although this formation into community is often conceived as being in opposition to another such community. I have further argued that these processes of connecting and uniting work in two ways: first, in chapter two, I argued that Christian communities form around shared understanding of musical meaning. I arrived at this conclusion by studying how people understood church music as a means

of communication. Further, I argued that for my interlocutors, musical meaning is determined largely by musical genre, but that these generic understandings of musical meaning were unstable because they were subject to constant negotiation through discourse. This instability precludes ethical theorization on the premise of discourse alone, yet indicates that the discourse that takes place both around and through musical worship is ethically important and should be taken into account by any moral theory that gives an account of church music.

In this chapter, I have argued that the second way that music builds community is through shared experiences of emotional orientation. That is to say that music forms communities through its ability to marshal human emotions and orient emotional postures towards or against ideas or objects. We encounter and experience the emotions and feelings of others in profound ways through music; these ways have been explained through academic models such as contour theory, compound ritual entrainment, and others. These encounters with and experiences of other's emotions influence our thinking, and when taken together with the argument of chapter two read through the lens of Nussbaum's theorizations, suggests that music is a site where meaning and emotion intersect in ways important to personal and communal formation. This intersection of meaning and emotion is intensely formational, and my participant-observation at churches along with participants' own descriptions of their experiences reveals how emotion and reason converge in human bodies. In this way, music forms affective communities, and when Smith's argument that we are formed most

profoundly by what we love and desire is considered, it becomes clear that music plays an important role in the formation of both reason and relationships. Yet this argument is only half finished, as here, too, we are faced with the reality that formation does not constitute an ethical theory, but rather explicates the need for one: if music plays a unique role in orienting our emotions and feelings towards ideas, objects, and people, thus forming our affections and desires out of which we reason morally and justify our actions and values, then we must account for this formative activity in order to both theorize about music's ethical significance, on the one hand, and evaluate music's ethical merit, on the other.

I have also argued that liturgical formation ethics contributes much to our understanding of how we are formed through the acts of congregational worship, and further that my account of music's emotional and affective power offers much to scholarship of ethical formation in worship. I have pointed out some places where formation ethics is lacking, especially in its tendency to assume deterministic outcomes of formation in response to orthodox liturgical practices while simultaneously veering close to confusing formation with conformity through an underdeveloped account of difference. Although it is perhaps an overstatement to extend this observation beyond the scope of musical worship, orthocardia may well form orthodoxy as much as orthodoxy forms orthocardia and orthopraxy. In the next chapter I will expand on this suggestion, and push into what I believe lies at the heart of musical worship's ethical significance: the intersection of care and justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reparation: Hospitality, Care, and Restorative Justice

Introduction

This chapter builds on the foundation of the previous two chapters, arguing that music's way of being in the world is inherently relational: to riff off of John Blacking's (1974) classic definition, music is *relationally* ordered sound. Therefore, an ethical theory that gives a holistic account of human relationships is needed in order to understand church music's ethical significance. I have argued that music's relational ontology can be understood in two ways; first, in chapter two, as imbued with meaning around which people build communities of agreement. Second, in chapter three, music is shown to be an affective activity that engenders emotional responses in its participants that in turn form social imaginaries and memories that are embodied through music. I further argued that these two limbs of music's relational way of being in the world are not separated in lived reality, but rather that meaning and emotion converge in human bodies through musical activity, particularly in congregational settings.

Concurrent with my examination of music's meaning-making and affective community formation, I applied the ethical theories of musical discourse ethics and liturgical character formation ethics as analytical lenses for my fieldwork and theoretical developments, and concluded that each are helpful

but ultimately insufficient. In chapter two, I argued that Habermasian and Rawlsian discourse ethics as applied to church and worship music by Rommen (2007) and Porter (2016) provide a valuable frame for understanding how musical meaning is made and received, but alone does not provide a sufficient means of understanding church music's ethical significance. Because musical meaning is even more unstable than linguistic meaning, discourse ethics alone was unable to offer a means of evaluating the goodness of musical meanings or of opposing divisively oriented communities from going to "worship war" with others who found either the musical sounds to mean differently or musical meanings to have different values. In chapter three I argued that liturgical character formation ethics as described by Smith (2009), Hauerwas (1979, 2015), Saliers (1979, 1998) and others, offer important keys to understanding how musical worship's affective aspects shape moral character, but their reliance on linguistic meaning alone similarly limited the application of their theories to church music. Moreover, many liturgical character formation ethicists assume a deterministic outcome for character formation based on adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy; in other words, they posit that if worship or music has a proper relationship to "orthodox" theology, then good ethical character will be formed. Music's affective ontology ultimately questions the causality of "good" theology, as character formation ethics do not provide a sufficient means of evaluating the goodness of those associations or the theologies that inform them. Instead, the diffuse nature of musical meanings coupled with the uncontrollability of emotive

responses to musical activity that in turn inform those meanings profoundly troubles deterministic character formation through musical worship.

This chapter suggests that feminist care-based ethics affords a fruitful way of holding both music's relational meaning and affective power together while also offering a way of evaluating the actual goodness of the communities and identities formed in response to musical worship. Care ethics' assumption of relationships as ontological for human beings is a crucial point of convergence with music, as defined here as an inherently, inescapably relational activity. As such, care ethics' purpose of enabling and supporting flourishing relationships points to a robust and holistic means of evaluating church music's ethical significance. Further, its emphasis on attentiveness and responsiveness to the needs of the other in timely and appropriate ways provides a way of understanding how musical worship can function ethically in discrete congregations. Care-based ethics provide a way of getting at the ethical dimension of music in a manner that neither reduces nor glamorizes its affective and subjective aspects, while simultaneously acknowledging the ways that meaning and reasoning is engendered in musical worship. In its more developed forms (see for example Farley 2002, Held 2006, and Nussbaum 2011), care-based ethics' emphasis on reciprocity, acknowledging the differences and agentic capabilities of the other, and working towards the flourishing of others in concrete and timely ways that are simultaneously discursive and formational cast a vision of what caring church music can accomplish and be.

However, I also argue that care ethics themselves are incomplete; in their nascent forms especially (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984), an emphasis on relationships and care for intimates precluded concerns for justice. Despite Held's and others' assertion that care and justice are compatible and inform each other in important ways, the conflicts between claims of care and claims of justice are not easily resolved. In response to this conflict, I draw on the work of Howard Zehr (1990), John Braithwaite (2002), and others, to argue that if justice is oriented towards restoration rather than retribution, then the conflict between care and justice may be lessened to a great degree. As my fieldwork at Lakeshore suggests, however, this goal is still difficult to attain.

Based on my observations and interviews coupled with the work of feminist ethicists along with philosophical musicologists Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen (2012), I argue that the ethical significance of congregational music making may best be understood as care oriented towards restorative justice. By restorative justice I mean a responsive, reciprocal, and restorative posture towards relationships both near and distant that acknowledges the contributions and capabilities of each as agents within systems of power, directing relational affections towards restorative justice. To be sure, music can be used as a powerful source of rupture, but this does nothing to diminish the legitimacy of my claim; rather, it provides strong support for it. If music were only used for restorative ends it would have no need of ethical evaluation.

Instead, congregational music is *unethical when it is uncaring*, that is, when it is

performed in a manner that fails to pay attention to the relational needs of persons of varying positions of power in view of justice. In this frame, ethical music is music that preserves people in and restores people to just relationships with each other.

However, commitments to relational care often conflict with commitments to justice: there are often disagreements within a given congregational community or among several such communities over which of these commitments should predominate. In such cases, individuals and communities as a whole are forced to choose between the values espoused by care and those espoused by justice. Lakeshore Baptist Church, a small, progressive Baptist church in Waco, TX, underwent just such a conflict during my study of that congregation. The narrative of their experience will draw this tension and conflict out into the open for better and clearer analysis of the problem.

I begin by engaging with Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen's work on music and ethics, applying their argument of "hospitable aural ethics" to my arguments of chapters two and three to frame music's relational ethics as a kind of hospitality. I then offer a sustained engagement with both the history and theory of feminist care ethics, being careful to give a faithful account of each while remaining cognizant of my position as a heterosexual white male who is also a confessing Christian. I follow this by offering a thick description of Lakeshore's decision to adopt an explicitly LGBTQ affirming statement of faith that brings the conflict between care and justice into sharp relief. I then describe

the major tenets of restorative justice theories, applying them to the gap uncovered by Lakeshore's story to show how the conflicts between care and justice can be resolved through music. Finally, I synthesize arguments about music's hospitable aural ethic with care oriented towards restorative justice, arguing that church music is ethical when it preserves people in and restores people to just relationships with each other and relationship with God.

Aural Relationships: Music and the Other

My argument for care-based ethics in church music takes as its foundation the work of Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen, who, in the introduction to their 2012 work *Music and Ethics*, state that their book seeks to “unravel ‘ethical moments’ which involve both ethical issues that warrant musical discussion and ... musics that invite ethical explication” (1). Though their highly theoretical work does not address religious music specifically, it nonetheless provides many useful insights that, when synthesized with the work of Held, Farley, and Nussbaum, lay the groundwork for a theory of musical care.

Cobussen and Nielsen lay out an effective framework within which they position their understanding of both the ethical function of music and ethical issues that may be addressed musically. They begin by asserting that music and ethics must be grounded within a particular social, cultural, and political context. Furthermore, they assert that music is process, and music making is an interaction of both musical elements (pitches, time, texts, etc) and human agents,

indicating that music cannot be philosophically examined as an object of understanding, nor as an object at all. With these two comprehensive statements in place, Cobussen and Nielsen offer a brief explanation of the two poles between which music and ethics are often located via a survey of the history of such thought (3-4). They state that the relationship between music and ethics is often engaged through the perspective of one of the opposing poles of *moralism* and *autonomism*. In many ways analogous to the nominalist and essentialist models of meaning making, moralism and autonomism argue in opposition regarding the relationship between music and ethics: moralists say that a work of art that violates a society's ethical tenets must be disregarded, whereas autonomism argues that art should function beyond the confines of ethics and morals. Where a moralist posits that music or art must abide by the moral laws of the given culture, an autonomist asserts that moral law has no power over a work of art, as to assert the power of morality over a work of art is to do violence to that work (5).

In developing their theory, they demonstrate the inadequacy of each assumptive model of the relationship between music and ethical meaning in two ways. First, in contrast to the assumption of moralists, they argue that art can stir our moral consciousness without being morally reprehensible. Second, while both the moralist and the autonomist assume that the ethical dimension of art is derived wholly from the context and intention of its origination, Cobussen and Nielsen suggest that such ethical value is located in music's *reception*, that is,

within the context and according to the values of those who hear it. This perspective indicates that music transcends the world of art as object and enters into the ever changing “situatedness of art where the relationship between art and recipient is key” (6). It is not as much music’s content but rather its usage that connects it to ethics through meaning and affection.

This, then, is the challenge and impetus for Cobussen and Nielsen’s project: because a given piece of music’s meaning is relationally defined, any work can potentially cause harm, if applied in such a way by others (for example, the use of the second movement of Beethoven's *9th Symphony* by Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*). Certainly, music can be used to promote certain behaviors and inhibit others: the problem is whether this promotion or inhibition is in fact ethical or unethical. This problem manifests itself in myriad ways and is at once a question of power, of control, and of individual freedom of thought. In this way, the responses elicited by music in particular circumstances matter, be those circumstance historical, political, cultural, or religious (8-10).

In order to solve these questions, Cobussen and Nielsen argue for an “Aural Ethics.” Such an aural ethics requires a radical hospitality to the musical other. They argue that music metaphorically affords a deep world of hospitality, as it consistently refuses to reduce the other to the same by virtue of its inherent need for differentiation; one note is not another – and cannot be for music to exist. Such inherent otherness provides both physical and metaphorical space for the human other to exist in shared musical space; a hospitality of/through music.

As Cobussen and Nielsen put it, music not only represents ethical values; through music, ethics sets itself to work (17, 34). An ethics of music implies a strategy of attentive listening that seeks to preserve both the space for and voice of the other. However, such an ethics cannot be understood as being relegated to the “metaphysics of morals, [as] music’s call for an affective ethicality, resulting from a premediated contact with sounds, is dependent on bodily experiences and perceptions” (165). This ethic is not constructed upon a predetermined set of principles, but rather has a single principle of an experience of musicking that is attentive to other performers, listeners, and composers. Using the metaphor of improvisation to describe how this hospitality goes beyond listening yet inextricably requires it, Cobussen and Nielsen argue that listening is necessary for good decision making and evaluation, and in turn for hospitable experiences of others in musical activities; either listening or making (86-92). This experience begins with and ends with listening in hospitality (166).

Cobussen and Nielsen’s argument about hospitable aural ethics has many points of resonance with arguments about meaning and affect from the previous two chapters: Musical hospitality is an attitude that creates space between listeners and performers and composers where encounter can happen, and values and convictions may be negotiated so as to form and affirm affective relationships. Further, the inherent relational nature of music is fundamental for any ethical composition about music and ethics, and that *good* encounter with the other in/through music – both metaphorically and physiologically – requires

hospitality as the first theme. However, as Cobussen and Nielsen point out, such relational aspects of music themselves fall victim to prejudice and assumptive patterns of goodness: for some, the western concept of consonance based in the triad is viewed as inherently oppressive, rather than hospitable (for example, McClary 2002, 77, 143).

Hospitality, then, requires acknowledgment and affirmation of difference; the negotiation of values and convictions together with the formation and strengthening of affective relationships must work against the tendency to form communities that are only ever in agreement. This point draws out two latent questions that need to be raised about an ethic of musical hospitality: how might we determine what musical hospitality is or could be beyond listening to other styles of music? Further, how might we ensure that such musical hospitality is indeed ethical? Surely, we may listen to other music with devious intentions, and opening the metaphor up beyond simply listening and into musical creation highlights this problem more acutely. For instance, while Cobussen and Nielsen's example of improvisation helps to thicken what they mean by "aural hospitality," in the sense that improvisation always requires attentiveness to the agency of other players and responsiveness to their gestures with an eye towards the generic and contextual expectants of the discrete musical activity, it also raises a potential problem: how is the negotiation of an individual's agency over or against another's determined to be ethical? What of the desires or expectations of a given performer of her co-improvisers – for instance, what happens if two

improvisers in a jazz combo both feel it is their turn to solo at the same time? If these needs are unmet, will that deter or damage their relationships? While Cobussen and Nielsen's appeal to Jean Luc Nancy's argument that freedom only happens in community (87) serves to mitigate against this critique to some extent, the hospitality they describe (improvisation notwithstanding) encounters the same obstacles that hinder the usefulness of the other ethical theories examined in the preceding chapters: negotiation of personal values and convictions is a good description of *how* ethics happen, but not of ethics themselves.

Furthermore, while hospitality does provide a guide for how those negotiations of personal values and conviction may be ethical, it does not go far enough; how might notions of "hospitality" differ from culture to culture or genre to genre, or, thinking more specifically about church music, from congregation to congregation? Cobussen and Nielsen derive their metaphor for hospitality from western music theory – namely, how harmony occurs through a predetermined progression of hierarchically ordered triads, while acknowledging that other musical forms could afford different metaphors. Interrogating this metaphor, hospitality as a guiding principle for encountering the other in and through musical activity breaks down when power structures are considered; thinking especially of the dynamics of western music, the privilege of I and V within a key and the ascribed power to their pitches and relationships can be read conversely as a metaphor for oppression of II/ii, III/iii,

or VI/vi. Within congregational settings, this critique asks “whose voice are we listening to,” or, “whose values and convictions do we honor should there be a conflict?”

Yet I do not wish to throw out hospitality as a useful category for theorizing about music and ethics. Indeed, hospitality – both in listening to and making music – is a helpful guiding principle for encountering the other. Instead, I wish to scale back the metaphor, and build on where it ceases to be effective by suggesting that there is an ethical theory that accounts for these problems of values and power, and offers a concrete way of addressing them: feminist care ethics. Where the metaphor of hospitality suggests attentiveness to real difference between individuals and communities, care-based ethics insists on both attentiveness *and* reciprocity; where hospitality assumes relationships as a goal, care assumes relationships as ontological; where hospitality implies welcome but often stops there, care implies active engagement on behalf of the well-being of the other. Where hospitality seeks to preserve the interpersonal agency of others in small-scale social situations, care works to ensure that the agency of the other is able to flourish in full view of spectrums of power and oppression that may be not be accounted for in the act of hospitality.

Care: Responsive, Reciprocal, and Restorative

Care-based ethics provide a helpful way of accounting for the relational ontology of human life. In order to give the reader a sense of care ethics’ history

and some of the major critiques of the theory, I begin with a description of feminist care ethics. The concept of “care ethics” was first articulated in Carol Gilligan’s landmark 1982 monograph, *In a Different Voice*. In this “little book that started a revolution,” Gilligan argues, in contradistinction to the prevailing theories of moral development of her day that tended to skew towards indicating a lack of moral development in a majority of women, that women operate in a different mode of moral reasoning. This mode of moral reasoning takes relationships to be ontological, and through a series of selected interviews with women, Gilligan argues that women’s moral reasoning is not inferior to that of men (as she contended Lawrence Kohlberg’s developmental model had indicated), but is rather relationally – instead of objectively – oriented. As such, women were more inclined to consider the health of a relationship over and above objective fairness and adherence to rules. Thus, Gilligan’s ethic of care centered around the development of moral reasoning that understood relationship and responsibility as the most important ethical impulses for women (1991, 16-23, esp. 19).¹

¹ The conventions of feminist care ethics impel me to offer a brief statement of position at the beginning of my recounting of this history: I am using the work of these theorists as a white, cis-gendered, heterosexual male. I am also a theistic Christian, and many of the scholars cited below explicitly reject that faith and constructed their theories in reaction against it. That I find much of value in their work may be as much a surprise to them as it may be to you, the reader. Moreover, some writers might object to my marshaling their work for Christian ends. However, I am convinced that their theories and insights are valuable and immensely useful regardless of religious persuasion, and I hope that by citing them as faithfully as I can that their words will not be conflated with my own. I have, therefore, endeavored to acknowledge and respect their positions as theirs alone, and to point out areas where our thinking overlaps without claiming that they would agree with my conclusions.

Building on the foundation laid by Gilligan, Nel Noddings' 1984 book, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, articulated an explicit ethical theory derived from the experience of mothering. Noddings suggested that in the same way that the care of a mother ("the one caring") for her child is focused on the well-being of the child, so an ethic of caring is concerned with the well-being of the "cared for" person who is in immediate relational proximity to the one caring. While Noddings regards motherly care as a natural state, she considers ethical caring a learned skill that involves intentionally recognizing who the one caring is responsible for caring for; or responsible to. In this frame, only living beings can be cared for, as a person cannot care about ideas in the same way that she can care about people.

Noddings argued for a non-principled, non-religious, non-rule-based ethics of care based on the primary relational affections (in other words, desires and loves) of humans. This ethics of care is founded on a value of concrete relationships rather than abstract principles, such that an ethics of care may at times be forced to violate the principles of rights or rules in the pursuit of "good." This concrete foundation is the "ontology of relation," by which Noddings means that all ethical responses begin with a relationship of one to another (1984, 23-29). She is careful to distinguish between moral "emotivism" from the affective care she espoused, as emotivist moral claims reduce themselves to

statements of agreement.² Instead, an expression of caring is that of confirming commitment to the well-being of another (89-92).

Gilligan and Noddings contribute much to our understanding of relationships and responsibility as central to ethical concerns. However, their work is also deeply problematic for many ethical theorists. For instance, beyond an insistence on essential gender differences in moral reasoning, Gilligan's claim that women's primary mode of moral reasoning is singular (if complex) is deeply troubling in that it can silence the voices of women who, by virtue of other commitments (such as religious or vocational), might employ a different mode of moral reasoning or arrive at different conclusions arising from an orientation towards care. Moreover, Marilyn Friedman critiqued Gilligan for her failure to recognize the relevance of justice to care. Friedman pointed out that even intimate relationships need justice and equity ("giving people their due [and] treating them appropriately," 66) in order for them to be truly caring (1995, 61-78).³ Michele M. Moody-Adams argued that Gilligan's construction of care ethics is helpful and valuable in raising the notion of "care" as a primary mode of moral reasoning to the surface, yet is limited and even problematic in its method and claims. Moody-Adams contends that Gilligan replicates Kohlberg's gender-exclusivist model, and that even in the best light Gilligan's approach is

² Stanley Cavell makes a similar critique of emotivism in *The Claim of Reason*, 265-273, esp. 271-3.

³ C.f. Tong 2014, 160-61.

“bimodal,” affirming bifurcated forms of reasoning that link men, abstraction, and rights, on the one hand, and women, concretion, and relationships on the other (1991, 195-212). This in turn is troubling in its assumption of a) the moral superiority of one gender over another (irrespective of other contingent factors, such as race and socio-economic status) and b) essential gender differences.

Further, Noddings’ elaboration of feminist care ethics has been critiqued on the grounds of her eschewal of justice. Sarah Lucia Hoagland harshly critiqued Noddings for her apparent preference for unequal relationships wherein the one-caring is in an “authorized” (authority) position over the cared-for (1991, 246-64). Hoagland and others take issue with the fact that Noddings explicitly refused to acknowledge charges of injustice against her intimates, most gallingly in the (hopefully fictitious) example of being unable to physically oppose her racist family members in an imaginary conflict over racial equality; in this anecdote, she claims she would fight on behalf of what she believed to be injustice (that is, not giving each person their due; actively privileging one person over another) if her intimates were on that side (Noddings 1984 [2013], 108-13).

Relational Rupture: Care versus Justice in Congregational Life

Despite the shortcomings of early proponents of care ethics like Gilligan and Noddings, their work’s contributions – particularly their emphasis on the centrality of relationships and the need for action on behalf of others to meet

their needs – were considered of sufficient merit for several scholars to set themselves to developing a care-based ethics that accounted for its problems. Alison Jaggar noted that care ethics has two shortcomings that must be addressed for it to be a broadly useful moral theory: a) its limitation to immediate relations and b) its avoidance of justice. She argued that when justice and society are brought into the discourse of care, the theory becomes one of broad applicability, and can avoid the pitfalls that an ethics devoid of justice elicits (1995, 179-202). Joan Tronto suggested that care ethics is a viable and useful corrective to abstracted rights and duty-based ethics if care is sufficiently expanded to encompass a broader scope than that offered by Noddings (1995, 101-16). Sara Ruddick noted that that justice may be helpfully deployed in family situations so as to name and prevent abuse, contending that justice checks care and helps keep it from becoming abusive, while simultaneously contending that care checks justice by limiting its scope (1995).

The conflict between care and justice is widespread and manifest in concrete events, and Christian churches are by no means immune to this reality; instead, they are often sites of highly visible and identifiable conflicts that can helpfully be framed as between commitments to relational care and commitments to a certain understanding of justice. During my fieldwork at Lakeshore, one such event illustrates this point profoundly. On November 30th, 2016, Lake Shore Baptist Church voted by an 86% majority to adopt an official statement of affirmation towards members of the LGBTQ community. This vote

took place during a Wednesday night supper and business meeting held at the church's building and had been preceded by a five-week series of seminars outlining the details and debates surrounding the question of whether queer identifying persons should be affirmed, or merely welcomed. These seminars included stories from several Lakeshore members who identified as LGBTQ or whose children so identified. Even prior to this series, the mostly elderly, middle class, well-educated congregation "practiced affirmation" of queer persons by allowing them to hold leadership positions in the church. The most prominent question in the minds of many was why a public statement was needed: if the church was already affirming, why make a big deal about it with a statement—especially when it may have negative repercussions in the highly "conservative" city of Waco, in central Texas, as well as among more conservative congregations in Lakeshore's Baptist networks? Despite these concerns, the overwhelming response of the congregation was in favor of the statement, and many who voted against it did so not because they opposed affirming queer persons, but rather did not see the need for a public statement that would result in social and ecclesial backlash that would likely sever many of those relationships.

As might be expected—and was indeed anticipated—the adoption of an affirming statement by a Baptist church in Waco made immediate waves. Despite Lakeshore's reputation as a progressive congregation on issues of race and gender (it was among the first Baptist churches in Texas to integrate racially in 1967 and ordain and appoint female pastors, in 1975 and 1985 respectively), a

public declaration affirming LGBTQ persons was too much for many in Baptist life. Retribution was swift. Within two months the BGCT had removed Lakeshore from its fellowship (Lakeshore's senior pastor, Kyndall Rothaus, was not allowed to speak at the assembly which voted on its removal), and numerous op-eds and letters to the editor were published in local and regional Baptist publications bemoaning the loss of another congregation to the "liberal agenda." Despite overwhelming congregational support for the affirming statement, several prominent and long-tenured members of Lakeshore left the church in the wake of its ratification.

The results of these events can best be described as relational rupture. The loss of fellowship with the BGCT and other local Baptist congregations created rupture on both large and small- scale levels: the church's relationships with other congregations and denominational institutions were severed, and the departure of some longtime friends and associates resulted in personal relational loss. Given Lakeshore's traditional values of hospitality, inclusion, and justice, the most prominent question for many members remains, how or can (or *should*) Lakeshore repair those relationships?

Many Christian communities, like communities of other sorts, deal with relational rupture and repair on a regular basis. Indeed, and specific to the context I am addressing, many Christian communities confess their purpose as one of restoring people to just relationships with each other, and ultimately with God. Yet in myriad and profound ways communities such as Lakeshore find

themselves in tension with this *telos*, as relational restoration in one context seems to demand rupture in another. On one hand, commitment to full inclusion of all in the community is both a just and caring action, yet on the other is also one of rupture with personal friends and a broader network of congregations – perhaps just from the dominant perspective of the congregation, but at the expense of relationship with those who they will no longer be in a position to influence. It may indeed be argued that such relationships are no longer worth the effort needed to maintain them: why should Lakeshore be troubled by the loss of ecclesial and personal relationships with those who do not agree with this application of one of its central beliefs and values? The answer to that question is both theological and pragmatic. In the first sense, the self-stated purpose of a community such as Lakeshore is to be, at the risk of redundancy, a fully inclusive relational community: “all are welcome,” is the common refrain from the pulpit. For many, this means actively seeking to make and keep relationships within the congregation – even those who disagree about what “all are welcome” means. However, this kind of theological response is in many ways insufficient when individual agency is considered, as those who left did so of their own accord and were not ostensibly forced out (although this assertion is contested by at least one former member). On the other hand, relational rupture often precludes and eliminates discourse beyond polemics and strawmen. If relationships are continually sacrificed and discourse abandoned for the cause of justice (or rights, or orthodoxy, for that matter), we risk perpetuating cycles of fracture and

destructive “othering.” In the same way that many of us may be reticent to excommunicate racist relatives or xenophobic family members, many at Lakeshore have no desire to cut ties with those who have shared their religious convictions and commitments – sometimes for 50 years or more. This is the tension that musical discourse and liturgical formation ethics insufficiently address.

Care and Justice in Dialogue

In recent years, several scholars have attempted to address this kind of conflict without abandoning either care, that is, relationships, or justice, that is, “rational action in accord with abstract principles” (Held 2006, 62). Margaret Farley, writing specifically from a Christian perspective about medical ethics, argues for a paradigm of “compassionate respect,” which she suggests is a contextualized means of holding together concerns of justice with concerns of care. She situates compassionate respect between rights-based moral reasoning and principles of autonomy, “respect,” and the affectionate, responsive “suffering with” of compassion (2002, 39). This compassion is a developed form of care that embraces the emotions and affections as embodied reasoning and couples them with awareness of the real needs of those who are suffering. Farley draws compassion from religion and respect from philosophy, although she points out that neither compassion nor respect, or philosophy nor religion, is exclusive of the other. Her theories offer religious ethicists a way to re-evaluate

approaches to care, especially as it pertains to power for the marginalized and oppressed. She further points out that this concern for the wellbeing of others is culturally and religiously motivated, and she hopes that by coupling compassion (as a concrete and qualified form of care) and respect (as a relational form of autonomy), the plight of the oppressed may be alleviated.

A cohesive and helpful development of care is offered in Virginia Held's 2006 monograph *The Ethics of Care*. She frames the problem of care versus justice like this:

...to those focused on the values of care, it is apparent that if women, in their justifiable quest for equality, pursue justice at the expense of care, morality will suffer. For those previously engaged in care to become more and more like the free and equal, rational and unencumbered individuals of theories of justice will leave no one to nurture the relations of family and friendship, and to cultivate the ties of caring. To treat friends and family members as if relations between them were contractual bargains based on self-interest undermines mutuality and undercuts trust (64).

In spite of this tension, Held argues that care and justice are not always incompatible, but are instead often complementary (69). She argues against the notion that care and justice operate in separate "spheres," but rather that care must be extended and strengthened so as to encompass all in society, such that the responsibility to care for the other is in effect a movement of justice (88-89). In so doing, Held moves the construction of a theory of care ethics out of the dead-end assumptions of essentialism and limited care by abandoning some of aspects of those principles and engaging notions of justice and rights in the concrete manner prescribed by feminist ethicists. As such, justice is nested within the

purview of care; families may be unjust yet still caring, which indicates that we can have care without justice (71-72). However, Held's book is limited by the lack of a developed description of how care and justice integrate to support each other; for instance, while we may certainly have care without justice, Held does not offer the converse one would expect: that we cannot have justice without care (see Bagnoli 2006 for more on this). Indeed, she implies this, but stops short of saying so. Instead, she pivots, and argues that her suggestion that care should form the meta context into which justice is set does not reduce justice, or rights, or even virtue to care, but rather orients justice and virtues towards a relational morality (74-75).

Held's perspective on care and justice together with Farley's compassionate respect helps explain some of Lakeshore's narrative from an ethical perspective, in that publicly affirming the LGBTQ members of the congregation (i.e., having full "rights," such as ordination or marriage) was both caring and just. However, they do not satisfactorily account for the relational rupture that resulted for those who believed that it was immoral for a Christian community to affirm LGBTQ persons in such a manner. While Held's assertion that relationships are ontological for human beings supports her argument that care is the most basic form of morality (73), her framework alone is unable to account for situations where relationships with some are upheld at the expense of relationships with others. At some point, care's assumptive power within relationships ends, and the cared for is free to make a choice about what is best

for her (the “cared for”); what aligns with her values and convictions. This is one of the strengths of feminist theory, and while Held and others veer perilously close to the edge at times with evident assumptions of caring-from-on-high, so to speak, the insistence on acknowledging and respecting the agency of the other remains an important limit for ethical theorizing.

Held’s suggestion that care forms the basis for justice and Farley’s depiction of compassionate respect as a method of acting on behalf of others begin to move closer to the interrelationship of care and justice I am arguing for as an ethic of church music. Yet this account of justice is still thin, and will be helpfully thickened with a thoroughgoing account of human flourishing that frames both justice and care as constitutive of such flourishing. Martha Nussbaum, writing about the methods used to evaluate human flourishing, suggests that any satisfactory account of care-and-justice-as-human flourishing must be able to consider human potential as well as access to and attainment of goods that promote flourishing, what she calls “the Capabilities approach” (2002, 123-35; 2011 18-20). She claims that a moral theory based on assumptions of capabilities stemming from humanness affords a better means of social ordering and justice. Against accounts based on measuring resources, preferences, and rights, an account based on capabilities is able to effectively measure flourishing for individuals and societies in ways the others cannot by allowing for individualized contextualizations of resources within broader social settings. Beginning from the question, “What is she actually able to do and be?”,

Nussbaum's capabilities approach to feminist ethics includes the emphases of the other approaches, yet marshals them in the service of fulfilling individual and social potential based on grounded circumstances and abilities. She argues that there are ten "Central Capabilities" that must be "secured" in order for human beings to minimally flourish: Life; Bodily Health; Bodily Integrity; Sense, Imagination, and Thought; Emotions; Practical Reason; Affiliation; Other Species; Play; and Control Over One's Own Environment (2011 33-34).⁴ Nussbaum's work supplies a broadly applicable theory of human flourishing from which to construct an account of caring and just morality that does not fall victim to critiques of particularity and exclusiveness, yet preserves the integrity of each

⁴ Nussbaum defines these as: "1. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length. 2. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; adequately nourished and sheltered. 3. Being able to move freely from place to place; secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction. 4. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason—and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education; being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. 5. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us; to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger; not having one's emotional development blighted by fear or anxiety. 6. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. 7. (A) being able to live with and towards others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another; (B) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. 8. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature. 9. Being able to laugh to play, to enjoy recreational activities. 10. (A) *Political*. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. (B) *Material*. Being able to hold property and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. Being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers" (33-34).

agent as an individual by emphasizing compassion, respect, and contextualized individual capabilities.⁵

Thinking with Farley, Held, and Nussbaum, the musical care ethics I propose begin to take shape. From its inception, care ethics are concerned with particular individuals and relationships. Moreover, it takes emotions seriously as aspects of the whole human person, not as inhibitions to moral development. As I argued in the previous chapters, music is an inescapably relational activity that is both discursive, that is, interpreted to convey values and convictions, and formational, that is, through the negotiation of these values and convictions identities and communities are constructed. Crucially, this discursive formation is affectively and emotionally constituted; it both *means* and *feels*, is both *rational* and *emotional*. In short, *musical activities embody the convergence of the tenets of moral theories of care*. Building on this foundation, and integrating the work of Nussbaum in particular, musical activity is ethical when it cares, that is, when it contributes to human well-being and flourishing.

The idea that music can contribute to human flourishing was illuminated in a number of ways by my conversation partners during my fieldwork. In

⁵ Acknowledgment of agency and mutual respect for others is a critical aspect of feminist ethics generally, and care ethics specifically. This observation reveals that what has been called “the problem of difference” is not so much a problem in itself, but is rather problematically understood and addressed. Instead of attempting to speak for all in the sense of universals or essences many feminist scholars argue that differences of opinion, experience, perspective, and agenda should be named, acknowledged, and respected. These ideas were expressed and codified in a special issue of *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (1992). See Eugene 1992; Hunt, Townes, and Umansky 1992; Isasi-Díaz 1992; Plaskow 1992; and Pui-lan 1992 for more on this.

response to my questions of, “does music influence your sense of well-being” and “can music heal,” the overwhelming responses were affirmative, yet nuanced. While my conversation partners affirmed music’s ability to influence their own personal well-being, many also noted that music’s influences on well-being were intimately tied up into human relationships with others. For example, Carin, a middle-aged woman from Harris creek, affirmed that music influenced her sense of well-being: “Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.” She described how music can cheer her up when’s she’s “in a blah mood” or how “dance music” can motivate her to “clean her house” (an aspect of Nussbaum’s capability 4, c.f. Hesmondhalgh 2013, 19). She further noted that it influences her relationship with her husband. Crucially, she connected music’s ability to heal directly to that relationship, noting that when her husband listens to “country music” he is reminded of his love for her and that in turn impels him to affirm their relationship through demonstrations of affection (“hugs and kisses”), which she understood as healing.

Speaking specifically of church music, Bob from Lakeshore said that the act of singing together with other people helped him reconcile his relationships with them: “if there’s somebody in the congregation or choir that’s singing by you that you may be angry at or don’t like as much, when you’re singing, all of that melts away.” I asked if those feelings came back later, after the music was over, and he said that if they did they were “greatly watered down.”

However, music did not always sooth or restore relationships; sometimes the relationships influenced the efficacy of music to “sooth [the] soul.” For example, Reggie, a musician from Greater Ebenezer in his early 60s who answered my first question by inflecting music’s ability to influence his well-being (“soothes my soul”), pointed out with an economy of words how relationship is vital in whether or not music influences his well-being. When asked if music influenced his sense of well-being, he responded: “It depends on where I’m at and who I’m with.” Others, such as Lacey from Fuller in a conversation recounted in chapter one, emphatically denied that music positively influences her sense of well-being at church, although she affirmed that it did in other settings.

Two points can be derived from these interviews. First, for many of my conversation partners, musical activity’s influence on their sense of well-being was initially tied to their emotional responses to it. Often, as Reggie’s response demonstrates, music’s way of being in the world is to influence emotions which in turn contribute to senses of wellbeing. Second, this emotional well-being was often tied to relationships with others. While my asking about healing right after asking about well-being may have influenced the answers I received to that question, it is telling that the healing was construed in relational terms that were integrated with emotional responses to music; either because of how music can inspire positive affections for family members and calm anger towards fellow

congregants, or of how it can invoke negative emotions towards others who are perceived as having violated or hurt them.

The negative aspects of music's relationship to well-being trouble overly optimistic accounts of music that imply that music always contributes to human flourishing by forcing an acknowledgment of the ways that music can hinder that flourishing as well. As Hesmondhalgh points out, his is a *critical* defense of music because he also notes this tendency (2013, 3). This potential for harm points to the need for musical activity to be evaluated ethically, and also points to how that may be done without falling into the regulative traps of *moralism* or *autonomism* that Cobussen and Nielsen identify: care that enables human flourishing as Nussbaum describes it. Evaluating musical activities from the perspective of discourse and formation go part of the way there, but they only provide an isolated interval of pitches; care towards justice-as-human-flourishing provides the tonic pitch in the chord, as it orients the meaningful and affective relational aspects of musical activity towards care for the well-being of the other.⁶ Indeed, musical practices in ecclesial settings often demonstrate the need for such an evaluative frame, as relationships are ruptured there as often and perhaps more profoundly than in other spheres of life. Musical care in congregations can also move the conversation into fruitful territory by

⁶ Please do not take my metaphor further than I mean it: I am not suggesting that a harmonious relationship between the three pitches based on western art music theory is the proper way of conceiving a chord. I hope that after the preceding account I mean it as no more than a heuristic device, and not a model for properly relating the three.

foregrounding the importance of relationships, where both discourse and formation place the emphasis on the individuated self. This relational inflection affords important insight when considered through the lens of music's metaphor of relationships, illuminating the inescapable fact that relational health is at the center of human flourishing (fulfilling sense, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reasoning; and play as well as affiliation in Nussbaum's list, expanding on Hesmondhalgh 2013, 19-20). Because music contributes to human flourishing through relationships, care-based ethics can be fruitfully employed to understand church music's ethical significance if oriented towards justice that repairs relational rupture rather than ignoring or accentuating it.

However, this account of justice-as-human-flourishing does not yet provide a means of naming and addressing the causes of relational rupture that inhibit human flourishing. While Nussbaum notes that violating the Central Capabilities of another is by definition injustice, we can and must say more about how efforts to enable flourishing through music can work against injustice beyond defining it. Justice, read through the lens of care, must also have a *restorative* orientation; when tempered and limited by attentiveness to the agency of others, caring musical worship works to repair relational rupture by restoring people to just, that is, flourishing, relationships with each other.

Restorative Justice

Care and justice, as Held, Farley, Nussbaum, and others have contended, read and interpret the other as the pursuits of each are engaged; people who care seeks justice for their intimates when they are the victims of oppression, but they also recognize that justice makes claims upon the activities of those intimate relations. It would be a grave mistake to refuse to acknowledge that unjust actions occur with great regularity in relationships (both intimate and distant) the world over. The accounts of care considered above suggest that the pursuit of justice-as-human-flourishing is equivalent to what has been called “restorative justice” by Howard Zehr, John Braithwaite, Carolyn Boyes-Watson, and others. According to the model of restorative justice, the goal of justice is to restore both the victims and oppressors to flourishing human relationships, if not with each other, then certainly with others.⁷ The editors of the *Handbook of Restorative Justice* (2013) describe restorative justice like this: “...approaches designed to make wrongdoers aware of the nature and magnitude of the harm they caused to other people and of their obligation to atone for that harm through constructive and reparative gestures and deeds.” Further, this approach is designed to “pave the way to forgiveness and reconciliation, the reintegration of wrongdoers into the community and the healing of victims’ trauma” (2013, xxi). Thinking with Held, Farley, and Nussbaum suggests that relationships need to be healthy in

⁷ For example, Zehr 1990; Braithwaite 2002; Boyes-Watson, Krumholz, and Rich-Shea 2013.

particular ways.⁸ It then becomes clear that an absence of an account of justice damns any attempt at constructing ethics around the maintenance of relationships alone. Yet taken together with this description of restorative justice, their work indicates that care – that is, ethics beginning with the ontology of relationships – needs an orientation for naming and opposing injustice that seeks to preserve the health of those relationships. Indeed, restorative justice provides the basis upon which a relationship may be repaired. When considered through the lens of restorative versus retributive justice, the one caring may see justice as being marshaled in the service of care, as being restored to relationship after acting against the flourishing and agency of an other or a self facilitates fulfilling the limits of capability, while simultaneously seeing justice as informed by and directed towards ethical caring for the well-being of others.

This account of just caring or caring through justice finds a voice in the affective and discursive activities of its proponents. Indeed, the notion of *voices* – both amplified and silenced – has great import for any consideration of human flourishing and agency. Moreover, listening and speaking *to* others is an important prelude to advocating on behalf of others; acknowledging the voice of another and their capability to leverage that voice is crucial to an ethic of care that marshals itself for just ends while marshaling justice in the service of care.

⁸ For example, reciprocity, equality, mutually fulfilling, etc., see Cahill 1996.

Musical Caring

It is now time to fashion the materials I have been assembling over the last three chapters into a theoretical means of evaluating both the impact of church music on ethical reason and action, as well as the impact of music on moral thought in general. The care ethics that I have described above provide a powerful heuristic tool for evaluating the morality of music that does not exclude its capabilities for care nor confines it to pre-determined courses of conduct. Jeff R. Warren (2014) has argued that music places us in relationships that require responsiveness of varying degrees. I suggest that the nature of this responsibility is to care for the wellbeing of others, both distant and proximate. This care involves attentiveness; observing, listening to, and talking with others in order to identify their capabilities and desires. Attentiveness additionally is composed of an orientation and posture of agential acknowledgment, both of the self and the other; being aware of the power dynamics at work in the relationship and orienting the self towards the best case of each party. Inasmuch as caring values relational harmony and health, attentiveness presupposes reciprocity within the frame of capability; each responds to the other as they are able. An important part of musical care is preserving the agency of the other; this involves making sure that space is made for the other to be received and acknowledged— inclusive of their differences— in a hospitable way, as Cobussen and Nielsen argue. This necessarily takes into account positions and dynamics of power, yet operates under an assumption of the equality of intrinsic human value and

worth, such that persons in positions of power do not violate the agency of others through music, as this would be considered an unjust act.

Church music, then, is ethical when it enables human-flourishing for each individual in the congregation; when it provides space for people to voice their needs to each other and to God (Nussbaum's Capability 4); when it affords people space to sing with each other and experience emotions – both joyful and remorseful – without denying or discounting them (Capability 5); when it invites personal reflection and evaluation of assumptions (Capability 6); when it unites people in meaningful and feelingful (embodied memory of relationships and feelings, Dueck 2017, 117) relationships (Capability 7); when it brings enjoyment and rest for individuals (Capability 9). Further, these ethical and caring aspects of musical worship are realized when they are directed towards preserving and maintaining the relational health of the congregation as individuals and community within a broader community. Further, it is ethical when it calls out injustice; when it names violations of human capabilities and acts of oppression. Finally, it is ethical when it does not abandon hope for reconciliation and restoration of ruptured relationships both within and beyond the bounds of the congregation. This does not mean emotionally coercing an abused woman to return to her alcoholic husband or an assaulted child to return to his violent mother. Instead, it means making every effort to make the husband or mother aware of the effects of their actions and move them towards well-being both as

individuals and relationships. This hope is often unrealized, but it cannot be abandoned despite the risk it will not come to fruition.

Taking these ideas together with my arguments from chapters two and three, I contend that a musical ethic of care is one that pays attention to the relational and affective discourses that music embodies, and seeks simultaneously to leverage those powerful discourses towards human flourishing while acknowledging and preserving the agency of others who might not share in the perspectives and opinions of the self. It also pays attention to music's discursive capability to protest and embody justice in caring and restorative ways, declaring identity and humanity on the one hand, and protesting injustice on the other. Moreover, musical care calls for a response to the declared needs and desires of the oppressed and victims of unjust action. This response may indeed be plural, as in certain situations the response may simply be to make music that identifies with the suffering or jubilation of the other, or perhaps listening respectfully to the songs of the other, or may perhaps encompass both. In any context, musically caring responses require attentiveness to the particularity of both that context and the individuals who populate it. The final chapter will look at how musical care might look in the discrete congregational contexts referred to in this dissertation.

Conclusion: Caring Justly in Church Music

This chapter began with an engagement with Cobussen and Nielsen who argued that on account of music's relational nature, musical ethics must begin with a commitment to hospitality. While my conversation partners in the churches I studied generally agreed with this thesis, their responses troubled it in important ways by the realization that hospitality is both contested and ethically open to abuse. Accordingly, I suggested that an ethical theory that gave a robust account of relationships would provide fruitful means of evaluating the goodness of such musical hospitality. I therefore described how feminist care ethics provided just such a theory, but that due to its intentional eschewal of justice in favor of relationships in its nascent forms, it, too, was insufficient. I then described the conflict between care and justice using my field work at Lakeshore, and noted that thinking with music as a metaphor revealed that care ethics could be recovered for evaluating church music if justice was oriented towards restoration of relationships, which lie at the heart of both music and human life. I then synthesized these theories and argued that music is ethical when it is caring; when it preserves people in and restore people to just, that is, flourishing, relationships with each other.

Musical care ethics in ecclesial settings begin with an acknowledgment of the meaningful and affective, that is, relational power of music, and seeks to marshal that power towards the well-being of the congregation, first as individuals within a community, then as a community within a society. Any

successful effort in this will require attention to the needs and desires of individuals in that particular place and time, with a particular eye for those who are being silenced or are experiencing oppression – or even just relational pain. The relational connections that music makes between individuals in congregations are ethical when they are caring; when they are oriented towards preserving people in and restoring them to just relationship with each other and God – the flourishing and wellbeing of the other. Further, music cares for members of the congregation when its capabilities for emotional, relational, and even physical healing are recognized and directed towards restorative justice. Music itself is ethical when it is caring, when it is carefully performed to respect, acknowledge, and appreciate the agency and humanity of others.

Further, music is ethical when it affords voices to those whose voices are marginalized in violation of their capabilities together with recognizing who needs to be silent in order for all to flourish. Indeed, this is not a blanket statement against those in positions of power; sometimes power is rightly used to prohibit or stop someone from violating the humanity of another. In specific communities, this will look different than in others, and it will vary even more greatly when applied to societies more generally. Considering church music and ethics in relation to power raises several additional questions: in our churches, how are those who are unjustly marginalized given voice? How can music be marshaled against relational injustice, on one hand, and restoration of ruptured relationships on the other? Can the musical worship, the sung prayer of the

congregation, declare justice and call all to reconciliation? The final chapter will engage these questions, and engaging deeply with ethnography, turn these questions into practical suggestions for scholars and practitioners of church music.

CHAPTER FIVE

Response: Neighbors, Relations, and Christian Theology

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I situate the relational care ethics for which I argued in the previous chapter within the broader field of theological response ethics. Synthesizing the model of “musical responsibility” proposed by Jeff R. Warren (2014) with the theological ethics of H. Richard Niebuhr, James M. Gustafson, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I argue that musical care whose end is relational justice is the appropriate ethical response to the needs of others that are invoked and evidenced in musical activity. Further, the ethical significance of musical activity in Christian worship may also be evaluated according to the dynamics of care; church music is ethical when it responds in just and caring ways to meet the needs of the congregation as individuals and community as situated in a broader social, denominational, or civic network. However, such a response is conditioned by the agential constraints placed upon each individual and community by society and by others; the caring and just responses our musical worship can embody are determined by the limits of our abilities, both individual and communal. From a Christian theological perspective, this ability to respond ethically raises the question of God’s agency in the world; human agents respond to the needs of others as they are able, but how they respond is

determined by how they understand God's agency in the world. Thinking with Gustafson and Bonhoeffer in particular, I argue that the claim of Matthew 22 and 24-25 is that a Christian ethical response of caring justice is an act of loving God and neighbor, and that in lived reality these things are symbiotic; "what you have done to the least of these you have done to me."

I begin this chapter with an engagement of Warren's musical responsibility ethics. Putting his argument into conversations about the connection between music and responsibility that I had with my ethnographic interlocutors, I both affirm and expand on his theory by showing how responsibility may be invoked in musical worship, but also how the indefiniteness of the responsibility he proposes limits its effectiveness, and can be fruitfully taken further by adding "to care justly" to his formulation without scaling back the scope of his claim. I then develop the theological impulses that have remained largely latent in this dissertation thus far, showing how my extension of Warren's claims finds theological support while simultaneously contributing to theological conversations in its own right.

The next section applies this theory to practical examples. I draw again from my observations and interviews to suggest some ways that care as restorative justice may be understood in concrete reality, offering some new examples and returning to previously examined instances. A final section weaves these theoretical and practical strands together and restates my argument for

understanding care as restorative justice as a way of both modelling and evaluating the ethical significance of musical worship.

Relational Response Ethics of Music

Jeff R. Warren's 2014 book, *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, argues that musical experience necessarily involves encounters with others, and that ethical responsibility arises from those encounters (1). Exactly what that responsibility entails emerges from the encounter and its attendant context (3). He argues that the phenomenological experience of music and others in musical events place limits on us that alter the way we experience music and consequently how we experience others. This is because music is inextricably linked to human relationships – even the inherent nature of music itself is relational, be it pitch, note, text, score, etc. Moreover, any activity of music involves others, whether encountered through physical presence or through such virtual means as history, memory, or imagination. Because of this relational aspect, ethical responsibilities to others should not be suspended in any musical endeavor. Instead, the activity of listening to and performing music with others causes us to enter into relational responsibility with them; “the relational leads to the ethical through responsibility, through the valuing of others, the limiting of ourselves for the sake of others, and giving, listening, responding to and respecting others - the improvisation of human relationships” (134). Following Emmanuel Levinas, Warren suggests that moral rules of a society should rest upon ethical

responsibilities of its individual members to one another. In this way, he parses the moral laws and rules of a given society and the ethics of responsibility that he is suggesting.¹

Warren pursues his argument of how music invokes ethical responsibility along two lines of inquiry: the first asks how musical experience can respond to ethical responsibilities. The second asks how music discloses ethical responsibilities (21). In order to effectively answer these questions, Warren posits that music cannot be reduced to subject/object distinctions, as a listener is always an active participant in constituting sound as music (2). Furthermore, music has a profound impact on social relationships, and we should therefore carefully consider the ways in which it is used, talked about, and created (9).

Warren suggests that musical meaning is inter-relationally constructed and discovered, what he calls the “inter-relational model of musical meaning” (21), and is comprised of three fundamental elements: 1) musical meaning is rooted in experience; 2) musical meaning is not singular, but multiple; and 3) musical meaning is interpersonal and thus has ethical implications. He suggests that because musical meaning is inter-relational, the ethics of music are likewise relationally generated. All musical experiences give rise to ethical responsibilities, and these responsibilities are determined by the specific context that gave rise to them (21-30). As such, the ethical aspects of musical meaning

¹ Levinas defines morality as the individual rules of an individual or society, and ethics as the principles that those rules are derived from. As such, morality is the diverse set of ways that ethical abstractions are made concrete in lived reality.

may be understood in terms of “appropriateness” (55-60), in other words, how fitting the musical idiom is to its context. The ethical appropriateness of musical meaning is further framed by historically conditioned receptions and uses.

Warren suggests that music draws people into proximity where ethical encounters can occur. Such a proximal encounter is active, and is oriented solely towards other people: there are no ethical responsibilities *to* music, only to other people (in that music is not a Thou but rather an It, 143). By actively entering into a musical “conversation,” people encounter the “other.” This encounter of the other is multifaceted and includes being *with* the other and listening *to and with* the other. Because this musical encounter with others is multifaceted, the agency of each party that enters into the various frames of musical meaning making is preserved by the ethical responsibility that arises in and through music (135-163).

The Trouble with Responsibility: Relating Selves and Others Through Music

Warren’s theory of relational responsibility in musical ethics was borne out in much of the field research I conducted for this dissertation. Through observations of congregants during musical worship and discussions about the way church music functions within interpersonal relationships, several of Warren’s core arguments were affirmed: relationships do indeed lie at the heart of musical activity in Christian worship; music is in itself intrinsically relational; musical meaning is negotiated with others, is bound up together with its

affective reception, and is further configured in relation to affection and human relationships; human relationships are, in turn, evaluated and determined within “social imaginaries,” which are in turn constructed out of the symbiotic elements of emotion and reason; emotion and reason converge in the human body during musical participation, thus music is ethically significant.

Warren’s theory holds together quite well in the abstract, yet is limited by his insistence that the ethics of responsibility in and through music remain in the abstract so as to remain broadly applicable. Indeed, his reluctance to provide what he terms a “hard and fast application” (187) for his theory indicates his realization that there is further work to be done. My fieldwork expands several aspects of his theory and also grounds it in church music practice, and in so doing demonstrates ways in which of my interview question, “Does music make you feel responsible for others?”, was equivocation from many of my conversation partners. Many of my interlocutors answered immediately in the affirmative – perhaps because they felt that music ideally *should* do so – but then struggled to find reasons to support their affirmation. For instance, Derek, who, as a Youth Director from Harris Creek was indeed a church leader, responded with “That’s a good question... I think, in some ways ... I don’t know if I would have phrased it like that, but, I think in some ways [it does].” Carin, also from Harris Creek, had a similar reaction to Derek and, intriguingly, upon pondering the question, relates a change in perspective towards other worshippers: “I’m going to say, and I never thought of that question before, maybe makes me a

little less judgmental. Maybe show them a little grace, maybe not expect them to be perfect [?]" Frida, an education professor from Greater Ebenezer, affirmed responsibility in musical worship in terms of being responsible for herself:

"I feel responsible for making sure that I'm receiving the word of God but also responsible that I'm being participatory and living my life where I can be an example to others because we all go [to] the church. We all have a responsibility to be in the presence of God and to take our own souls and then we go out."

Some were less affirming that music made them feel responsible for others.

Reggie, a musician from Greater Ebenezer, said "Kinda, sorta," and framed his answer in terms of playing with another person in a band. He described how some musicians are better than others, and that he feels less responsible for certain musicians' making mistakes in performances. Reggie's answer was decidedly more negative when I asked about others in church: "I really don't worry about the other people. No. I mean when I'm singing, I mean, I'm in the spirit. So, whatever message that I sing out and feel [about or from] God is what I feel they experience."

Others, about one-third of my conversation partners, were more definite in their disagreement. CJ from Harris Creek said "Nothing-, well, no, not necessarily a responsibility for them as far as ... in the moment." Kim, too, said "I don't think it does because of boundaries. You know? Like, 'You're responsible for yourself.'" Dave, a middle-aged pastor from Arizona interviewed as part of the SXSW research, said "It should. I don't know that it *does*."

These responses illuminate a central point of Warren's theory; that although people "should be" responsible to others in music, they often are not. In his concluding chapter, Warren recapitulates his thesis: that human relationships are central to meaningful music experiences, that ethical responsibilities arise from such experiences, and that there are impediments to its effectiveness for invoking ethical responsibility in human relationships. These impediments are two-fold: first, is what Warren calls "the culture industry's" commodification of music (184). Second, this commodification of music leads to a fracture of human relationships in and around music, and obscures the ethical responsibilities that arise from such relationships. Warren does not advocate for the destruction of the culture industry; instead, he indicates that its presence is the reason for his book. Yet the "commoditization of music" is only one possible reason for my conversation partners' ambivalence about whether music necessarily entails responsibility. Another possible reason, more immediately applicable to my topic of church music, is the individualization of musical worship, particularly within North American Protestantism, that has been identified by Martyn Percy as "an abrogation of the social" (1996, 286) and by Mark Labberton as "tromping in the spirit," by which he means intentional unawareness of others during musical worship (exemplified by a story of a worship leader who quite literally was tromping on the feet of other congregants because he was so engrossed in musical worship, 2008, 21). Indeed, many of the responses to my suggestion of responsibility through music were couched in terms of *personal* responsibility,

which confirms part of the critique offered by scholars such as Percy and Labberton. The effect of an individualistic focus on worship as solely about a “personal relationship with Jesus” in evangelical churches often trumps social awareness or obligation. When worship is understood and practiced in this way, we are often guilty of “[losing our] neighbor,” as Labberton puts it (2008, 20). As Warren argues, in order for people to understand the relational ethics of musical responsibility, they must first be alerted to its reality. In this way, Warren is not advocating for a certain set of moral laws to govern the use and activity of music, but rather he is “making propaganda for a style of thinking” (188) about musical meaning and ethical responsibility that arises from it.²

However, as I argued earlier, ascertaining what music means is not straightforward: what music means is symbiotic to how it feels, and how it feels is profoundly part of its relational ontology. This redirection of Warren’s claim, from meaning to affect, is illustrated by Derek, who in answering my question, went on to describe the relational and emotional responsibilities he felt towards the family whose teenaged son had recently died: “when I [see them worshipping in church] there's definitely some inspiration [that] makes [me] want to connect outside of that moment as well.” He later described how seeing the emotions that musical worship evoked or gave place to was integral to how his relationship went with them and how he understood the family’s

² See also Ingalls 2018, chapter one, for further discussion on the individualization of musical worship.

interpretation of “Before the Throne” (see chapter three). Extending the emotional aspect of musical responsibility beyond seeing the emotion of others towards having feelings of *one’s own about others* in musical worship, Stan, an English professor from Lakeshore who affirmed feeling a sense of responsibility to others during musical worship, said in a follow-up Facebook Messenger conversation that this sense of responsibility is directed towards forming community affectively: “I really want people to pull together and get frustrated when I can’t/ don’t seem to [see any] impact on them/the performance.” This perspective was more positively shared by Carin, who noted later in our conversation that she did experience a sense of responsibility for others during worship in relation to her bodily gestures, specifically, whether or not to raise her hands or move along with the music. Her concern was initially that she would be a distraction if she did raise her hands, but later she decided that her actions might encourage others to do the same and experience a fuller sense of God’s presence in musical worship. This perspective is further clarified by Frida’s qualified affirmation of individual responsibility to act obediently to God’s working in her life as an example to others.

While congregational music is likely not the kind of music Warren had in mind when writing his book, examining his theories from the perspective that this specific song genre affords helps to flesh them out and points to how they may work in real life. Importantly, my conversation partners were over twice as likely to affirm that music gave them a sense of responsibility for others *in a*

congregational setting than they were in general.³ This is likely because personal relationships are more readily identifiable in a congregation than outside of one; church members are ostensibly committed to the relationships with others in the church, and therefore experience responsibility for them through musical worship more readily than through non-congregational music.

Finally, part of the problem my interlocutors had in answering my question was the indefiniteness of what “responsibility” entailed. I crafted the question to be open ended because Warren’s argument for responsibility is similarly indefinite. Indeed, though Warren’s suggestion is on the face of it correct, the relationship between music and responsibility to others needs to be pursued further. To provide a useful basis for an ethical framework for church music, two additional questions must be addressed: how are we responsible to each other in music or through music? And what are we responsible to do? In order to support my argument that we are responsible to care justly for the relational health of others in musical worship, the theological underpinnings of this claim need to be explicated. It is to this task that I now turn.

Theological Response Ethics: Agency, Care, and Power

...and a lawyer asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said to him, ““You shall love the lord your God with

³ 14 said “no” in general and “yes” in church; 6 said “yes” to both; 5 said “no” to both; 3 said “yes” in general and “no” in church; all others were non-committal in their answers.

all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and all the prophets.” (Matthew 22:35b-40, NRSV)

My argument for care ethics oriented towards restorative justice in musical worship also has a theological dimension that, while implied at various points throughout this project, must now be explicated. Following many scholars of American Christian social ethics (including Rausenbusch, Niebuhr, Gustafson, and others), my ethical proposal is grounded in the text of Matthew 22 relayed above. I wish to situate my argument as a development of the response ethics proposed by H. Richard Niebuhr and James M. Gustafson in the late twentieth century in conversation with the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; namely, that care oriented towards restorative justice in music is a response to Jesus’ interpretation of the greatest commandment. In other words, to love God with everything, and your neighbor as yourself, can be described as caring for them, and that Jesus’ inclusion of the law and the prophets connects this caring to acts of justice. Stanley Hauerwas, in his commentary on Matthew (2006), argues that we are able to know what it is to love our neighbor and God because of our experience of God’s love for us: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). He goes on to argue that Jesus’ invocation of the law and prophets keeps love from devolving into saccharine sentimentality (193-194).⁴ While I affirm that justice

⁴ Hauerwas goes on to commend Aristotelian *Nicomachean ethics*, which invoke the necessity of self-knowledge and love as a pre-requisite for love of others, although Hauerwas

checks care in the same way that Hauerwas suggests the law checks sentimental love, the thrust of my invocation of care is in an effort to temper Hauerwas' (and others') hard-mindedness towards the centrality of relationships in Christian ethics. To exclude emotions as a potential basis for moral action is misguided, and a fools' errand, when the arguments of Begbie, Smith, Nussbaum (chapter three), and indeed my own, are considered. If we insist that love of others contains no trace of sentiment, then we deny ethical actors' full humanity by reducing them to a single aspect of their humanity. Nevertheless, sentiment cannot rule the day, for humans are not only the sum total of our sentiments, but are rather the composites of the diverse, myriad ways of being human. Indeed, this is one of the many ways that musical activity discloses what it is to be human; that we are both emotional and sentient, rational and affectionate. Furthermore, for church music scholars, trying to ascertain musical meaning using only lyrical analysis in order to determine doctrinal orthodoxy is in danger of obscuring what Smith points out in *Desiring the Kingdom*: that we have a tendency to justify intellectually that which we, in the first instance, love and desire.

Keeping my intent to attenuate the anti-sentimental impulse within some theological and church music scholarly conversations in mind, I turn now to theological considerations of response ethics that modify even as they agree with

mollifies the effect of this by insisting that such ability is dependent on God's revelation.

Warren's argument of music as invoking ethical responsibility: what kind of responsibility is invoked? Responsibility to do what? Indeed, any series of answers to this line of questioning will be informed by the belief system under which one is operating. As a Christian scholar writing a dissertation on church music, I am assuming a shared commitment to Christian beliefs and convictions. These questions then become, "what kind of responsibility is invoked *in Christian Worship, or, from a Christian perspective?*" In order to answer these questions, I must first situate my argument theologically by giving a contextualized account of the history of Christian response ethics in America.

The responsive tradition of American theological ethics dates back to the late nineteenth century, but finds perhaps its most prominent exemplar in the person of Walter Rauschenbusch. The figure of Rauschenbusch looms large over the tradition of religious social justice in America, and his commitment to "making the world a more just place" was supported by his reading of the biblical example of the Hebrew prophets, who "insisted that a right life was the true worship of God" (4). The prophets demanded "right moral conduct as the sole test and fruit of religion" (6), and formed the foundation upon which the morality of society was ordered. Indeed, in Rauschenbusch's reading of the prophetic narrative, ethics and religion were inseparable in Hebrew society and should be understood as such in democratic America as well (6-8).

Central to this "right moral conduct" was a concern for the wellbeing of the poor and the oppressed. For Rauschenbusch, wellbeing was expressed in the

mutually constitutive matters of land and money, and a moral interaction with these sources of “flourishing” included prompt and timely payment of wages and access to possession of land on which to live and flourish (6-18). This concern for the poor and the oppressed was similarly informed by an understanding of ethics as being inalterably concerned for the well-being of the community *together with* the individual. While the value of the individual was of central importance, the flourishing of the individual was only to be found within the flourishing of the community (19-26). Such communal flourishing was not to be understood as the exclusive right of those who held membership in the community, but was instead to be at the ready for any who entered the community from outside. Rauschenbusch calls this hospitality of welcome and care for the stranger a Christian virtue (106-109).

For Rauschenbusch, the prophetic ethic of the Hebrew scriptures was concerned with troubling the complacency of the religious elite and comfortable. Their call was for all to live in accordance with the moral law as found in the Decalogue. Such an orientation resulted in accusations of pessimism, and Rauschenbusch acknowledges that holding up a standard of ethical righteousness is not often a popular activity, but is rather the fundamental reality of God’s will for humanity. Such a will was to be lived out in the social and political arenas of life, and Rauschenbusch constructed his ethics accordingly (26-31).

For Rauschenbusch, this prophetic ethic found its ultimate fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not a “timeless” religious teacher, but was rather a concrete, historical figure who spoke directly to his context. Thus, the directive to those with “two coats [to] go, sell one” was not a vague philosophical ideal, but rather a concrete example of how the prophetic ethic of care for the poor and oppressed was to be lived out. Furthermore, Jesus’ social ethic was one of building into his coming kingdom; he was not concerned about the ritual and ceremonies of the priestly religion, but was rather intent on exhibiting the “kingdom of God among you” (58-66).

Reinhold Niebuhr builds explicitly upon the ethic Rauschenbusch outlined, yet modifies it in two significant ways. First, Niebuhr is intent to show that a Christian ethic must be in some sense differentiated from both the liberal progressive naturalism and Marxist mechanism that Rauschenbusch happily worked within. This kind of ethical Christianity was concerned with bringing into being a just society such as that exemplified in the person of Jesus. Second, Niebuhr recognized that the reality of human sinfulness presented an obstacle to the onrush of progressive improvement that was deeply ingrained in Rauschenbusch’s prophetic ethics. Sin for Niebuhr was more than just the failure to choose moral action, but was also an inability to discern what moral action might be in a given scenario.⁵ Moreover, sin is an irrational defense of the

⁵ It should be noted that both Reinhold and H. Richard developed a doctrine of revelation to answer the riddle of how the ability to comprehend “the good” was reconfigured in the

egoistic self at the expense of community within the human person; it was an unavoidable orienting of the self towards the flourishing of the self that was so pervasive that it required a radical renewal (1949, 1-14; 1971, 11; 1979, 39-61, esp. 44, 52). As such, addressing “sin” requires an ethical paradigm that includes this aspect of mental and cognitive renewal (1979, 18-25).

This recognition of the depth of human sinfulness prompted Niebuhr to develop a soteriological Christology that maintained the radical element of Christianity he found appealing in what he calls “orthodox” Christianity without abandoning the intellectual credibility of his “liberal” education (1979, 38, 59-60; 1949, 171-195). In so doing, he moved the inflection of his ethics away from the high ideals of moral perfection so prominent in Rauschenbusch, and placed it on an awareness of social reality. While he does not deny the ideal of universal love as the fundamental ethic of Jesus, he states that ideals cannot dictate our understanding of reality; rather reality must dictate the application of our ideals. He calls this ethical paradigm “realism” (1979, 60-61). Ethical realism leads Niebuhr to question the efficacy of the prophetic ideal found in the Hebrew scriptures and into an affirmation of ethical action in the reality of modern human history. Rather than an application of concrete moral laws, on one hand, or an abstracted ideal of love, on the other, Niebuhr’s ethic of realism posited

Christian. An examination of this important aspect of Niebuhr’s theology is beyond the scope of this project.

that a contextual application of ethical principles was the most appropriate Christian ethic for the modern world (1955, 1949, for example).

Foundational in this construct is Niebuhr's strong reliance on the narratives of history to inform an application of these prophetic ethical principles. According to Niebuhr, due to the power of sin on the human mind, we cannot assume to know what is the good in a given scenario unless we have studied history and understand what the effects of actions have been in the past (1949, 14-33; 1971, 19). However, our ability to understand the ethical principle under which we are acting in a given circumstance by virtue of historical inquiry does not assure the human agent of right action; rather, it is faith in the resurrected Jesus and the revelation of reality that faith brings that enables this rational ability (1949, 196-213). In this way, Niebuhr is able to satisfy his own requirement of a peculiar Christian ethic without abandoning his desire for an ethical paradigm that is universally applicable.

This move towards universal and peculiar principled realism nonetheless presented a number of problems for Niebuhr, and he devoted much of his later writing to their negotiation (1955, 1971, 1979). While it is not the purpose of this project to investigate and resolve these problems, a brief mention of two which pertain to my project will help guide this inquiry. First, Niebuhr's desire to maintain a principled ethic of realism that was both peculiar and universal meant that his principles needed to be flexible and substantive enough to work in the entirety of human experience, and his theological work was unable to

account for this. Thus, his ethical paradigm is contextualized to *a* society (*his* society), but that society is too large and diverse to be unified under such an abstracted ethical principle. Second, the appeal to principles itself was still too abstract; how does one interact in a principled manner with others in a given, diverse, society so that the result of that social interaction – be it politically, economically, or religiously – will be good for, and understood as such, by all involved?⁶

Reinhold Niebuhr's brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, took up this dual challenge. To the first challenge, he introduced a far more developed and complex understanding of society in relation to the gospel in his oft-cited *Christ and Culture* (1956). H. Richard intended that his "culture" idea be developed by future scholars using anthropological techniques (1956, 29-30). Society was no monolithic entity, but was rather a fragmentary composition of groups of people who exercised a commitment to shared values; these he called "culture" (although he could not have known what the study of culture would entail after his death, he would have spared future scholars much effort had he said "cultures" instead of "culture." See Ortner (1997), Shelemay (2011), and Zamito (2013) for anthropological descriptions of the problems of "culture").

H. Richard recognized that Reinhold's proposition had merit but needed to be developed further. He introduced the Christ & Culture typologies to give

⁶ Indeed, if such an outcome is even possible.

an account of the diversity inherent in cultures and Christian communities and provide a way to negotiate its situational peculiarities. By establishing his typologies, *against* (Christ in opposition to culture), *of* (Christ as synonymous with culture), *above* (Christ as the best parts of culture), *paradox* (Christ as in a paradoxical relationship culture), and *transforming* (Christ as the redeemer and transformer of culture), H. Richard sought to answer the question of how an ethic could be both peculiarly Christian and universal by suggesting that there are *many different, often conflicting sets of principles* that inform the way different groups of Christians respond. In so doing, he acknowledged the ways in which cultures are diverse – both between each other and within themselves – and sought to explain the principles under which a Christian might act ethically in a given society and context. As such, the application of Christian principles in any interaction of a given individual or community might be peculiarly Christian, yet might not conform to a single standard of engagement.

Second, H. Richard recognized that even a peculiar application of a contextualized Christian ethic, such as that suggested in his *Christ & Culture*, needed further development. With which “culture” is one supposed to be *against*, *of*, *above*, or *transforming*? Furthermore, how is one to enact such principles? The answer, for H. Richard, can be found in his other well-known work, *The Responsible Self*. In it he argues for a realistic mode of ethical action that is governed by an understanding of the self as being responsible to, and for the well-being of, those who are in community with it (1978, 69-72). Such an ethic

assumes the same pre-conditions as Reinhold's ethic of realism in that it begins with an understanding of the self in relation to history but extends it to include the self's relationship to society and to God.

This essential recognition of relationship as the foundation for an ethic of appropriate responsibility is itself built upon a recognition that the self is distinct from the other, and is in many ways realized as a self through encountering the other. Drawing on the work of Martin Buber, particularly his I-Thou/I-It construction of human relationships, H. Richard posits that the idea of the human self is socially formed, in that the reflexive nature of self-inquiry is only possible inasmuch as the other is encountered. This other can be an agent (Thou) or an object (It). If an object, then the self does not have an inherent responsibility towards It, but if an agent then responsibility is enacted in that the self has some semblance of a relationship to the Thou (72-76, c.f. my discussion of music as moral agent in chapter three).

In unpacking his understanding of responsibility, H. Richard states that there are four elements to the theory of responsibility: *response*, *interpretation*, *anticipation*, and *social solidarity*. In response, our self-agency is recognized to be relationally conditioned by the actions of those around us (the I-Thou), and so it is that each action is a response. Second, this responsive action is necessarily constructed upon an interpretation of the actions to which we are responding. Third, this interpretation is contingently modified by the anticipated response of the other to our action. Finally, action is responsible if an agent takes each of

these elements into account together within the frame of social solidarity, in that a good response is necessarily determined by the community one inhabits (61-65). In this way, the encounter with the other in relationship is not only an I-Thou, but is more importantly an I-You, in that the other is *known* within the standards of society; social moral laws are mutually constituted on the ethical principle of response/interpretation/anticipation/solidarity cycle in such a way that the other is knowable, albeit in a limited way (78-79).

Within such a postulation, the question of universal ethics is, if not answered completely, then is at least asked differently:

And now in *cathékontic* ethics, or the ethics of fitting, we find ourselves led to the notion of universal responsibility, that is, of a life of response to actions which is always qualified by our interpretation of these actions as taking place in a *universe*, and by further understanding that there will be a response to our actions by representatives of universal community... (87-88).

Yet this ethical responsibility of fittingness is always engaged in a particular time and place, and our actions are configured in the liminal now in response to actions (both self's and other's) of the near and distant past in anticipation of the universal community's (of which the "I" is a part) future response (108-126). H. Richard's use of "universal" here does not mean for all time and all places, but rather is defined in relation to a larger social reality that is nonetheless still relationally constituted, as ethical responses are not merely the concern of the self. Moreover, the self is in a dependent relationship to the other, as we are not hermetically sealed individuals, but are rather "members of one another."

James M. Gustafson continued this line of ethical reasoning in *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, yet differed from H. Richard theologically in that Gustafson assumes less of an agential position for God than does H. Richard. Whereas Niebuhr understood God as an active agent in the world – acting with individuals in society and history – Gustafson locates “God” as the limitations of human agency; as “the forces that bear down on us and sustain us” (1981, 273-74). Instead of an ethics that understands God as an agent whose actions in history are to be responded to, interpreted, and anticipated in relational responsibility, Gustafson sees such responsibility being directed only towards human agents and the created order. His reasons for differing as such from Niebuhr are complex and nuanced, and Gustafson sees Niebuhr’s doctrine of God as being too limited, on the one hand, and offering too much excuse for unethical human action, on the other (274 ff, for instance). Gustafson argues that the human agent’s responsibility to the other and to the world is care for its well-being. Whereas Niebuhr argued that “Responsibility says ‘God is acting in all actions upon you. So, respond to all actions upon you as to respond to [God’s] actions,” (1978, 126). Gustafson argued that God *is* or *is in* the actions that act upon us (1981, 264). Within this frame, we can see that our responsibility is to act on behalf of others as if we were doing so to God: “What you have done to the least of these you have done to me” (Mt. 25:40, 45).

To return to Hauerwas’ rhetorical question of how we know what love is, in light of both Niebuhr and Gustafson’s claims about the agency of humanity in

response to constraint, it is not affirming the consequent to read Matthew 25:40 in reverse. In other words, if we know what love is and are able to love because of God's love for us, and our love is construed in active terms as Jesus' says in Matthew 22, then when taken together with the reality of our actions towards others (loving or unloving) as being done to God, it stands to reason that we know what love is because we have been loved by other people. In the same way that what we do to others we do to Jesus, then in what they do to us is the way we experience Jesus. Yet even "they," the other, are as much a Thou as we are in the scope of Jesus' words. As I have argued in chapter four, this acknowledgement of the humanity of the other means that our loves and desires – our affections – are imbricated with our knowledge; we know what love is and how to love because we are loved by others as by God, and are therefore able to reciprocate this love in response to the claims of Jesus.⁷

This double inversion of the I/Thou – Thou/I reading of Matthew 22 and 24-25 illustrates that reciprocal human relationships are the axle around which the wheel of response ethics turns. Yet it also illustrates that relationships cannot mean our intimates alone, but must always again include attentiveness to those

⁷ This inversion of the "golden rule" is more clearly evident in Luke's account of the same material (Luke 10:25-37). Instead of placing the words of the greatest commandment in Jesus' mouth, the author puts them into the mouth of the lawyer. When Jesus affirms the lawyer's exegesis, the lawyer wishes to justify himself, and utters those words that have troubled Christians throughout history, "And who is my neighbor?" (29). Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan, where the logic is: you are also a neighbor. Your neighborliness is directed to whomever you encounter, but you have also received the care that a neighbor gives.

who might qualify as “the least of these,” who may include us from time to time. There is a latent suggestion in the parallel narrative of the Greatest Commandment in Luke 10 that places the agency of loving actions into the hands of the “Thou” rather than the “I.” As Robert Funk wrote in 1964, “as victims we are ‘loved’ by the enemy” (58). Like many of Jesus’ parables, we find ourselves caught by misidentification with the characters of the story; we are likely as not the ones in need of care.

When considered in light of this reading of Matthew 22, 24-25 as directing our agential orientation towards love of God through love of neighbor, the problem of orthodoxy as I described it in chapter three comes more clearly into focus. Cherry’s syllogism, “right worship (*orthodoxy*...) leads to right action (*orthopraxy*) which, in turn, leads to right affection (*orthocardia*),” has ascribed a sequential, cause-and-effect relationship to concepts that are actually symbiotic: the active love and worship of God occurs *through* active love of neighbor. To riff on Gustafson, active love of God *is* or *is in* active love of neighbor. To take this one step further, which I cannot resist, any claim cannot be “orthodox” if it is not always also characterized by orthopraxis *and* orthocardia.

Towards a Theology of Care in Response Ethics: Grace and Being for Others in Love

Taking Niebuhr and Gustafson together with Caccamo and Warren, I suggest that music invokes a theological responsibility to love our neighbor in concrete and practical ways as we are able; to care in appropriate and just ways

that enable human flourishing as I defined it in chapter four. However, the kind of care that Jesus calls love of God and neighbor in Matthew 22 and Luke 10 is costly, as it may also involve appropriate acts of justice that transgress the bounds of personal comfort and safety (like the Samaritan who stopped on a dangerous highway to help a hated enemy). I ground this suggestion theologically from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who argued that ethical response to God's gracious love was to act on behalf of others, of "being for others." In his *Discipleship* (1937 [2001]), one of the most significant works of Christian theology and practice of the twentieth century, Bonhoeffer sets out a framework by which to live in Christian community. In his extended reflection of the "Sermon on the Mount" (Mat. 5-7), Bonhoeffer argues persuasively for an understanding of "costly grace" as that which is not "cheapened" by evil action (2001, 171-175). An acceptance of grace, Bonhoeffer argues, demands the sacrifice of our own self-righteousness ("piety," 161). No more can the person who has encountered such radical grace consider anything about himself as worthy of it. This does not lead to an inactive faith of passivity for Bonhoeffer; instead, such costly grace frees the individual from the constraints of self-righteousness ("the law"), and enables Christ-like action (18). Freedom, defined as such, violates the rules of self-righteous "piety" and insists instead on something far more radical: a life of committed action on behalf of others (175).

It is important to note here that Bonhoeffer does not diminish the importance of character formation (2005, 76-102), but rather reframes it to say

that Christian discipleship is entered into for the purpose of being formed into the image of Christ (2001, 281-288). Instead of forming classical virtues, such as prudence or temperance, which for Bonhoeffer lead to “piety” and “cheap grace” thereby preserving the self’s resistance to the freedom of costly grace, formation of Christ-like character enables action on behalf of others without fear of personal piety being compromised. This is the ultimate virtue: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and your neighbor as yourself (2001, 175; 2005, 146-170).

In his unfinished and provocative manuscript, *Ethics* (1949 [2005]), Bonhoeffer continues this line of thought by claiming that the life formed in the image of Christ is identified by its similarity to the life of Christ himself as described in the Bible – “the man for others”⁸ [*Stellvertretung*] – by living “for others” (2005, 432). This claim is further established by his insistence that our acts of service to God must be bound up in our acts of service to human beings in light of the incarnation. In Jesus, the God-man, the fullness of sacred reality was revealed in profane form (59).⁹ For Bonhoeffer the distinction between sacred

⁸ The translation of *stellvertretung* has been much debated. I am partial to this definition, which was favored by the late Glen Stassen during a course on Bonhoeffer’s *Ethics* at Fuller Theological Seminary in Summer 2012. Instead of “vicarious representation,” which has other theological connotations (such as penal substitutionary atonement), “the man for others” puts the inflection on action rather than passivity, and is therefore more in line with the thrust of Bonhoeffer’s ethics than the other translations.

⁹ Action becomes profane when it is not oriented towards the flourishing of the other, and therefore the love of God.

and profane action is obliterated in Christ, and so all action is now to be engaged as an act of loving God.

Emmanuel Levinas contributes a relational theory of existence to the discussion from an ethical perspective outside Christian theology. Levinas (whom Warren, Rommen, and Cobussen and Nielsen cite), in his book, *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other*, suggests that, “[w]hen human existence interrupts and goes beyond its efforts to *be*... there is a vocation of an existing-for-the-other stronger than the threat of death...[italics mine]” (1998, xii). Levinas goes on to suggest that the very existence of the *I* is wrapped up in the existence of the *other*, such that I am responsible for the other’s well-being. Indeed, my own well-being depends on it (xii-xiii, c.f. Warren 2014, 186). Such thinking for Levinas leads him to suggest that the other is a fundamental ontology that is at once *not* an ontology (8-11). In a certain sense, the presence of others is a phenomenological (experiential) reality that insists on an ontological ethic of relational responsibility (8). To say so plainly, the foundation of ethics is to care for others.

For Bonhoeffer, such a commitment to a life lived for the good of others resulted in activity that violated his own convictions and personal sense of righteousness. His participation in the failed July 20, 1943 *putsch* (coup) against Adolf Hitler was not a denial of his pacifist convictions but was a violation of his personal righteousness on behalf of others (Todt 2007, 117). Such epistemic dissonance is an extreme example, and is perhaps beyond the pale of what I am trying to say about ethics in music. It does, however, highlight several salient

features of Christian ethics that have significance for the church musician: 1) Bonhoeffer's commitment to living for the good of others led him to confront the unjust powers that surrounded him in Nazi Germany; 2) his acts of civil disobedience were not motivated by a commitment to an abstract ideal, but rather by a commitment to the concrete right to human, bodily life; 3) he was oriented around the idea of the flourishing of the other as the foundation of Christian living in the freedom of costly grace.

In view of Bonhoeffer's insistence on the ultimate reality of God being found in the penultimate reality of human beings by virtue of the incarnation – the God-man Jesus – we may say that Levinas' insistence on the idea of human identity and existence being bound up in the presence of others (or an Other) provides a more comprehensive ontology of care by which we may reframe the formation of character.

Applying this point about the centrality of relationships to Warren's argument for musical responsibility suggests that our responsibility to others through musical activity in Christian worship is to care for them by responding to their needs and to accept in reciprocal kind the care they offer to us as both we and they are agents of God's love as revealed in the person of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, musical activity participates in these acts of loving justly by virtue of its discursive/meaningful and formative/affective power; music can at once care for the other and care for us. It can at the same time inspire and orient our

affections towards care for other. However, it is one thing to suggest in the abstract that music has such power, it is another to describe what it looks like in lived reality.

“What Would That Even Look Like?”: Relational Response Ethics in Congregational Worship

“What does music do in church?” I asked Kevin, a current Fuller student and pastor of a multicultural evangelical church in Hollywood. He initially responded as many other Christian leaders had done in my study,

It helps my ministry by setting the mood. It kinda sets the tone of, like – you know how I was talking about being under the influence of that song, or music? We do that collectively at our church. It’s like that music allows us to forget about everything, it encourages us to forget about everything and be present to, what we call, ‘the Spirit of God.’ And I think that there’s also the element of being responsive to God. Right?

Kevin had earlier spoken of music’s ability to present “truth” in emotionally applicable ways, connecting people to each other through this, and his answer assumes my knowledge of that aspect. I then asked him if music made people responsible for each other. His face registered a flicker of something, perhaps surprise, as he reflected. Then he repeated the question: “Responsive to other people?” “Yeah, like in worship at church,” I clarified. He paused, staring out the windshield as we made our way through the downtown traffic, and responded as though thinking out loud,

Bro, you know that’s interesting. I just realized that a lot of times it can be kind of individualistic in a sense. Like you close your eyes and you raise up your hands and stuff. But I don’t think I’ve ever thought of it as a

response to other members in our church. And I wonder what that would look like. Like, um, [pause] wow. That's interesting.

"Do you think it should be?" I queried. He answered enthusiastically,

Yeah! Yeah, that'd be really, that'd be really great. Like I said, I wonder what it's like, [pause] I wonder what that would look like.

Kevin continued reflecting on "what that would look like," noting that his church is primarily Korean American, but also has some African American and Latinx members. He remembered that their worship leader abandoned the set list the week Philando Castille was shot, and instead led the entire congregation in songs of lament. He further noted that this was particularly impactful, since as Korean Americans he thought the majority of his congregation did not experience "police brutality" in the same ways the African American members did. He asked again and again what it would look like to respond musically to the racial and political injustices that occur in our communities in real time. I confessed that I did not know, and that my lack of knowledge was the impetus for my research. He pressed me, "Like, 'I'm being more responsible to my neighbor, right?'" I nodded. He thought for another moment and then talked through an example that came to mind.

Okay... You know what we did, we tried this one praise night thing, where we ... played the same four chords again and again, drums playing and everything. And we asked each person to sing a couple lines, and as soon as they sang a couple lines we joined and repeated their thing. And we only had seven or eight people show up, but each person got a chance to sing a line, and we echoed that line. I remember that was really powerful.

Kevin continued reflecting on the slow-dawning epiphany that church music could have profound significance for human relationships for the rest of our conversation, noting that musical worship at his church was “kinda like a concert, honestly, many times ... That bothers me! I didn’t realize that would bother me until you asked me that question.” “Sorry!”, I responded. He came back immediately by saying,

No, that’s a good thing! And I think the songs should be contextualized to what we’re singing what’s bothering us in this country. I mean, what would it look like to react to what’s going on with our current political administration, President Trump and everything, that bothers people, and either try to find worship music that reflects that, or maybe encourage them to write something of their own and share that together. That’d be interesting.

There are several aspects of Kevin’s reflection over the course of this conversation that need to be unpacked. First, he noted that he often treated music as a tool with which to “set the mood” for his “ministry,” by which he ostensibly meant the sermon. He then realized that if music “connects people” and offers them a means of “handling truth” in emotionally important ways, then understanding music as being solely about an individual encounter with “God” during musical worship—a common evangelical approach—was counterproductive. Second, he recognized that musical worship is both meaningful and emotional, and is therefore capable of disclosing the gravitas of certain events or experiences to others in profound ways, as his memory of musical worship the week Philando Castille was shot suggests. Third, his account of the prayer service where the band vamped over a short progression

while individuals sang their prayers, after which the rest of the group repeated their prayers with them, provides an easily recognizable point of contact for the care ethics I am arguing for. In providing affective space for each individual to give voice to their needs and desires in concert with each other – being heard and joined in that prayer – the prayer service demonstrated how attentiveness, difference, and mutual respect can be engaged in musical worship. This narrative takes Warren’s notion of musical responsibility one step further, revealing what a caring response oriented towards justice might look like in a discrete context. Yet it also implicitly reveals how the constraints on human agency are often encountered in systems of power, as Kevin’s reflections on “police brutality” and “President Trump” suggest. Indeed, there is a danger in reading Gustafson’s suggestion that “God” “is or is in” the power structures that bear down on us as unreservedly sanctioning the actions of those power structures and their occupants. Instead and indeed, unjust power is often the “It” that caring justice responds against, and a brief examination of power together with a hypothetical example of musical disruption of unjust power will clarify how the relational responsibility to care towards restorative justice that I argue for may look.

Navigating Relational Power and Care Ethics Through Church Music

The fact that there are power positions is a messy and difficult reality of life. Because of these differentials, often, the word “power” itself carries connotations of abuse and oppression. This is not necessarily the case in every

circumstance, for as Theodore Kemper contends, positions of power are an inherent part of human life; they are not inherently oppressive or liberating, but can be either – or both (2011). When considering human relationships, power needs to be addressed, but some qualifications must first be mentioned. First, power and leadership are not the same thing. Leadership does not necessarily equate to positions of power, as quite often leadership is needed to confront unjust use of power.¹⁰ Second, while the exercise of power varies markedly within and among human societies, power dynamics are ever-present in human relationships; I am in a position of power over my children; my boss is in a position of power over me; and so on. Third, power positions tend to obscure the ability of those who occupy them to identify or empathize with those of a lower status than themselves. It is difficult – perhaps because it is often undesirable – to see the plight of those over whom you exercise power (Keltner et al 2003; Kleef et al 2008; Kemper 2011; Solomon 2015; for example).

The reality of power is an important aspect to consider in congregational music ethics. Who is in a position of power? Or, who has greater agency in a given situation? To return to the example of Bonhoeffer, who was the power he was addressing? While the obvious answer is Nazism, it is important to note that Bonhoeffer himself occupied a position of ecclesial and social power that enabled

¹⁰ I am using “leadership” here as a relational term, as in the ability to guide others, as opposed to making them do something (power). Further, a leader in this sense casts a vision and then persuades others to join in the pursuit of that vision rather than force them to join in.

him to advocate for the right to life and flourishing of those with less power: those persecuted by the Nazi regime.

In this way, we can see how the life of care for the other can lead to a confrontation with unjust power. How would such a confrontation look in church music as considered in this dissertation? It would be instructive to examine church music in relationship to a specific example of justice work. For example, the conversation between Samantha, Ron, and Nick from chapter two regarding using hip-hop music for worship in Samantha's "old, white" Anglican church, where Samantha affirmed that she was responsible to her congregants musically, and that part of that responsibility was to protect their relational needs and to facilitate their worship by not offending their sensibilities, draws this question out into the open. In so doing, it projects ethical music discourse (that is, the meanings, values, and convictions attached to/mediated by certain genres of music) into the mix of care and justice while theoretically highlighting the tension inherent in that relationship of care to justice. This care/justice tension is further revealed when considered through the lens of power relations. The congregation of Samantha's church would likely be irritated by her use of rap music during the service, and this musical selection would perhaps damage the relationship she has cultivated with the congregation. Yet a commitment to justice may well compel her to violate that relationship: if Samantha became convinced that her congregation was participating in an unjust system of power structures that privilege white people over black people, then she may indeed

have an ethical responsibility to her congregation to perform rap music during worship. As Todd Boyd has argued, rap and hip-hop music are explicit confrontations of unjust racial power in America (1997, 2002), and would, within a certain discursive perspective and with acute sensitivity to context, be an appropriate way of mediating a challenge and rebuke to a congregation.

On the one hand, care ethics alone would argue that such an intervention would be unethical because it would violate the ontology of relationships in which intimacy is primary: Samantha would surely rupture some relationships in her congregation by such an action. Let us pursue how the relational ethics I am arguing for might facilitate such an intervention, depending on certain other contextual factors. Assuming the need for relationships to be just in order to be healthy could be understood to impel a disruption of certain power structures in order to facilitate relational health through justice. It is instructive to consider a hypothetical example: suppose the congregation started being confronted with its alleged racism; perhaps several black families began attending, and the older, white congregants resented that fact. Perhaps some were passively (or actively) trying to make the new families leave – or worse, to make sure they knew that they were the second-class congregants. If that were the case, Samantha would have an ethical responsibility to intervene musically. Such a determination would of course depend on the principle of attentiveness that underpins ethics of care, and would, from the perspective of restorative caring, need to be done in manner that maximizes the chances of people being restored to relationships

with others. Alternatively, suppose that the realization of unjust racial systems occurred within the generational relations of the white congregation; perhaps the children or grandchildren of the older congregants began to realize that their elders were engaged in such racist power structures and sought to correct their relations. Now suppose that attempt at correction resulted in a falling out between the family members; maybe they would not even sit on the same sides of the sanctuary with each other. In such a scenario, would performing hip-hop music in worship be a caring intervention if Samantha were able to leverage her relationships with the elder congregants to facilitate restoration with their loved ones?

In either case, it is difficult to imagine that using hip-hop in worship in Samantha's congregation would be effective in any capacity for restoring congregants to just relationships with each other. Instead, perhaps Samantha would borrow an approach that many other congregations have chosen in reflexively addressing issues of racial oppression and power structures. During my fieldwork at Lakeshore, I observed on several occasions that the music minister would include a non-Western Christian musical selection from what is commonly referred to as the "global song" repertory (Moore 2017). In one instance, the mostly middle-aged choir attempted to lead the congregation in a "Traditional Cameroonian" dance that accompanied the song "Stand, oh, Stand

Firm.”¹¹ Most of the predominantly white congregants gamely attempted to sing, clap, and move their bodies at the same time (to varying degrees of success), but I noticed a few exasperated expressions and embarrassed grimaces on the part of several congregants. It was several months before Lakeshore attempted another global song in worship.

As Marissa Glynias Moore points out, many practitioners of global song are members of white, liberal protestant churches who recognize the injustices of colonialism and missionization efforts from the previous centuries, and seek to justly participate in the global church by “singing the world” (11). C. Michael Hawn calls this “praying with” others by using their prayers (2003, 13) and argues that this practice can be interpreted as a countercultural opposition to Western musical hegemony (7-15). Yet as Moore points out, there are myriad problems that churches face when attempting to sing this repertoire. The most prominent of these is that it is nearly impossible to practice global song with full assurance of faithful translation/performance, which is imperative for guarding against appropriation and letting other cultures “lead,” so to speak, and thus placing the white, western congregations into a position of humility (Moore 2017, 13-14). Moreover, she notes that it is difficult to account for the often unrecognized ubiquity of Euro-American cultural power, and attempts at parity

¹¹ #445 in *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* (2013).

that fail to reckon with this ubiquity often further institutionalize oppressive cultural power (14).

Additionally, within the discourse of global song, there is an aspect of what Rommen calls “the negotiation of proximity” (2007, 57). Speaking of Full Gospel Churches’ in Trinidad singing North American Gospel tunes instead of gospelypso for worship, Rommen notes that it is far easier to sing the song of a distant other than a proximate other, as less is known of the distant other, and thus their “difference” is less troubling to a dominant group (56-60). For global song practitioners, a hymn or sacred song from Brazil or Cameroon (that may have musical elements that are associated with pagan or at least secular practices there) has fewer cultural connotations than Christian hip-hop or Christian punk rock, and is therefore easier to incorporate in musical worship than styles about which more is known to be troubling.

Attempts to “pray with others” in global song such as Lakeshore’s are often awkward, as the congregation is rarely familiar with the musical forms or adept at their performance. However, as Moore suggests, “while global song practice is far from perfect, it represents an attempt to embody both cultural particularities and the widespread spiritual communion of the global church” (15) in a manner that attempts to justly acknowledge the differences of others. Moore’s work suggests that global song can be used successfully to address these unjust cultural power differentials in certain congregations, but that such successes are challenging and difficult to attain.

The use of church music in acts of caring towards restorative justice is by no means confined to music's generic conventions nor to issues of unjust social power structures. In some instances, a just and caring response to unforeseen situations has little to do with deploying conventions of musical genre and generic meaning, but instead marshals music to work at affective and emotional levels. An instance that I observed during my fieldwork at Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church illustrates how such a just and caring musical response can be made in the moment.

A Hospitable Defense: Observation from Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church

February 4th, 2018. *During the children's sermon at Greater Ebenezer Baptist Church, a young white man enters the sanctuary when the ushers open the doors after prayer. He has a peculiar look about him, dressed in athletic shorts, combat boots, an oversized sweater, and a soccer club scarf draped across his shoulders (I could not see which club). A large, styrofoam "Whataburger" cup is in his hand. There is a nervous energy about him that makes me anxious. He wanders to the front of the sanctuary where a deacon meets him and offers him a seat in the second row. The man takes the seat and looks around the room while the children's sermon is being delivered.*

GEBC has a weekly tradition of acknowledging their visitors following the Children's Sermon, asking them to stand and introduce themselves. The young man stands and introduces himself as "Malchizadek, the high priest of Jehovah Most High. I have come to deliver a message," Malchizadek continued, "should I find hospitable fellowship here." A voice from the congregation testifies, "go ahead", and Malchizadek

continues to deliver a minute-long utterance that vacillates between warning and congratulating, revealing a deeply disturbed mind. The worship leader welcomes Malchizadek, but a sense of unease settles over the room. Having introduced myself, I watch Malchizadek as the worship leader announces tithes and offering. Reggie, the drummer and saxophonist, strikes a driving tempo for "Fire shut up in my bones." Robert, the piano player, joins him in a pulsing rendition of the tune. The choir struggles a bit at first, like the song was unplanned. Reggie takes the lead and sings the chorus. Soon, the choir has it and so does the congregation. The ushers have not moved, despite the announcement of tithes and offerings. As we are singing, I notice Malchizadek get up and walk over to where one of the offering baskets is resting on the end of a pew, take what appear to be Easter eggs out of his Whataburger cup, and place them into the basket. He then walks towards the back of the sanctuary using the side aisle, along the wall immediately to my right. Sitting in the second to last row, I have a clear view of his movements until he passes me. As he does so, I sense him stop. I glance quickly over my right shoulder and notice him standing immediately behind me, alone in the last row of pews (as I am in mine). I turn back to the front of the sanctuary, unsure of what will happen next. After a brief moment, I notice Malchizadek leaving. I turn and watch him walk out the door. A moment or two after he leaves, the deacon who had ushered him to a seat retrieves the "eggs" (someone later told me they were lemons) from the basket and places them on the floor next to the pews. He then takes the basket and the congregation is invited to stand and bring their offerings to the altar, where the deacons have now brought the baskets along with the two-foot by eighteen-inch wooden model of a church

with a slot on top through which to drop money. Reggie, Robert, and the choir continuing playing "Fire" as the congregation places their offerings in the baskets and symbolically in the "church."

Two weeks later, over breakfast at IHOP I asked Reggie if he remembers the affair, and what he made of it. He remembered, and shared my sentiments of concern over Malchizadek's words and actions: "I was like, 'So, did you come in to end my life or did you come in to say this prayer for me on the street?'" When I asked him about his choice of "Fire," he confesses he does not even remember what song he played: "I wish I knew!" Moreover, he does not remember any of the details about the congregation's response, likely, he said, because he was watching closely to see what Malchizadek would do next.

Though Reggie did not recall the song he chose in the heat of the moment, his choice was profound and significant. Analyzing the choice of song in the tense situation described above reveals another way that musical worship can justly respond in caring, affective ways to a potentially dangerous situation. I can make no claim as to what Malchizadek's intentions were, but it appeared as though there was something about the music that either satisfied or repelled him. It also seems like more than coincidence that the lyrics of the song Reggie chose in the heat of the moment describe the words of a prophet. It could have been that Reggie was reaching out in a musical way to the service's unusual guest, giving him a prophetic text with which to identify and, in doing so, giving the members of the congregation a sympathetic biblical frame through which they

could interpret their guest's strange actions. In this way, the musical response could be interpreted as hospitable, even welcoming, to the volatile and potentially dangerous stranger.

It's just like fire, shut up in my bones.
It's the Holy Ghost fire, shut up in my bones.
It's just like fire, and it's shut up in my bones.
It's the Holy Ghost fire, and it's shut up in my bones.

From his mother's belly, Born to prophesy.
The prophet Jeremiah, Would lift his voice and cry.
Be quiet folks commanded, Shut up leave us alone.
How can you be quiet, When there's fire down in your bones.

The song's lyrical theme of fire was paralleled in its driving beat and quick tempo; it seemed to represent a Holy Ghost fire that could not be contained. On the other hand, the driving beat and quick tempo were a stark departure from the other songs we had sung that morning, and could be understood as both hospitable and as responsorial; it very much matches the tone of the lyrics, and conveys a sense of almost defiant confidence in a prophetic calling. What I observed was that the performance of "Fire" that morning embodied both hospitality and defense at the same time. In this instance the musical activity itself was a response that was both hospitable and caring, but was also acting on behalf of the well-being of the congregation; both as encouragement and as comfort. Perhaps as a result of this highly appropriate – and I would contend, profoundly ethical – musical response, Malchizadek left without doing any harm, alleviating fears and bolstering the praise of the congregation.

Lyrics and Actions Inspiring Just Activities

Despite my efforts to address the aspects of music that have been under-addressed by other church music scholars, this account of ethics in musical worship would be incomplete without acknowledgment of the role that lyrics play in both the construction of meaning and the didactic content that congregational music can mediate. Many of my conversation partners indeed spoke of the lyrical content as very important, both in terms of what music means and how it makes them feel. As Lakeshore's Associate Pastor Sharlande Sledge said, "the words are very important." This was affirmed by each church leader I spoke to, and also by several congregants. For example, Kory, a recent graduate of Baylor's Truett Seminary who now manages a coffee shop in Waco, responded to my question of responsibility by saying the texts of Lakeshore's music inspired him to care for the needs of the oppressed around him as an act of justice:

the assumption that I have is that it's an accountability towards what we're singing, but also to the greater picture of 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.' To 'take care of the orphans and the widows and seek out and protect the oppressed.'

He went on to describe this accountability in terms of community building and relationships within the church, noting "The Servant's Song," a benedictional hymn for Lakeshore, as being particularly important in this regard:

[The lyrics] 'walk the mile, bear the load' [are very important], I think that this is a shared commitment within a community and my singing this with each and every other person is me asking them to keep me

accountable, and also me telling them that I'm gonna keep them accountable, and asking for each other, for us both to join each other in this shared commitment.

As Kory's reflection indicates, the lyrics are very important in musical worship, as they serve to provide an easy point of reference for determining the meaning of the piece and its ethical merit. As I have argued in the preceding chapters, the lyrics of musical worship are only one component of its efficacy and impact, yet their evaluation is an important final aspect of church music's ethical significance.

Conclusion: Beyond Prophetic; Care, Justice, and Knowing the Difference

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that music's way of being in the world is inherently relational, and that this dynamic relational ontology encompasses both meaning and emotion; that in musical activity meaning and affect, reason and emotion, converge in human bodies. This dyadic convergence can (and often does) configure and orient our understanding of self and others together with the ways our social imaginaries occupy the gaps they are uncovered by such understanding. With this in mind, it is clear that music is ethically significant, and I have further argued that this significance can be understood as care wedded to restorative justice. From the perspective of the discourse ethics favored by musicologists and ethnomusicologists, we saw that music can indeed be understood as ethical discourse through genre and style (in addition to the lyrics, of which an ocean of ink has been put to page), but that such a frame does

not account for the fact that these conventions of meaning-making are often quite unethically oriented against each other. Further still, when considered from an ecclesiological perspective, the antagonistic meanings of genre as revealed in the “worship wars” indicates that examining church music from the perspective of discourse ethics is not in itself a sufficient ethical theory, but instead demonstrates the need for one. Likewise, from the perspective of character formation ethics favored by liturgical theologians and church music scholars, we saw that church music activity does indeed form identities and communities by virtue of its ability to marshal human emotions and affections, and that doing so often influences our understandings of ourselves and others through how we feel about them or our relationship with them. But formation also is not a sufficient ethical theory, because however helpful it may be, it reveals only how ethical character is formed, but does not afford us a means of evaluating or planning towards that formation. How can church music form individual character in ethical ways if we cannot rely on the absolute meaning of the music and lyrics, which my argument about music as discourse implies? Indeed, as is particularly prevalent in church music scholarship, a complete trust in the absolute efficacy of orthodoxy for ethical formation leads to an application of formation ethics to musical activity in Christian worship that is sorely inadequate, as James K.A. Smith’s argument that we justify that which we love

indicates that human affections trump doctrinal orthodoxy such that orthodoxy is constructed based on desires.¹²

For pastors, music ministers, and worship leaders, the relational ethics of church music provide a means of evaluating how music is employed as normative, corporate worship. This requires recognizing that through music, congregation members and leaders are given the unique ability to care for the emotions and affections of a congregation, while also orienting the congregation members' understanding of self and other in ways that are often difficult to identify in real time. Thinking with Held (2006), Farley (2002), and Nussbaum (2002, 2011), church music is caring, then, when it is practiced and performed with attention to the needs and desires of the congregation; when the humanity and agency of those who exhibit those needs and desires is acknowledged and respected; when they are acknowledged respectfully and responded to equitably as each person is able: response-ability (Cobussen and Nielsen 2012; Warren 2014; Barz 2017).

Second, church music is caring when it orients the emotional posture of the congregation towards restorative justice-as-human-flourishing. Sometimes, this may mean speaking truth to uncaring power, first in the congregation, second in the local community, and finally to the world writ large. It also involves affording space for the voices of the congregation and community to be

¹² I believe this concern is not only applicable to church music, but also to Christian ethics more broadly. However, to argue that would require another full dissertation.

heard by others – especially those who may not hear such a voice save for in the sanctuary. Perhaps, as Kevin suggested, this may be accomplished in a prayer service that incorporates music through which the congregation can sing their prayers, giving affective voice to their needs and desires, hopes and fears, in the hospitable presence of others afforded by the music. Or, as my observation at Greater Ebenezer suggests, it may be a response to a perceived threat that neither escalates nor ignores the situation, but rather defuses the threat through hospitably shifting the orientation of the congregation towards a solution. Perhaps that piece of music can act as a symbolic refrain that invokes the congregation’s response-ability to each other and to the world each time it is performed, as “The Servant’s Song” does at Lakeshore. In a like manner, music can also subvert the voices of uncaring power much as Floyd (1995) and Southern (1979 [1983]) suggest in their work on spirituals, blues, and gospel music. Such an endeavor must be done with great attentiveness and concern for the well-being of the congregation while acknowledging that it might result in further relational rupture, as my reading of Bonhoeffer suggests for the hypothetical scenario of Samantha’s “old, white, Anglican church.”

Finally, church music is ethical when it heals; when it restores minds, bodies, and emotions to relational health; when it repairs broken and fractious relationships through its embodiment of the other, or through its symbolic

representation of mutual values, or through its affective convictions of injustice.¹³ Healing also includes invoking concern for justice in the world and in the church, and between churches and the worlds they inhabit. Music reminds us that if the church promotes injustice, it cannot be an agent in the healing of the world; further, it calls us to imaginative responses to the claims of restorative justice. In this, church music can heal by helping congregations imagine better worlds, and by orienting the affections of the congregation towards generating those kinds of worlds that are centered on calling human beings to just and therefore healthy relationships with each other and by extension with God.

¹³ I draw this idea from the work of Melinda Latour O'Brien (2016). O'Brien argues that a category of "moral music" arose in response to the "Wars of Religion" following the initiation of the Protestant Reformation. This musical category was secular, in that it was not sacred, yet it extolled moral virtues that were agreeable to Protestant and Catholic alike, and thereby participated in healing relationships and social malaise in that context.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion: The Relational Ethics of Church Music

“If one is to acknowledge another as one’s neighbor, one must acknowledge oneself as his or her neighbor.” - Stanley Cavell (1997, 434)

In this era of divisive conflict within and between Christian communities in the United States and elsewhere, it is especially important for church leaders and scholars to carefully consider the ethical implications of church music. The goal of this dissertation has been to provide language for doing so, and this concluding chapter summarizes how I have offered such language.

My argument is grounded in the fundamental assumption that music’s way of being in the world, its ontology as an activity, is *relational*. Music is relationally ordered sound, and as Warren and others point out, every musical experience involves an encounter with another human, either directly or indirectly. This relational way of being in the world rests on two interwoven strands of meaning and affection. Meaning is made by the convergence and subsequent configuring of expressions and gestures that correspond to sonic and social values and convictions determined discursively in community. We call these discursive conventions “genres.” According to the social and sonic rules of a given genre, musical meaning is negotiated stylistically, with certain values or convictions being affirmed or rejected according to the conventions of the genre.

Such discursive activity in music parallels language in a limited sense; genres can be thought of as languages within which certain sounds and gestures are capable of meaning something. Yet as Feld and Fox point out, the semantic indefiniteness of music makes musical meaning even more unstable than that of language, and musical meaning is often therefore determined by linguistic exchange; by talking about what music means. In this way, musical meaning is determined in the context of community. This way of meaning-making also works in reverse, as communities form around shared understanding of musical meaning even as they continue to negotiate that shared understanding. Many of my interlocutors, such as Joan, the head usher at Lakeshore, noted that they ascertain what musical genres that their friends like in order to determine what their values and convictions are, and thereby negotiate relationships, indicating that people understand and take advantage of the fact that musical meaning is relationally constructed, both in how meaning is established and how relationships are experienced in light of that construction.

However, as chapter three shows, musical meaning is always determined in relation to musical feeling; how a piece or genre of music makes us feel is integral to what it means (Partridge 2017, 23-24). The second interwoven strand of music's ontology is how it invokes, engenders, or invites emotion in human beings. From the perspective of contour theory, music invokes emotion by way of imitation; musical sounds mimic bodily gestures and states associated with certain emotions, such as *pianissimo* dynamics mimicking sadness or *fortissimo*

dynamics mimicking joy or exuberance. Musical activity also influences human emotion through entrainment, the phenomenon of human bodily rhythms synchronizing such that emotion is elicited. This invocation of emotion has profound efficacy when experienced with other people, and an important aspect of music's relational ontology is the way that our emotional responses to musical activity are associated with other people. Indeed, this association suggests that musical activity plays a profound and particular role in constructing "social imaginaries," the way we perceive and believe our relationships with others to be. Social imaginaries are further configured in musical activity by its "feelingfulness," that is, the way that musical experiences affectively index memories of relationships with others. To paraphrase my conversation partners in the field, such as Bob from Lakeshore, singing with others helps him negotiate how he feels about his relationships with others; when he is angry with someone, singing with them helps him to manage his anger and imagine his relationships more charitably. This connection of emotion to relationships reveals how musical activity influences human affections, our loves and desires, and how the convergence of meaning and emotion in human bodies configures affection towards people, objects, and ideals.

This account of music's relational ontology argues that a) music is ethically significant, and b) that an ethical theory of music must be able to give a comprehensive account of human relationships. Musical discourse ethics, such as the ethics of style (Rommen 2007) and cosmopolitan musical ethics (Porter 2016),

afford fruitful ways of thinking about how musical genres and styles have moral importance. Indeed, each person I interviewed understood musical style as a fundamental way that music communicates and makes meaning, and therefore is ethically significant, affirming the basic tenet of musical discourse ethics that through shared understandings of musical meaning, values and convictions are negotiated and individual and communal identities are configured. However, as I argued in chapter two, what genres and styles *mean* are profoundly unstable, varying from group to group and place to place to so great a degree that the lack of agreement over musical meaning renders the negotiation of values and convictions through musical genre insufficient. Using the example of the “worship wars,” I showed that negotiation of values and convictions through musical genre and style breaks down due to disagreements over musical meaning, resulting in musical communities and congregations that are mutually opposed to one another by definition and thereby undercutting the principles of ethical discourse. For Christian communities, such mutual opposition is incompatible with the ecclesial vision confessed by many of these communities for the unity of all Christians in faith. But more than that, considering musical ethics from the perspective of discourse reveals that conflicts over style in musical worship are in actuality the result of our need to know and control others; music confronts us with ourselves, with our loves and desires, but we also encounter others in musical activity in ways that we cannot control.

Liturgical formation ethics provide another helpful perspective for thinking about church music's ethical significance. By emphasizing how participation in Christian worship forms character, formation ethics show how musical worship forms Christian individuals and communities by orienting affections through active participation in Christian narratives; as Caccamo says, "ritual singing itself is a set of particular and regular religiously responsive performances that shape the ways in which individuals respond to God and neighbor outside of the ritual event" (2004, ix). While liturgical formation ethics incorporate elements of discourse, such as practical reasoning and understanding, agreement or consensus are not required for formation to occur. Instead, people and communities are formed by what they do, and what they do is strongly informed by what they love and desire. Where discourse emphasizes musical meaning, formation emphasizes musical affect. For formation ethicists, the character that is developed through liturgical participation in musical worship is evaluated by the standards of Christian belief; by "orthodoxy." Yet when formation is considered from the perspective afforded by musical discourse ethics, evaluating character formation in relationship to orthodoxy again reveals the need to control others. Attempts to control how others are formed through musical worship has its own set of problems, not least of which is the uncontrollability of musical meaning; attempting to control others through musical worship is ethically suspect.

Taken together, musical discourse and musical formation in Christian worship each account for an aspect of music's way of being in the world, yet synthesizing these two theories does not account for how leaders might resist the temptation to try to control others through music. Discourse provides a standard for engagement with musical meaning from an ethical perspective (the "worship wars" do not disprove the theory so much as give evidence for its necessity); however, it requires agreement on musical meaning that, even when considered within the confines of genre, is nearly impossible in real-world musical activity. In other words, there is not sufficient agreement on what a given musical style means among communities for discourse to function ethically. Furthermore, discourse alone does not account for the formative aspects of music's relational ontology. Formation ethics gives an account of the affective and formative aspects of music's relational ontology, and in so doing complements discourse ethics' account of musical meaning. Additionally, formation ethics does not require agreement on musical meaning (although this is important), but instead is more fundamentally concerned with how collective performance shapes individuals' and communities' character. However, in the same way that discourse ethics is unable to check human desire to control others, formation ethics, at its worst, can be used to conflate formation with conformity masquerading as orthodoxy. While both systems are indeed helpful in directing my efforts at theorizing and interpreting my field research, synthesis of these

two modes of inquiry alone is not sufficient to understand and evaluate the ethical significance of church music.

This leads us to chapter four: care and restorative justice. Care ethics, with its ontology of relationships and emphasis on attentiveness to difference between persons and communities while directed towards meeting the needs of others, provides a means of synthesizing discourse and formation ethics in such a way as to give an account of music's relational way of being in the world, and especially its way of being in church, without reducing one or the other aspect of music's relational ontology. Instead, care provides a framework within which to evaluate both musical discourse and formation while checking the need to control by emphasizing the importance of difference. By care I mean a responsive, reciprocal, and restorative posture towards relationships both near and distant that attentively acknowledges the contributions and capabilities of each as agents within systems of power. Within the frame afforded by care, musical meaning and affection may be evaluated by what they produce in a given community; yet attentiveness to the difference between individuals and other communities checks the need to control others and make them conform to "my" standard of musical worship. This is not to say that a caring approach to musical worship does not critically evaluate what others are doing, but rather it does not seek to control others. Instead, it actively seeks to check the desire to control.

Yet care alone is still insufficient, as an orientation towards preserving relationships at all costs can and does lead to destructive musical practices, and ultimately to the destruction of the relationships that we were trying to preserve. Relationships cannot be said to be “good” or “healthy” if they are unjust; affections can be violated by unjust manipulation; responsibilities can be corrupted when uncoupled from orientations towards justice. A theory of justice must be added to this account of church music ethics. My theory of justice works in two directions. First, thinking with Martha Nussbaum (2011), I argue that justice is enabling human flourishing by creating, encouraging, and protecting the development of human capabilities; life, health, shelter, creativity, imagination, love, education, and reasoning, for example. Justice is more than just protecting these, it is the active pursuit of them on behalf of others as they and we are capable. Second, and importantly, justice must also be oriented towards restoration of relationships – both individual and corporate. It is not enough to punish those who violate the humanity of another, or, to give an example more specific to my topic of church music, to continue to exclude those who do not conform to a standard of musical meaning; rather, an ethical response must actively seek to tear down those barriers or build bridges over those chasms. From this perspective, I argue that ethical church music is music that preserves people in and restores people to just relationships with each other and to God.

The theological turn at the end of my argument (chapter five) is important, and while I do not wish to overstate my case, it is the foundation upon which my argument rests. We encounter God even as we encounter others; as Bonhoeffer said, the words of God are most often found in the mouths of our brothers and sisters (1954, 21-22). We respond in just and caring ways to God when we respond in just and caring ways to others. Our responsibility in and through musical worship goes beyond doing no harm. Our responsibility is to actively advocate on behalf of others; to seek the good of the other; to *be for* them. It is through caring for the needs of others – helping them flourish as they are capable – that we fulfill the law and the prophets through love of God and neighbor, even as we are loved and cared for by God through others.

So What?: Why this Research Matters

Put simply, my research matters because human relationships matter. By and large, church music scholars and practitioners have undervalued the relational ethics of musical activity. By directing our focus towards taste, singability, propriety, style, and especially the lyrics in light of theological orthodoxy, we have undermined our own efforts to enable and encourage faithful and healthy musical worship because we have done so at the expense of the relationships that musical worship depends on. Too often, conversations about musical worship focus on the didactic aspects of that activity at the expense of the relational, “reduc[ing] music to a commodified object” (Warren

2014, 1). My hope for this research is to work against that trend. Despite our best intentions, through our efforts to defend music's use in worship by downplaying the emotional aspects of that activity (often, again, with the best intentions to avoid unjust manipulation), we have unintentionally been advocating for a use of music in Christian worship that ethically malforms and creates divisive communities.

For scholars, the relational ethics of church music encourages us to acknowledge and embrace the instability of musical meaning together with its uncontrollable affective elements and frame our prescriptions in light of these realities. For practitioners, ethical church music leadership involves actively listening to both the individual congregants' and the congregation's needs and seeking to respond to them in real time. Caring musical practice makes space for the prayers of others, and gives voice to the loves and desires of people. Perhaps this is a prayer service such as that suggested by Kevin, where the congregants were able to sing their prayers over a short vamp and have them echoed by the others. Perhaps it is hospitality that affirms even the most seemingly obtuse person in the congregation, or perhaps it would involve introducing bodily actions like turning to face each other for the benediction. In any situation, it will necessarily require attentiveness to the needs and diversity of a congregation, and a willingness to serve others musically. For congregants, the relational ethics of church music remind us again and again of our neighbors, calling us to acknowledge their agency and their difference, acting in musical worship and

beyond in order to facilitate their love of God and neighbor in the context of human flourishing.

Suggestions for Further Research

Much work remains to be done in this area. While my work has built on the work of many scholars, the relative dearth of research on ethics of and within church music remains. I hope that, while this dissertation is by no means the first word on the matter, it will also not be the last. In this dissertation, though I have focused my efforts on church music, I have drawn from conversations in ethics, liturgical and worship studies, and several branches of music scholarship, and in so doing have attempted to frame my constructions in ways that will also speak back to the conversations from which I draw. Such attempts inevitably require more work than a single volume can manage, and further research will certainly make these exchanges more effective. For instance, this dissertation has only mildly engaged virtue ethics, and even then only in its more explicitly ecclesial forms; a more robust account of virtue theory will enhance both my affirmation of formation and my critique of its efficacy for ethical evaluation. Additionally, I have not engaged a rigorous examination of belief structures and systems that likely play an important role in understanding how individuals and communities form and express values and convictions. Engaging epistemologies of belief, such as those suggested by V.W. Quine and J.S. Ullian (1978), will likely

enhance our understanding of individual and communal values and convictions, and therefore relational ethics.

Another limiting factor for my research is the location and scope of my fieldwork. Certainly, greater insight can be gained by expanding the fieldwork to include churches from more diverse traditions and denominations, as well as geographical regions. Doing so would likely enrich our understandings of how a relational ethics of church music could be realized in practice. Furthermore, the idea of multiculturalism and racial reconciliation in worship – a growing concern within church music scholarship in the past two decades (for example, Black 1998; Hawn 2003a, 2003b, 2013; Marti 2012; Bradley 2012; Myrick 2014, for example) – has not been addressed, and interrogating these ideas from the perspective of relational church music ethics might yield important insights.

This dissertation has not examined several other aspects of music's way of being in the world that can and likely do pertain to Christian worship more broadly. For instance, I have not engaged conversations on the effects of aesthetics on musical worship and their link to ethics. Additionally, I have only made passing mention to the role of entertainment in contributing positively as well as negatively to human flourishing. What significance might entertainment, on the one hand, or a sense of the sublime on the other have in the relational ethics of church music? *Should* music in worship be entertaining? Is greater responsibility invoked by "beautiful" music?

Finally, and importantly, this dissertation has not engaged the negative and destructive aspects of musical activity in general, or worship in particular, head on. Instead, I have gestured towards these destructive elements in the hopes of producing a work focused on calling out and pointing towards good practice rather than naming bad. There is, however, need for naming misuse and abuse in an ethical account of church music, and future research will do well to address those aspects concretely. For example, many of my conversation partners in the field spoke of authentic emotions as being a crucial criterion of “good music;” this raises the question of “inauthentic emotions.” What might they be? Can one care justly but be insincere while doing it? Perhaps Charles Taylor’s “ethics of authenticity” would be a fruitful avenue for approaching such a topic.

Concluding Thoughts

One thing is clear: church music has ethical significance and therefore must be considered and evaluated as being ethically powerful. Such an endeavor is by no means clear cut or straight forward, but it is worth the effort. My hope is that by calling attention to the relational ethics of church music, scholars may theorize more carefully and with more attention to the human relationships that generate and are the concern of ethical reflection, and Christian communities may be more just and caring in their musical worship, thereby more faithfully fulfilling Jesus’ call to love God by loving neighbors.

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