

CHAPTER EIGHT

**Popular artworks
reflecting Christian
assumptions will
show that actions
have
consequences.**

Popular artworks do not need to contain overt references to God or the supernatural to represent a cultural landscape that resonates with Christian beliefs.

There are two avenues for artistic presentations when understanding God's presence in the world: the unreliable narrator and irony.

By highlighting the incongruity between people's expectations and what actually occurs, Biblical accounts intimate that God's intentions are realized despite human planning.

**Popular arts
are cultural
texts and
artistic
constructions.**

**Artists interpret
reality and invite
audiences to
share their vision
of life.**

**The unreliable narrator
can contribute to an
ironic style of
storytelling while also
demonstrating the
perspectival nature of
life.**

An honest artistic representation of God's world in popular art will include images and metaphors of chaos, justice, pain, suffering, and alienation which are all part of living in a fallen world.

**Redemption comes
from experiences that
make us aware of our
human brokenness
and insufficiency.**

The popular arts can show us the meaning of things, or their purpose in God's kingdom, by helping us articulate our experiences for deeper a understanding of life.

Popular artworks can explore the heights and depths of human experience, illuminate our mundane lives, and get us to transfer artistic interpretations to the real world.

The contours of a Christian cultural landscape are made up of cultural meanings (ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions) that represent what it is like for people to live in God's good but fallen world. The four basic features of these contours are:

**1. God is at work in
the world and there
exists a spiritual
realm**

**2. Believing
people inhabit this
landscape and
faith is integral to
all life**

**3. Human sin is
real and evil
exists**

**4. God offers
forgiveness and the
possibility of
redemption**

CHAPTER NINE

**Melodrama is
characterized by
strong emotionalism
and excessive
expression.**

In the melodramatic world, virtue is defined in domestic terms – marriage, parenthood, dutiful children.

**Melodrama is utopian
and puts forward a
hopeful vision of a
world in which
everything is made
right.**

**As a mythic vision,
melodrama does not
critique culture but
affirms it by
representing its
inevitable triumph.**

The classic melodramatic pattern begins with a normal or ideal situation that is threatened by external evils.

Melodrama gives an exaggerated place to emotion, especially fear and sympathy.

Narrative causality
refers to the way that
one event causes
another to happen in
a story, each scene
flowing into the next.

**The classic
Hollywood film is
driven by a cause-
and-effect narrative
centered on the
actions of the main
characters.**

**Melodrama in fact
marks the structure
and tone of the
classical Hollywood
film.**

Resolving tensions and contradictions between the individual and the community is a perennial theme in American culture and fertile ground for artistic exploration.

**The focus on
the individual
can make
storytelling
more dramatic.**

**American
sentimentality is
often fused with
Christian values.**

**The attitudes,
desires, and values
of materialism are
powerful forces in
North American life.**

**An underlying
assumption in
mainstream**

**Hollywood films is
that the goal in life is
becoming rich.**

A primary value in the consumer culture is immediate gratification which is a basic belief that acquiring things makes individuals better people.

In a consumer society, acquiring wealth is the measure of accomplishment.

**The Wizard of Oz
Syndrome is a very
human-centered
approach to life.**

**Heroism is a
matter of self-
fulfillment.**

The journey of self-realization is the backbone of many Hollywood stories, in which characters achieve heroic status by making something of themselves.

**Hollywood films
deal with social
issues by reducing
them to personal
matters.**

The myth of individualism is so powerful in American culture that audiences find it plausible.