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**SONGS FOR THE END OF THE KYRIARCHY:
CARE AND REPAIR THROUGH CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY
HISTORIOGRAPHY IN FOLK ENSEMBLES**

Master's Thesis

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Tartu, 2019

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Dedication

To those voices lost but never forgotten: For my Grandpa Powell who always taught me to sing and play music from the heart. As Ray Charles once sang in “That Lucky Old Sun” now you finally have “nothing to do but roll around heaven all day.” For my Papa Sammie who carried Yiddish songs with him over the ocean to pass on through the generations and my Grandma Aunnie who encouraged my pursuit of music, academia, and fostered a love for Yiddish classics. As you used to sing to me as a child, I have been sure to “make love my guiding light.” For my Uncle Alan who had a great passion for genealogy which inspired me to continue the work he had started and to learn more about our family’s origins. I would also like to honor Nicole of *Planina* whom I never had the pleasure of knowing personally, but whose presence was always felt during gatherings and house sings. *Srce moje*, we hold you in our hearts. To Arturo (Art) Pacheco who encouraged me to sing for the first time in a ceremonial space and Roger Sunka Sattler who offered guidance and friendship to my partner and I over many years. *Tlazocamati, whoopila!*

Acknowledgments

I am greatly indebted to my advisor Ergo-Hart Västriik who connected me with musical performers and ensembles in Estonia which gave me great inspiration and started me on the path to developing what would become the corpus of this research. I must also extend thanks to Elo-Hanna Seljamaa who supported me throughout the academic process and aided my progress in innumerable ways. I would also like to thank Ülo Valk for making me feel welcome in Tartu from my very first day.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the ensembles and individuals with whom I collaborated for research and fieldwork; the directors and organizers of the *Planina* 2018 summer field expedition who arranged much of our activities and especially to Laura Olson Osterman and the ensemble director Julie Lancaster. I would also like to thank Valerie Brown and Keith Wagner for sharing their insights through personal interviews.

For *Calpulli Calmecaztlán* or spiritual family group in which I participate and the performers of *Tzotzollin* I have immense gratitude. This group has taught me a great deal about the power of song and traditions. My activities in this *Calpulli* have inspired me to seek out deeper connections with my own heritage and in many ways sparked the initial concepts which were the precursors to what has become the core of this thesis. I would like to thank David Atecpatzin Young for offering counsel, guidance, and sharing his insights through various discussions and interviews.

I would also like to thank my partner Jason Cordova from the bottom of my heart. Although he may have been half a world away in body, he has been with me every step of the journey in spirit.

This thesis was funded in part by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research under the personal research grant PSG48.

Stylistic Notes

As has been the practice among contemporary Indigenous communities in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, I have made the conscious choice to capitalize the word “Indigenous.” To treat the term Indigenous as a proper noun acknowledges and respects the sovereignty of the affiliated cultures and peoples. The importance of enacting this writing style in academic works has been eloquently explained by Ann-Elise Lewallen (2011) and used by researchers including Margaret Kovach, among others who argue that this approach is connected to the complex and daunting process of decolonizing research and academic discourse. I have additionally opted to capitalize spiritual terms referring to “Spirits” and “Deities” as these are entities to be honored within their respective cultural and religious traditions. I do so to impart my respect for their beliefs and the associated practices.

When speaking of traditional clothing and outfits I will refrain in some cases from using terms such as “costume” as some perspectives consider this to be problematic or disrespectful. Native Americans tend to refer to such clothing as “regalia” and I have found similar such usage among the Ainu. Lewallen (2011: 12) explains that “celebrating one’s communal heritage by adorning the body in heritage regalia is as much about honoring one’s ancestors as it is about asserting a shared position as Indigenous and signaling membership to those sharing this status globally.” This perspective tends to vary however as I have observed many folk ensembles in the United States and Europe which appear to favor the term “costume.” In this regard, I will reference the work of Pravina Shukla (2015) who outlined attitudes and practices relating to the use of costumes and traditional clothing in various contexts.

To refer to people of European descent with white-skin I will simply use the term “white” rather than “Caucasian” as is often used in the American context as a blanket term to encompass all white people. This application of the term Caucasian is a result of an invented racial classification holding over from the designation made by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in 1795. This affiliation with the Mount Caucasus regions was established due to his belief that the Georgians represent “the most beautiful race of men” (qtd from Baum 2006: 6). In many ways, this provided the foundation for “race science” which was utilized to justify social inequalities and fuel colonial campaigns. As my work is presenting a challenge to systems of oppression and working to decolonize academic discourses, I will avoid such anachronistic terminology.

Introduction

Singing has always been an integral part of my life, in fact, I may not be here were it not for my parent's mutual love for music as they met while performing together in a country band. My name, Savannah, was inspired by the Ray Charles song "Georgia on my Mind." In my family, music has been used not only during times of celebration but in times of great need. When my father fell ill while I was still a small child, friends and family organized a benefit concert to help pay the medical bills and it was there that I made my first musical performance at the age of three.

By organizing a benefit concert my family was utilizing music as a means to overcome economic disparity; in a way singing against societal inequities and hardships. As will be explained in later chapters these systemic imbalances may be attributed to what has been come to be called by feminist theorists as the kyriarchy. Of course, at the time none of the intricacies of classism nor the potential to counter structural systems of oppression through music were apparent to my three-year-old mind. All I knew was that my father was sick and that my family told me that somehow singing would help to get what we needed so that he could get better. As I grew, I continued to engage with musical activities, and I found that creating music continuously instilled in me a sense of empowerment and unity with those whom I have co-created various soundscapes.

In 2016 when I began my search for universities to attend for a master's degree in folkloristics and heritage studies the name Tartu kept appearing on my computer screen. Knowing very little about Estonia, I began to seek out and absorb anything I could find regarding the culture and the history of the region. Not far into my search, I discovered what has come to be called the "Singing Revolution." When I began reading of people who had participated in the Singing Revolution as stating that "Singing together was our power!" this was something to which I could certainly relate. With academic and practical experience in social justice movements and a background in music, I was fascinated by the idea of social change brought about through song. Indeed, I had found my academic home and so the work of this thesis began.

The Baltic independence movement was driven by a power which focused on nonviolent political action aimed at instigating social change. Through the use of traditional songs passed through many generations this movement united Estonia with the Baltic nations of Latvia and Lithuania in their pursuit of independence. For many years prior to and following the success of the Singing Revolution after these nations gained the freedom they

sought, the songs have continuously performed and sung among friends in intimate settings and at large scale festivals with thousands of voices singing in unison (Šmidchens 2014). I began pondering on other methods in which musicians might employ the use of song to make powerful and empowering statements.

The concept of the kyriarchy was borne out of feminist discourse however it may be easily applicable within various contexts. This theory has been gaining traction within numerous academic fields. As explained by Natalie Osborne (2015) who applied kyriarchy as a framework to analyze climate change and feminist geography, this concept is being increasingly embraced in activist spaces. With a background in international cross-cultural awareness and diversity studies, I approach folkloristics with a consciousness for and commitment to addressing issues of social inequities. Rather than to pursue research with a focus on the nature of injustices, I have set out to explore creative and innovate ways which musicians are using performance to undermine and challenge the kyriarchy.

The theories of kyriarchy and critical emancipatory historiography presented by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992) are the core threads linking various elements of this research in addition to concepts and expressions of gender including those that venture beyond the bounds of binary frameworks typically found in Western cultures. “Gender and sexual diversity” encompass the multiplicity of sexual orientation, sex characteristics, and gender identities while “sexual and gender minority” addresses those whose gender identity/expression or sexual orientation varies from cultural or societal norms. Two-Spirit has been adopted by many Indigenous North American tribes as a way of referring to what is often understood as gender-variant by Western cultures. It is essential to note that often individual tribes have distinct languages and traditions surrounding such experiences, roles, and identities. There will be an exploration of the intersections of these various perspectives of identities and experiences in greater depth with consideration for their positions within the kyriarchy.

The theory of kyriarchy, developed by Schüssler Fiorenza (1992) encompasses interconnected systems of domination, oppression, and submission. This approach disrupts binary thinking by presenting the complexities of society with inherent inequalities. Within the kyriarchy, an individual may experience privilege in certain spaces and oppression in others. The kyriarchy as a structural concept is intended to be an extension of patriarchy and gives additional consideration to societal and institutionalized racism, transmisogyny, homophobia, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, ableism and other forms of dominating hierarchies. In an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the intersecting nature of this

matrix, I have opted to utilize an approach which examines and compares musicians from two distinct case studies. This lens makes it possible to gain more diverse perspectives and experiences from people who share the common interest of engaging with heritage-based musical traditions.

My research objective is to illuminate adaptive and innovative interpretations of traditional music people develop to maintain a voice in an ever shifting and increasingly globalized society, a voice that is unique and genuine to the individual, yet simultaneously integrated with transnational and even global movements. In this study, I examine the works of folk musicians who use music in connection with their heritage to make positive and empowering statements with an emphasis on gender as it intersects with other identities such as Indigeneity and sexuality. There will be an analysis and comparison of traditional and contemporary expressions of gender and sexuality with consideration for cultural and historical contexts.

For comparison I will draw upon participant observations from my involvement with two Colorado-based groups; the folk ensemble *Planina: Songs of Eastern Europe* and fieldwork with a Native American *Calpulli* or spiritual family group and the connected ensemble *Tzotzollin*. Consideration is given for the activities of smaller locally-oriented ensembles to illuminate their links with larger social movements. Collectively these musicians and ensembles represent cultural legacies which display some degree of transnational activity extending their work beyond national borders. I will examine and compare the ways Indigenous people of the United States relate to and construct their sense of cultural identity while bearing in mind the question of how white people and those cut off from their ancestral legacies engage with heritage in a positive manner without appropriating the identities of others.

In *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies* G. J. Ashworth, Brian Graham, and J. E. Tunbridge (2007) explore the means by which contemporary societies utilize heritage in the creation and maintenance of collective identities. Between heritage institutions and community movements, heritage may often be politicized and employed to encourage individuals to identify with particular traditions and places. Heritage and culture as presented in this study were argued to allow for certain pluralism in both policy and practice, bonding them to concepts of multiculturalism and assimilation.

While Indigenous people are often cut off from their traditions through processes of colonization, white people in the United States often struggle to define the boundaries of their identity. In the face of what may be framed as “bland nothingness” due to the loss of ethnic heritage and ancestral connection or the racism associated with “white pride” movements, Ian Relfowitz (2016) expresses the need for a positive and inclusive American identity. Relfowitz points out that for many white Americans this identity is often deficient of sustaining, nourishing cultural content. To illustrate this point Relfowitz conveyed a story of a Utah baseball team which had planned what was intended to be a fun and lighthearted gathering titled “Caucasian Heritage Night” in which people would eat hamburgers on Wonder Bread with mayonnaise and watch “Friends.” The event was canceled following the Charleston massacre of 2015 in which a white supremacist committed mass murder in a black church in South Carolina.

The author of *The History of White People* Nell Irvin Painter presented the conundrum of white heritage in America as such; “Whiteness is on a toggle switch between ‘bland nothingness’ and ‘racist hatred’” (Painter qtd. in Relfowitz 2016). What Relfowitz argues for is a cohesive American identity grounded in a shared history and a value system favoring diversity and equality. While I would not discourage the cultivation of such identities, I question the capacity of this approach to adequately fulfill the complex yearnings experienced and expressed through an identity grounded in cultural heritage. One query addressed in this thesis is to ascertain appropriate methods applied by white people of the United States in their relationship to their heritage and cultural identity. Approaching heritage from the concept of the amalgam with the lens of critical emancipatory historiography is presented as a means of constructing a positive heritage-based identity while respecting those of others and avoiding instances of appropriation.

Chapter 1 will provide the structural framework and theoretical grounding of this corpus of work. The concept of the amalgam has been introduced to me by David Atekpaztin Young of the *Calmecaztlán* (Noble School) *Calpulli*. Queries regarding the positive engagement with heritage while avoiding appropriation will be addressed in chapter 2 through my analysis of the activities of *Planina* including the constructions and explorations of heritage identity by various members including myself through autoethnographic accounts. This will be followed in chapter 3 by accounts of how this process expanded into and was impacted by experiences with the *Calpulli*. Data is not necessarily presented in a linear manner based on the order of occurrence as my interactions with *Calpulli* groups began about 6 years prior to my introduction into *Planina*. Information is analyzed rather on the basis of

relatability to the experience and process of heritage construction and the consequential interplay between these two groups which occurred in culturally intimate and conscious ways.

The re-configuring of cultural practices or performances may be impacted by social circumstances and should be addressed with consideration for situational contexts. As my research is related to performances of folk ensembles with an emphasis on the construction of heritage identity, I am interested in questions of how traditional performances may change or evolve as certain groups react or interact with forces of globalization. This is due to changing attitudes surrounding conceptions of gender and sexuality through processes of cultural evolution, modernization, and globalization taking places over time. The second question being addressed in this study is to what degree do cultural traditions surrounding gender and sexuality impact expressions within the ensemble performances? Various factors which may have altered beliefs and practices surrounding these concepts such as colonization, immigration and globalization will be reflected upon in this regard.

Besides questioning how these performances may change, I am interested in the processes of learning and transmission of musical traditions. As the two groups being compared experience a certain disruption in the transmission of their cultural legacies for differing reasons, I will examine the reconstructive processes for Indigenous peoples and those descendant of predominantly white European immigrant ancestral lines. Schüssler Fiorenza's 1992 work addressing critical emancipatory historiography will be presented as one method for addressing such challenges. The final inquiry discussed in this corpus of work is what modes of reconstruction are being applied when there is a disruption of transmission, and how might individuals find empowerment in this process? In both instances, the potential for care and repair to take place is made possible through a conscious reconstruction framed here as an approach utilizing critical emancipatory historiography.

My approach will take into consideration various aspects of heritage as related to musical traditions which have evolved over time as well as the interplay with the construction of identity and the pursuit of establishing a sense of belonging through music. In these considerations, there will be an exploration of creative interpretive elements with an awareness of the potential for appropriation. Social structures and cultural identities may be deeply influenced by musical traditions. Bernhard Grossfeld and Jack Hiller explain that "history tells us that music has been seen as a means of social organization to increase and harmonize physical and spiritual forces" (Grossfeld and Hiller 2008: 1150). Entire cultural

legacies may be carried through lines of music, expressed through the vocal tone of a singer, instrumental lines, lyrics, song styles, associated dances and performance attire.

In my efforts to address diverse perspectives I have intentionally chosen to examine ensembles with differing cultural groundings and approaches in order to gain an international cross-cultural view. These groups each represent a unique piece that contributes to a global tapestry woven of distinct elements which combine into a greater whole. The broad spectrum presented here allows for comparative analysis in various cultural contexts in order to achieve a deeper understanding of empowerment through musical expression. This additionally allows for the analysis of data which corresponds to diverse experiences within the matrix of privilege and oppression represented by the model of the kyriarchy. Despite their differences, this approach reveals that each group relates to the material, source communities, and audiences in a transnational manner, bridging and transcending borders, historical narratives, generations, and cultural differences.

Participant observation with ensembles either as a musician or audience member has oriented me with each group so that I have gained a deeper understanding of their unique values and approaches to the music. In my comparative study of these folk ensembles, I will arrange symbols, activities, and performances in order to recognize patterns which may convey larger narratives. While the ensembles I collaborated with for fieldwork regularly perform in the community, I have additionally participated in private rehearsals, traveled with musicians to source communities and conducted personal interviews to gain more in-depth perspectives. Each ensemble has its own vision of how to carry out rehearsals and performances. This includes the visual presentation of the group, which may be more or less individualized depending on how strictly the image is dictated and maintained by the ensemble. The ensembles examined have a certain dress code for performances, each with unique goals, intentions, and specific guidelines for the performers. Performance attire with attention to the practitioner's individual presentation was examined in fieldwork observations.

Fieldwork with *Planina* consisted of attendance to rehearsals. The analysis of participant observations was made retrospectively. Participant observation took place during rehearsals, ensemble gatherings, concerts, over a two-week field expedition I accompanied in the summer of 2018 planned to collect music and by conducting Skype interviews with two members. Interviews consisted of 1 to 2-hour conversations guided by 18 questions (see annex 2) relating to individual perspectives on heritage, music and gender dynamics.

Chapter 2 begins with an autoethnography outlining my personal journey of finding empowerment through tracing musical traditions related to my heritage primarily through my work with *Planina*. This ensemble is an established non-profit folk music organization based in Colorado of the United States. I have been involved with this group on and off since January 21st of 2013 when I first auditioned as a singer and instrumentalist. The ensemble is particularly suitable for my research as they have prominent academic origins and involvement of various scholars of folklore, Slavic traditions, and ethnomusicology in addition to a history of strong leadership by women all while maintaining ties to traditional ensembles abroad and with Eastern European immigrant communities within the United States.

In the six years I have been involved with the ensemble, I have witnessed a concerted effort to produce quality material based on parameters set by the source communities from which the music is learned. Relationships are built and maintained over many years with experienced teachers based in the United States, and those living in Bulgarian villages working through local *Chitalishte* (читалище) public cultural institutions (see fig. 1). Teachers and organizations providing advising to *Planina* are compensated through money the organization raises at performances. The ensemble sustains a dedicated approach to producing high quality cultural and musical material combined with continuous evaluation and re-evaluation of presenting the music authenticity.

My experiences with *Planina* eventually bled over into other more personal and spiritual facets of my life which created space for unexpected cultural exchanges. Although I was raised with Jewish traditions, I had not been active in the religious community for many years. When my partner began reconnecting with Native American ceremonies in 2009 and I was invited to participate, I felt it was important to be conscious of the potential for appropriation and simultaneously sought to maintain my own heritage practices. Over the course of nearly a decade, I have negotiated my identity within the space of the *Calpulli* (house or community group) by way of internal dialogue and personal exchanges within the community. Initially, this was centered on my religious identity as Jewish, but later as I learned more of my genealogy and sought out musical expressions of my Eastern European and Ashkenazic heritage this became intermeshed with my experiences within *Planina*. Chapter 3 is dedicated to these experiences with Native American communities and additional observations of folk ensembles based in Colorado connected with the *Calpulli* community.

These ensembles and performers observed were selected based on their mission statements with the inclusion of cultural heritage education and preservation as a central element. My connection with the US-based ensembles was most developed particularly with *Planina*. In this way, I have based the starting point of my research on a comparison which is rooted in my experiences presented through autoethnography in *Planina* and the *Calpulli* groups. Each group has leadership by women or gender and sexual minorities while presenting diverse cross-cultural and transnational perspectives in their repertoires. These ensembles have prominent academic roots while maintaining strong ties with source communities. Working with these groups has enabled me to explore varied forms of positive expression through heritage and folk music traditions in order to make a cross-cultural comparative study.

The goal is not to obtain a specific cultural context that might come from an individualized case study, but rather to discover the nature of empowerment itself as a creative force expressed through traditional music by under-represented peoples. While comparative analysis will be implemented in this study, it is not my intention to imply in any way that these distinct groupings are without difference. The objective is to illuminate those approaches that may be similar in nature in order to aspire to further know artistic means of overcoming the various insidious forms of kyriarchal oppression. While each group may be individually unique, the examination of similar approaches may reveal much about social movements for equity and justice.

To understand the meaning and intentions behind the music a series of analytical frameworks will be applied to this study. Selection of repertoire, performance styles, rehearsal formats, public image, and audience interaction will all be considered. Alan Dundes (1964) outlined an interpretive framework to address the meaning and function of songs through an analysis of their performative context. Guntis Šmidchens described Dundes's approach as including not only an awareness of setting specific parameters to the analysis of song performances but additionally "native interpretations regarding what songs meant and did" (Šmidchens 2014: 309). This will be considered alongside the analysis of contemporary interpretations and expressions of music.

CHAPTER 1: Theory and Methodological Framework

1.1 Identity, Heritage and Sense of Belonging

Music may be linked to identity and the sense of belonging be it ethnic, national, religious, geographical, gendered, or of various other defining factors. The experience of music as connected to heritage and identity is deeply personal yet depending on the context it may simultaneously become politicized and brought into the public sphere. Performances may be implemented as a form of communication, or as Joan N. Radner and Susan S. Lanser (1987) have suggested in their research, it can be presented in the form of coded messages. As a social force, music encourages cohesion and can impact public sentiments, however, this concurrently establishes certain boundaries. Beyond simple expressions, music has the potential to convey the essence of lived realities and to preserve them as lyrical tales and narratives. In the words of Robbie Sykes, one finds “morality and ideology written into the aesthetic textures of music, music’s power to galvanize politics and also to reshape thought; its powers to strengthen social bonds and delineate identities” is indeed undeniable (Sykes 2018: 186).

In her examination of the relationship between identity, heritage and power Laurajane Smith (2017) spoke of the political nature of heritage-making. This is due in part to contested interpretations and historical perspectives. Smith (2017: 15) explained that the definition of the self through the affirmation of an inclusive heritage inherently engenders an implicit assertion of exclusion through difference. In the realm of multicultural studies, delineations determining difference are not problematic, on the contrary, certain approaches within cross-cultural studies embrace the acknowledgment and preservation of such distinctions. Although the mixed cultural make-up of the United States has been described as a “melting pot” some now favor the metaphor of the “salad bowl.” Rather than blending into one culturally homogenous group, the “salad bowl” framework provides space for the coexistence and continuation of separate cultural identities. In the Canadian context, this is what is referred to as the “cultural mosaic.”

The intrinsic nature of politics related to heritage identity was illustrated by Smith through the story of a tea ceremony held in Canberra Australia shared between a Taiwanese student, a tea expert from China, and a Japanese scholar. When the Taiwanese student expressed that drinking the tea brought the feeling of being home, to which the Japanese scholar proclaimed that the tea was in fact from Japan, followed by a final rebuke from the Chinese expert pointing out that the tea is now sold as a Chinese tea (Smith 2017: 15). The

contested nature of heritage and authenticity related to the tea resulted in the delegitimization of the Taiwanese student's heritage and cultural connection. The wider political and social contexts provide meaning by recognizing and legitimizing social inclusion and exclusion with the potential of impacting a collective or individual's self-esteem. Smith concluded by highlighting the importance of the self-recognition felt by the student affirming his identity in a foreign place and stating that "the accumulative effects of such moments have not only personal but wider political consequences" (2017: 35).

The role of music as a form of political communication and resistance is well known (Šmidchens 2014, Mattern 1998, Onyebad 2017, Frith 1991, Street 2011). Even beyond protest rallies, music has been utilized as a tactful way of making powerful statements in rather hostile political climates. For example, *Tzotzollin*, the Native American ensemble I observed in 2018, regularly performs the song "Brown Eyed Children of the Sun" which came out of the United Farm Worker's movement led by labor and civil rights activists Delores Huerta and César Chavez during the 1960s and 1970s. The song narrates the story of immigrant workers from Mexico coming to work in the United States and their hopes of making a better life for their children by marching to the capital to fight for better working conditions and assert their rights to be respected.

Considering the current Trump administration's attempt to build a wall and in some cases completely close the border and putting children into cages after being separated from their families, the performance of this song makes quite a powerful statement. This line of thought is not too distant from concepts of coding in folkloric art and performance as presented by Radner and Lanser (1987). I will seek out and examine similar examples of music as a form of heritage preservation and as an assertion of political sovereignty. This is but one example which is related to research I will present in later chapters of Indigenous peoples applying music as a means of education, political organizing or cultural celebration in an otherwise oppressive society.

1.2 Authenticity

While meanings of songs may shift as they are carried and sung by new generations of musicians and community members, how do they maintain authenticity? They may be reinterpreted to fit into new and evolving contexts, yet there may simultaneously be efforts to maintain a link to past traditions and to engage with preservation. While this may be viewed as an attempt to revive something traditional by breathing new life into the creative piece, it may concurrently be labeled as inauthentic. Regina Bendix (1997) has described the

mounting issues inherent in the idealistic approach to authenticity in reference to cultural-historical, folkloristic, and musicological fields. Notions of cultural authenticity have certainly been undermined by invented traditions, nationalistic fabrications and instances of appropriation. According to Bendix, these issues have been addressed through an examination of the culture of inquiry. In response, scholars have been “deconstructing the ways their disciplinary subject was constituted historically and examining the mechanisms and strategies through which authoritative knowledge is produced” and thus “music has come to question its systems of exclusion and authentication in music history and performance” (Bendix 1997: 4). Speaking more broadly on the concept of authenticity Bendix has framed it as being constructed and deceptive in nature (ibid.: 228). My research will outline the processes by which folk performers tackle the daunting subjects of authenticity and appropriation in their efforts to preserve and share traditional music.

Building upon theories introduced by Bendix, Joseph Grim Feinberg (2018) provides many insights into approaches of authenticity through his fieldwork with folk ensembles in post-communist Slovakia. Folklore has often been linked with nationalism and political agendas, however, Feinberg found that contemporary folk ensembles would go to great efforts to convey to the general public that authentic folklore holds no connections to nationalist or populist movements. As Feinberg has pointed out, in the case of depoliticization one may find these very efforts to be politically meaningful in and of themselves. The ensembles analyzed in my work represent different demographic and geographic groups which present alternative perspectives on these subjects; Native American, rural Eastern European and migrant groups have been predominantly in marginalized positions with limited to no representation among the dominant power of the nations in which they reside. Due to their marginalized identities, musical activities may often become politicized. Despite the variance in the social authority of the cultural groups examined in my fieldwork, similar approaches and themes will be identified and examined in later chapters.

Jason Baird Jackson (2018) has discussed performance theory in regard to how objects may provoke reactions for observers, audience members, and participants. This was explained as both empowering and dangerous as it has the potential to diminish attention given to the “every day” or the “mundane” while privileging or emphasizing “special” or “aestheticized” moments. As my research focuses on the activities of folk musicians, it appears to touch on the “mundane” such as rehearsals and private gatherings among musicians. This additionally may include those “special” or “aestheticized” times such as concerts, workshops, or other events involving folk attire. Jackson further explained that the

reflexive lens on performances implies that they do not simply tell us what matters to people, they provide space so that people can rethink what matters to them while giving consideration to potential change. Interviews with individual performers will reveal greater details on what indeed matters to them and what if any potential change they hope to impact.

The theme of perceived authenticity may be related to what Jackson termed the “snowmobile problem” in which a museum would be willing to acquire a sled from Arctic peoples, but not a snowmobile despite the fact that it has become central to their daily lives (Jackson 2018). As traditional folk ensembles, the works practiced and performed by these groups must be based on some authentic source. Determining the parameters of what qualifies as authentic has great variance depending on the ensemble’s approach. It is possible to find elements displayed or performed as folk music that some may not think of as traditional or authentic such as electronic instruments and synthesized sounds. Although some musicians have been criticized for integrating modern elements into their performances as inauthentic, others celebrate these integrations as reflective of the modern contemporary experience of these communities. These cases are part of a larger whole, a global assemblage of scholarship which supports a movement that is inherently transnational in nature addressing the social phenomena of tradition preservationists in the contemporary era.

1.3 Kyriarchy, Critical Emancipatory Historiography, Care and Repair

In discussing the kyriarchy, it is necessary to address the concept of intersectionality which was first introduced by critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw. Osborne (2015) described this approach as a means to address intragroup difference while acknowledging that an individual’s relationship to power is impacted and governed by multiple axes of identity. While identity politics were faulted for universalizing certain experiences, intersectionality provided a response to these limitations. “The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference...but rather the opposite – that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (Crenshaw 1991: 1242).

Creative and musical expression may be stifled by social stress when living in a complex system of intersecting oppressions and privileges as represented in the kyriarchy. In 1987 Radner and Susan S. Lanser explored the varied ways in which women approach coding as a form of expression through performance in their article “The Feminist Voice: Strategies of Coding in Folklore and Literature.” If one is to expand upon these ideas to include gender variant and sexually diverse populations a vast array of artistic expression may be observed. Through this framework, I am examining the messages encoded in musical performances by

women and gender or sexually diverse people with attention to subversive messages and expressions of empowerment. Therefore, this study has a focus on works linked to the performer's heritage through music with a positive message in connection with the performer's identity, community, or sense of belonging to a social movement.

Schüssler Fiorenza took an approach which addressed accounts by historians who did not adequately regard the roles of under-represented peoples. She asserted that in some instances these groups were left out of historical analysis altogether. In dealing with such inadequacies of documentation Schüssler Fiorenza urged the investigation of alternative clues in order to engage with a reconstructive process she described as similar to quilt-making. She explained that the "quilt-maker carefully stitches material fragments and pieces into an overall design that gives meaning to the individual scraps of material" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1987: xxii). Probing for unacknowledged and forgotten contributions and correlating historically relevant data contributes to a larger all-encompassing picture of the greater society. Thus, by focusing on the surrounding evidence and seeking out missing sections, we may reconstruct a more complete and more inclusive image of history and society as a whole.

To adopt an approach similar to that of Schüssler Fiorenza is to embrace a perspective that views society as radically heterogeneous and history as variegated, multilayered rather than monolithic or linear. This is all achieved by centralizing gender minorities and other marginalized people within the primary research objectives. In the past feminist theorists who were coming from predominantly white and Western cultural backgrounds have been criticized for failing to acknowledge their own privileges. Alternatively, this approach places gender oppression within a greater matrix including other forms of oppression, thus one may come to see and understand the various ways in which systems of domination and submission are in fact interlocking and multiplicative.

Schüssler Fiorenza emphasized the importance of the recovery of both the history and heritage of the oppressed. She referenced an approach outlined by Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff which traces the history of oppression with an awareness that the whole may not be recovered as it once was, but that a "past of ourselves, reclaiming as our own" is indeed possible (qtd. in Schüssler Fiorenza 1992: 80). The emphasis here is again on fragments of history which may require to be reassembled from the perspective of identity-based work. Cliff continued by explaining that this may require the blending of that which was taught by the oppressor and undermining the language and styles imposed by turning them to serve the purpose of the oppressed. Schüssler Fiorenza termed this "critical emancipatory historiography" and explained that the overall objective is to expose that which has been

suppressed or excluded in traditional historical studies (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992: 81). She concluded that ultimately historical knowledge is constituted of choices and inevitable exclusions which require further investigation in order to construct a complete and more inclusive image of the past. This theoretical vantage point as explained by Schüssler Fiorenza illuminates with greater clarity the responsibilities, interests, political functions, and communicative practices of feminist critical historiography. While critical emancipatory theory will not be applied in analysis within this thesis, I argue that the musicians themselves utilize this approach in their own work.

Wayne Modest (2018) presented ideas of the museum as a space of care and repair as the work occurring in spaces of heritage and educational institutions between preservationists, academics, and tradition bearers has great potential for healing if handled properly. I would expand the concept of care and repair to be applied in performative spaces encompassing not only the performers but audience members as well. Modest integrated queer and feminist theory in ways that could certainly benefit the interpretations of tradition and authenticity for many folk performers. As will be seen in later chapters these concepts can be related to experiences of *Planina* members who expressed a disconnect between personal identity and what was presented on stage as performance. This question of how to include representations of gender diversity is also relevant to folk ensembles as they engage with performance.

1.4 Gender and Performativity

The analysis of marginalized voices within folk ensembles with consideration for the structures of power presented in kyriarchal frameworks (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992) will be addressed in this work with the inclusion of theories on gender performance as presented by Judith Butler (1988). By framing gender as an unstable identity which is reified through the repetition of stylized acts, Butler presented the concept of gender identity as a “performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” (Butler 1988: 520). Butler cited the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1974) in reference to phenomenological and feminist views which rather than assuming a particular state to be a natural fact instead take into consideration the realities of distinct cultural and historical situations. This is essential to bear in mind regarding the processes folk ensembles undertake to present what they interpret through cultural and historical sources in order to create a presentation of a traditional image.

Butler (1988: 520) explained gender as a stylization of the body to be interpreted through enactments, gestures, and movements. It is important to note that performance and

the performativity of which Butler theorized are not one and the same. Performativity according to Butler is something repeated unconsciously which produces a series of effects. Folk ensemble performances entail a series of practiced and calculated actions which are executed in a controlled and intentional manner and performativity may certainly impact performances. There is a certain degree of performativity even within performances. Depending on the ensemble, group members may have varying degrees of freedom of expression in this realm. The drive for authenticity with beliefs influenced by performativity may overshadow personal expression and identity. This is particularly evident in relation to expressions of gender and sexuality as many songs address romantic themes or gendered stylings. Ensemble directors or costume managers may ultimately have the final say in an individual's presentation on stage.

Performativity creates the sense that gender is somehow normative or regulatory in status. This theoretical approach bears in mind the cultural and historical meanings held and conveyed by the body as active processes and further postures that gender is portrayed in a manner similar to the performative acts of theatre. Folk ensemble performances explored in this study with attention to theories of gender presented by Butler (1988) thus become an examination of performativity within performance; one that is deeply personal yet often meticulously controlled within the realm of folk ensemble production. Indeed, performativity may impact the way that ensemble directors coach the singers or how costume managers address the appearance of the performers.

1.5 Performance Attire, Representation, and Appropriation

For analysis of performance attire, I am applying the framework provided by Pravina Shukla (2015) in her exploration of the performance of identity through dress. Although creativity, personal aesthetics and the expression of identity may be communicated through dress, at times it may be necessary to accommodate certain social and environmental factors. Folk ensemble performance attire often functions as an artistic form of cultural communication. The folkloristic approach outlined by Shukla (2015: 3) defines "costume as artistic communication, as a marker of identity, as an outlet for personality, and as a vehicle for social and cultural expression." This paradigm draws on performance theory and material culture in the form of exchange through a social moment of creativity.

Shukla uses the term costume to discuss a specific form of dress often utilized in performance to depict a different place or time. Costume is explained as the garbs of others; those the wearer is pretending to portray. As some of the practitioners I have worked with

through this study indeed identify with the attire they adorn themselves with when singing publicly, in some places I use the phrases performance attire, folk attire, or regalia. Despite this difference in ontology, as was explained by Shukla (2015: 3) “costume – like dress – is the clothing of who we are but that it signals a different self, one other than that expressed through daily dress.” In *Clothing Costume and Dress* Joanne B. Eicher (2010) differentiates between dress which conveys an individual’s identity in everyday life and that of costume which expresses a performance identity. Time spent among folk performers has made clear the delineation between these two categories, although at times there may be some degree of overlap. In some instances, dress-code has been regulated with the *Calpulli* during ceremonies held for the community.

The presentation of a carefully constructed and maintained cultural image is a central element in the ensembles examined here. Analysis of these elements takes into consideration perspectives presented by Butler (1988) which emphasized gender as being “constructed through specific corporeal acts” and that such acts have the potential for cultural transformation of the concept of gender itself (Butler 1988: 521). As I am working from a cross-cultural multidimensional perspective, attention to the cultural transformation of gender through the ensembles’ interpretations of performance attire and the performances themselves will be essential in this analysis.

At times the expectations within these ensembles appear to adhere to theories of gender as presented by Butler in which expectations of gendered existence are perceived as sedimented and therefore become part of compelling social fictions. In working with music, folk tales told and performed through the songs have the potential to reinforce or challenge expected norms of behavior in the realms of gender and sexual expression. In many cultures and societies, including Western culture and those impacted by it through imperialism, colonization, and trends of globalization, gender is often presumed to naturally occur in a specific configuration of “bodies into sexes which exist in a binary relation to one another” (Butler 1988: 524). The ensembles selected for investigation in my research have at times conformed to such prescribed social expectations, and at others have presented alternative forms and expressions to be discussed in further detail later in sections 2.3 and 3.3 addressing expressions of gender and sexuality. These components will be addressed in an effort to reach an understanding of the nature of the construction of identity and the sense of belonging sought by folk musicians with consideration for intersecting identities, backgrounds, experiences and expressions.

In his research on cultural appropriation Richard A. Rogers (2006) defined it as the use of cultural symbols, genres, rituals, artifacts, or technologies by members of other cultures. He continued by explaining that cultural appropriation may be placed into four categories: exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation. In regards to the theme of transculturation within the realm of appropriation, he stated that “tensions exist between the need to challenge essentialism and the use of essentialist notions such as ownership and degradation to criticize the exploitation of colonized cultures” (Rogers 2006: 474). Cultural politics are inescapably enmeshed with instances of cultural appropriation as it pertains to exploitation and the assimilation of colonized and marginalized cultures. Rogers explains that it is pertinent to consider the importance of “the survival of subordinated cultures and their resistance to dominant cultures” (ibid.).

In the study of folk ensemble performance, it is essential to bear in mind the potential not only for cultural appropriation but for the commodification of culture. Concerns in this regard must take into consideration if marginalized or colonized cultures are involved as imbalanced power dynamics are inherent in such situations. Simply put these concepts are defined by unfair or unauthorized taking or what is ultimately cultural theft. Countering such concerns may not be an issue for the *Calpulli* as this group is predominantly Indigenous, however, some challenges arise in the case of *Planina*. As will be presented and discussed in this study, concerns regarding appropriation have been raised by members of the ensemble. As *Planina* is a non-profit with an ardent dedication to authenticity while maintaining continuous contact and communication with source communities this disrupts much of the potentially exploitive and destructive elements of such cultural exchanges.

1.6 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is central to the analysis presented in this thesis. The term “autoethnography” was first used by Karl Heider (1975) in reference to the research of Indigenous anthropologists relating to their own culture. The term has since been expanded to include research practices concentrating on influences of societal and cultural compositions addressed through qualitative research. Ellis Bochner (2000) framed autoethnography as a process by which multiple layers of personal experiences and cultural issues are examined through links which tend to blur distinctions between the two.

Keyan G. Tomaselli (2008) presents autoethnography as a type of science with the intention of facilitating ways of knowing in conjunction with the process of inquiry. This approach includes the researcher along with the research in an effort to elaborate upon

“perspectives that are always in dialogue with each other” (Tomaselli 2008: 368). As a method this is applied first through an outward ethnographic lens by examining the social and cultural aspects of the experience then by venturing inward “exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations” (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 739, qtd. from Tomaselli 2008: 348). Thus, an ethnography is achieved which is not an assembly of the exotic “other” but rather one that is reflective of the researcher’s personal life and cultural practices even in the examination of another culture. This is inherently reflexive and allows for a window into the moral dilemmas of the researcher and to think with the narratives as opposed to merely about them.

Billy Ehn (2013) exemplifies the connection between autoethnography and participant observation in which the researcher’s mind, body, and personality are utilized to produce knowledge. As an approach autoethnography is self-critical and reflexive, meaning that the ethnographic gaze is turned inward upon the self. This is carried out while retaining an outward analytical gaze intended to obtain a broader context characterized by self-experiences. Hence the perspectives of subject and object of observation are concurrently contained within autoethnography (Ehn 2013: 314–315). This attention to reflection is significantly revealing of the research process. As outlined by Ehn I have endeavored to recollect on actions and experiences from times when I was immersed in activities with *Planina* and the *Calpulli*. Despite such elite access to thoughts and feelings of the autoethnographic self as the subject of study, Ehn acknowledged the human limitations of memory, the unconscious mind, and emotions which may cloud or create a bias in the analysis.

CHAPTER 2: *Planina: Songs of Eastern Europe*

2.1 Contextualization

Planina: Songs of Eastern Europe is a group of singers, instrumentalists, and academics who specialize in traditional and contemporary music from Eastern Europe. Membership tends to fluctuate, but there are typically between 12 to 15 active performers. The organization's mission is not only to perform and share songs but additionally to educate audiences about the cultures and traditions from which the music originates. Although *Planina* is an ensemble including people of different genders, it was founded in 1988 as a women's choir and has had a strong core leadership of women since the beginning. Currently, the group consists of around 9 women, 3 men and has had at least one gender-variant member over the course of my involvement. The ensemble maintains strong ties to Eastern European immigrant communities in Colorado and throughout the United States through involvement with the East European Folklife Center (EEFC) and other Balkan institutions. The name *Planina* is taken from a word which is used in many southern Slavic languages to refer to a mountain, speaking to the connections the organization seeks to make between the local Rocky Mountain community and the Balkan Mountains. The choir was originally under the direction of Gordon McDaniel, Ph.D. of Slavic Languages. Two current *Planina* singers are professors of Slavic languages and literature and the organization coordinates workshops with other scholars of anthropology and folklore.

Many people in the United States first encounter Balkan folk dance and develop a deeper interest in the accompanying music from there. According to researcher Daniela Ivanova-Nyberg (2011), the origins of Balkan folk dance movements in the United States can be traced back to the start of the 20th century and the international folk-dance movement which took place from 1930 to 1950. Although my journey into the world of Balkan folk appreciation originated with the music, other members of *Planina* were first introduced to the music through the folk-dance scene. In a 2018 Skype interview conducted with *Planina*'s Assistant Director Valerie Brown, she explained that she switched from dancing to singing initially because she was pregnant and was no longer able to dance (Interview with Valerie Brown, 2018). She explained that although she has no direct familial connections to Eastern European heritage, this music is what suits her voice and more importantly, she describes it as the music of her soul and said laughingly that perhaps it could have been her heritage from a previous life.

Valerie explained the origins of the ensemble as being heavily influenced by house-sings which were organized in the late 1980s in Denver and Boulder by Gordon McDaniel. The ensemble was founded primarily by people with little to no Eastern European heritage, but who shared a mutual love for the music and culture. Nationally known Balkan music teacher Mary Sherhart played an essential role in guiding *Planina* and building up a repertoire. Sherhart is the founding president of Sevdah North America, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of *sevdahlinka* traditional music of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over the years of my involvement, rehearsals have typically consisted of warm-ups and drilling songs which members had been instructed to study with lyric sheets and audio recordings. A newer feature during rehearsals which I observed during my fieldwork in 2018 was the testing of memorization for the “Song o’ the Month.” In the earlier days of the ensemble members were required to memorize the entire repertoire, now performers may hold small black lyric cards, but memorization is certainly encouraged. The ensemble studies and performs music from the traditions of Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Jewish (Yiddish and Ladino), and Roma.

2.2 Heritage and Sense of Belonging

The sense of belonging and identity are subject areas which are often intertwined and may become highly politicized. A key distinction between the two according to Gerharz (2014) is the avoidance of fixations for concepts of belonging. Such fluid structures relate well to the framework of kyriarchy as intersectionality and various simultaneous positions of privilege and oppression may be held by an individual at any given time with the added potential of shifting dependent upon the situational context. Belonging is additionally an essential concept for consideration of gender expressions and identities which likewise may not be fixed. In the event of migration or displacement, belonging may be transitional or collective in nature.

Planina has had members from Bosnia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Lithuania and other regions from which we draw our repertoire, and others with no direct known heritage, but great interest in the music and culture. Although many of the members may not have Eastern European heritage, most, if not all of the singers, do have some kind of European heritage. The drive to participate in such an ensemble appears to vary greatly from one person to the next. During a 2018 interview conducted with former *Planina* member Keith Wagner,

he explained that although he does not have Eastern European heritage engaging with this kind of music fills some kind of gap, something for which he had always wished (Interview with Keith Wagner, 2018). Keith holds a degree in Applied Romance Languages, so music in different languages and culturally diverse melodies naturally appeals to him. He discussed how the language itself impacts the sound and flow of the music.

For many of the members who do not speak or understand many of the languages in which we sing, myself included, it can be quite difficult to remember what to us is perceived predominantly as a series of sounds and syllables. In the case of *Planina*, although I personally do not understand the languages, singing in a language I know my grandparents spoke holds great meaning. Tracing the musical and cultural heritage of my ancestors and embracing the languages, cultures, and traditions they felt pressured to abandon in the processes of assimilation has certainly instilled in me a sense of empowerment. This kind of reconstructive work is potent in the context of an American culture which is often whitewashed to a degree that many individuals struggle to find a cultural grounding. I have found this to be particularly true of white people who may feel somehow disconnected or threatened by growing trends to recognize and honor diversity despite the fact that white culture is widely represented and privileged in the dominant society.

I would like to acknowledge that the work of tracing and understanding one's heritage is often a complicated and convoluted process, one that is not accessible to everyone. However, we are all entitled to some kind of heritage, and heritage is certainly something to be protected and preserved. The question becomes what to do when there is some kind of disconnect? When I sing a Polish song because I know that my Papa Sammie was from Rzeszow and that my Great Grandma Rose was from Warsaw, is my doing so an appropriative action as a person born and raised in the United States? If someone from a closely related country such as Slovakia takes an interest in Polish music despite having no direct family connections to the region, would this constitute as appropriation, or are the cultures and languages closely related enough to be considered an acceptable expression of culture?

The answers to these queries are not so clear as one might imagine as appropriation does not always occur within the context of a definitive binary with clear markers. As someone who has been engaged with social justice movements, it is difficult for me to see appropriation as anything other than disrespectful and leading to cultural degradation, however, the path to heritage reconstruction and reclamation is one wrought with ambiguities. The continuation of traditions makes for a convincing argument. For example,

during a summer visit to Bulgaria in 2018 *Planina* was presented with a plaque by the mayor of Velingrad for the ensemble's efforts in studying and preserving Balkan music (see fig. 2).

These considerations become increasingly complex if I am to consider my family's Jewish background which was often viewed as "other," outside, or even at odds with Polish culture. My grandparents sang and spoke in Yiddish rather than Polish and their experiences in Poland were not so pleasant considering the deeply embedded anti-Semitism and mounting tension leading up to WWII. The knowledge that my Great Grandma Rose insisted her family immigrate to the United States after being pistol-whipped by a Polish soldier as a teenager for refusing to speak Polish. This makes me question whether learning to sing in Polish would be looked upon positively by my ancestors. Nevertheless, singing these songs has made me feel closer to them through the awareness that even if they themselves did not sing in Polish, it was a culture and language in which they intermingled. The process of integrating these elements of my familial history into my own identity through singing engages a type of healing that has potential to span generations by reaching back through tradition and moving forward through future generations with this understanding.

In July of 2016 members of *Planina* traveled to Snow Mountain Ranch near Winter Park Colorado to participate in the REECA (Russian / Eastern European / Central Asian) Heritage Camp sponsored by Heritage Camps for Adoptive Families. The Heritage Camp programs provide adopted children the opportunity to gain a sense of pride in their heritage while their adoptive families learn about the cultures and connect with other families in the community. Although this was my first experience taking part in the camp, *Planina* has been involved in two prior camps in years past. During the camp, *Planina* taught six workshops on Lithuanian and Russian songs, dances, and song games for differing age groups (see fig. 3). In the evening the ensemble performed a repertoire including the music of Bosnia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine for the children and their families. The gathering had a certain emotional intensity for the children and families alike. At one point during one of our performances, the mother of one of the children broke down crying. She later explained that the song *Planina* had shared reminded her of her child's birth mother.

Programs such as those provided during this camp bridge gaps and forge networks for these uniquely diverse families who must work to establish connections with their children's culture of origin. Transethnic adoptions present a situation in which the child may become both an immigrant and the bearer of two cultural backgrounds. This presents a unique challenge as it is a disruption in transmission combined in some cases with immigration and the inclusion of new cultural traditions. This disputes purely essentialist frameworks while

highlighting the importance of flexibility in regards to concepts of heritage identity particularly considering cases in which biological lineage cannot be determined.

I maintain the belief that conscious engagement with one's heritage, although not necessarily easy or pleasant, can be immensely powerful as it illuminates the transgenerational scope of family history over many years. The awareness and understanding of personal familial history may help to find individual orientation in the larger societal narrative. In my personal experience music has been an essential pathway to this knowledge. An example of this can be found in the sharing of *Tumbalalaika*, a Yiddish song passed down in my family by my Grandfather. I grew up hearing this song in a combination of English and Yiddish as a lullaby. When I introduced the song to *Planina* as a proposed performance piece, I had to obtain more information.

In order to suggest a new song for the ensemble, I had to wait for the appropriate time and prepare a proposal containing the specifics about the piece. *Planina* holds a new materials meeting once a year during which members may present new material for consideration by the group. Lyrics, audio recording, sheet music, and translation or context are presented. Information is compiled and emailed to each member prior to the meeting, then the group convenes to listen to recordings together and discuss or debate which pieces to be considered as additions to the repertoire. As this happens about once a year it has a somewhat competitive element to it thus a voting method in which individuals mark their top picks is utilized. *Tumbalalaika* evolved from an oral tradition passed down in my family to something that suddenly had to be well documented and defined.

When I presented *Tumbalalaika* various members expressed interest and familiarity with variants in other languages. The suggestion was made that the piece be performed by alternating languages between verses with Yiddish and Russian. This song is one of my earliest and fondest memories of my mother and grandfather singing my sister and I to sleep as children, just as it was for my mother and her siblings when they were young. It is easy to understand the great sentiment for the song held by the family. The changes suggested by the ensemble were a bit jarring for me at first. I sang a few lyrics and was told it was too quiet, like a lullaby when the ensemble members felt it had a more celebratory nature. Another member explained she had heard of the song being sung in Russian, Polish and Yiddish as a rallying song, a way of finding solidarity. These concepts all sounded interesting and even appealing to me, but it somehow felt like my attempts to share and honor a very personal piece of myself, something akin to a treasured childhood toy once held for comfort, suddenly had too many hands upon it pulling and contorting it in too many directions.

An instrumental arrangement was written for the song including violin, flute, accordion and I was invited to play viola. *Tumbalalaika* had unquestionably evolved into something new, but as we started rehearsing and performing it, I began to really enjoy and find pride in the experience. Audience members often join in on the chorus as the song has circulated through various parts of Europe making it a familiar melody. In introducing the song, I always name my grandfather, Papa Sammie, who used to sing it and I often think of my great grandfather Morris who spoke fondly of Russia after immigrating to the United States. Eventually, I came to see this new version of *Tumbalalaika* as a more complete and integrated representation of my heritage.

This experience reconceptualized the way I thought about my heritage and I began to view it not as a story buried in family records to be discovered but as a process to be lived, experienced and explored. Conceptualizing heritage as a process emphasizes the state of “becoming” rather than an identity which is innately static. This perspective embraces a method which is selectively and intentionally forged over time as part of one’s personal journey. Ann-Elise Lewallen (2016) discussed the process of “becoming” rather than an identity which is “innate” in regards to Indigenous perspectives. Western cultural concepts have often been imposed upon Indigenous peoples, however, the idea of applying a theoretical approach founded in Indigenous methodology upon Western cultures has some intriguing implications. For one it removes falsely homogenizing concepts of white cultural heritage and encourages further investigation into the specificities of one’s ancestral legacy.

This exploratory track is not necessarily clearly delineated or logical in nature and access to information related to one’s cultural legacy may vary depending on circumstances. In many ways this represents a privilege within the matrix of the kyriarchy if one is to consider the often-limited access to family knowledge for those with strained familial relationships, those with different family structures which could include adoption, internalized oppression which leads families to hide or distort origins, and more drastic cases of familial disruption through conflict or colonization. In his work on heritage theory and ethics, Erich Hatala Matthes (2018) highlights the need to acknowledge the role of colonial dynamics and the distribution of power in shaping current dynamics of access to and control over cultural heritage. Matthes elaborates on the contrast between “official heritage” which is “top-down” in nature such as formally designated UNESCO sites, and “unofficial heritage” as being “bottom-up” as it encompasses the uses of and relationships to the past as understood by individuals. It is relevant to note that as nations are not culturally

homogeneous a clear distinction should be made between cultural heritage and national heritage.

Among members of white ethnic groups within the United States, there is often a sense of heritage displacement due to the history of immigration during the process of colonization. The variance in the generational timing of these transnational movements impacts the degree and prominence this disconnect may play in an individual's sense of heritage identity. Factors relating to an individual's upbringing such as adoption or access and ability to communicate with family members may have an additional impact on identity and the potential to construct a genealogical narrative. This brings in additional questions related to essentialism and the autonomy within such processes of familial historical research and reconstruction. Returning to the idea of implementing a theoretical principle founded in Indigenous studies to people of different backgrounds, there is the possibility for the capacity of engaging with healing and decolonial work.

My personal work on this matter has revealed interesting contrasts despite having predominantly European and seemingly homogeneous origins. Although my maternal line is Ashkenazi, my paternal side is Catholic primarily originating from Eastern Europe. Bearing in mind historical tensions between Catholic and Jewish communities including countless pogroms and the atrocities of WWII, learning more about my family's history created in me a sort of fractured sense of self. It was not until I began singing with *Planina* that I began working through the complexity of these emotions. By singing songs in the languages of ancestors on both sides of my family I began to integrate the story of my personal heritage. Witnessing the music bringing people together from various local and immigrant communities within the United States and through the ensemble's fieldwork abroad reinforced my sense of belonging through "becoming." These transnational connections are forged along routes once taken by my ancestors many years ago when they made the move from Europe to the Americas.

During my time singing with *Planina* I have become close with members of one family which has been involved with the ensemble for many years as musicians, dancers, and event organizers. After becoming aware of my Jewish roots, a member of this family inquired about my family history and I shared with her that the sole line of my Jewish family that survived the Holocaust in Europe has published a book documenting the harrowing tale (Feigenbaum Deutsch 2003). Although this book has long been out of print, she sought it out and read the narrative in its entirety returning to me with many questions about further details. It was through this exchange that I discovered that she is 3/4 German which had been

weighing heavily on her and lead to a sense of guilt relating to the history of WWII. This acknowledgment was profound, and I sought to convey that she should not carry the additional shame of this history moving forward in hopes she could reconcile with this difficult past in order to integrate her sense of self in relation to her own heritage. This demonstrates that the process of “becoming” through heritage recovery and healing through care and repair is a collective community process. This is how music acts as a mode of empowerment which ignites the transformative labor necessary for dismantling structures of the kyriarchy. This case displays the application of critical emancipatory historiography made possible through the participation with the ensemble which created space for this discourse to occur.

During the 2018 field expedition through Bulgaria, there were times when occasional tensions would naturally arise when traveling in such a large group in situations often requiring that we function in extremely close quarters. Interestingly I did not have any trouble getting along with the one person I spent the most time with during the trip. Reflecting on this I realized that she and I often sing the same parts together in the ensemble. This requires that we remain attentive of one another during rehearsals and performances, often standing together, listening closely to each other’s voices, and making eye contact while breathing in unison. Jill Suttie of the University of California Berkeley presented research conducted by music psychologist Stefan Koelsch who explained the various ways that music strengthens social bonds including increased cooperation with others and empathy in addition to cultural cohesion (Suttie 2015). Working so attentively to sync up with one another musically appears to have forged deeper more meaningful social and emotional bonds. It is quite apparent that people collaborating musically form close relationships, and this corroborates what I have observed within ensembles during fieldwork again creating space for care and repair.

2.3 Expressions of Gender and Sexuality

Whether within the realm of the United States or in the countryside of Bulgaria, conceptions of gender and sexuality are guided by historical and cultural trends which inform what Butler (1988) referred to as performativity. These behaviors are enacted through repetitions which are carried out unconsciously in a manner often assumed to be natural. When I joined *Planina* for example, it was assumed I would wear a “women’s costume” which in most cases meant either a dress or skirt with an apron and don make-up for concerts. Sexuality too may be indicated in the concept of performativity, such as the expectation for ensemble members to relate to romantic song lyrics in a heteronormative manner. Data

presented through my autoethnography, fieldwork and interviews reveal patterns that deviate from perceived norms of performativity. Leadership and engagement of women and sexual minorities were also quite prevalent.

During fieldwork in 2018 song workshops were held with the Draginovo ensemble at the local *chitalishte*. Besides the traditional songs drawing from a regionally based repertoire, they brought a village elder who shared songs and music styles that she recalled from her childhood (see fig. 4). This ensemble had a strong presence of leadership held by women, although much of the work was shared by veteran members of the group, the majority of whom are women. It was explained to us that the younger newer members were expected to defer to the experience of the older members as part of their learning process.

During our time in one of the villages, I met an individual from an academic institution who is conducting groundbreaking research on homosexuality in Bulgaria. In discussing local attitudes in Bulgaria this person explained that “coming out” as is referred to in some Western LGBTQI2-S (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, 2-Spirit) communities, is nearly impossible especially in isolated villages where people struggle to fathom such a concept as an identity. We discussed people who are living in small villages of Bulgaria who may not be “out” as LGBTQI2-S but certainly live in ways that seem genuine to their personalities and experiences.

There have been men in rural Bulgaria who openly express tendencies which may be viewed as more typically feminine. Some men who participate in village ensembles may occasionally sing in falsetto voices with the women. Although this is not typical of Bulgarian ensembles, there have been instances in which these unique singing abilities among men were clearly celebrated. Choirs aim to showcase their most talented singers and musicians, and if a man happens to display skill in singing with women it is not necessarily discouraged. Some ensemble directors who have recognized such talents have been known to encourage and develop these styles.

There have also been cases in which men have mastered the tradition of *gelina* Muslim Pomak bride painting for village weddings, a role typically held by women. This tradition, which was once suppressed during Soviet times, is now undergoing a revival. There is customarily a gendered separation of duties; the female family members and guests would assist the bride in the wedding preparation including the process of *gelina* (Kuruvilla 2016). Much of the younger generation lack interest in such traditions. It is perhaps for this reason that when a boy or young man expresses interest in learning a tradition typically carried by

women that it is permitted. Although not particularly common, this trend is interesting considering the extremely conservative nature of Bulgarian culture in regards to expressions of gender and sexuality, especially in such rural areas.

In cases such as the example listed above of the bride painter, the individual's expression of gender and sexuality, which overlaps with the maintenance and continuity of tradition may receive more acceptance as one that is culturally rooted through his heritage. A similar trend may be observed with the gender-fluid Bosnian folk *sevdalinka* singer Božo Vrećo who has received overwhelming support in his efforts to revive a highly valued musical tradition despite the customarily conservative environment which might otherwise reject his presentation (Hadziristic 2015).

It is interesting to consider the experience of individuals participating in a folk ensemble in a village of the Balkans with perspectives of members of *Planina* within the United States. During an interview with former *Planina* member Keith Wagner (Interview, 2018), the discussion regarding performance attire immediately struck a chord. Wagner expressed that he did not feel authentically himself when performing with *Planina*, feeling that he had to “assume a different personality.” This was not only about the folk attire but gender and what Keith termed the “machoness of the village man archetype.” He connected this to a heteronormative presentation, which for him was like putting on a role. This was additionally connected with what he referred to as a “gendered repertoire.” These gendered expectations within the ensemble may be impacted by frameworks of performativity as outlined by Butler (1988) which normalize certain gendered behaviors and presentations.

Keith named a song referred to as “*Sluzba*” which is centered around the assertion of masculinity through the description of a soldier his relationship to his horse. The men in the ensemble are encouraged to be extremely “manly” while performing this song and to imagine the feeling of having their masculinity challenged. The performance of this piece by the men of *Planina* is quite spirited making it quite popular at concerts. At times the level of masculinity displayed in the song performance is so dramatic it becomes an almost absurd and comical expression of certain stereotyped gender ideals. Although this almost mocking element of the performance can be somewhat subversive, Butler has argued that it is still in part reinforcing of presumptions linked to performativity.

During the rehearsal of songs with heterosexual romantic themes, members have been told to imagine how they may have felt “as a boy having feelings for a girl” for the first time or vice versa. This is something Keith has never experienced in his personal life and was thus

difficult to relate to and even a bit uncomfortable. So long as we exist within society replete with imbalances of representation for sexual minorities, there will inevitably be times when kyriarchal dynamics will persist despite our best intentions. Although Butler's (1988) theory of performativity was applied to gender it could be relevant in such instances of heteronormativity. Keith has recently begun singing with a smaller group independent of *Planina*. This group is currently focusing on women's song arrangements, but they manage the group with gender neutrality in relation to musical styles and lyrics.

There was a recognition by Keith for certain elements of *Planina*'s management as being positive and empowering for women. Maintaining consciousness surrounding elements of representation and inclusion in these spaces harken to the concept of care and repair as presented by Modest (2018). The ensemble as a community has the potential to provide this kind of reparative work which poses a direct challenge to oppressive forces.

The subject of gender expectations related to performance attire and make-up has been an important topic amongst other members of the group. Upon joining the group, I was issued a traditional dress and was briefed on expectations for concert make-up. At that time, I rarely if ever wore make-up and although I did not mind wearing a skirt or dress, I certainly preferred for that to occur on my terms. Given the need to fit in with the performance image of the ensemble I did my best to present as expected for concerts. For many years after joining the ensemble I had wanted to wear trousers to performances and had to find ways to make the argument that doing so was still part of a "culturally authentic presentation."

After attending many performances in dresses and skirts, I finally made the decision to show up in trousers with tall black boots as I had seen the men wearing (see fig. 5). I encountered our cultural advisor before entering the concert venue and I asked if what I was wearing was acceptable. She immediately exclaimed "Yes! It's a *boychik* outfit, that's fine!" Although she had used the term to refer to a Russian style, I was familiar with this term in the Yiddish context with the same meaning of "boy." I was able to relate to this culturally through my Jewish roots and it additionally resonated with the way I wanted to express my gender through performance attire on that day. The fact that *Planina*'s cultural advisor had spoken approvingly resulted in my own expression feeling a little freer in future performances.

This incident shifted the way I framed my own gender both on stage and in my personal life; *boychik* came to be a marker that represented the intersectionality of my gender along with my cultural and religious heritage. This deeply personal realization came through

my need to construct a stage persona that felt like a genuine representation of my inner self. The concept of *boychik* can be seen as transnational and transgenerational in nature. *Boychik* is a juncture of place, time and tradition applied in a contemporary context with multilingual implications of Yiddish and Russian. If one is to consider the sound of the word from an English perspective it sounds like a conjunction of “boy” and “chick,” which appropriately conveys the kinds of gender blending for which I aspire. This playful interpretation of the word additionally has the effect of including my experience of language as English speaker brought up in the United States. Thus, in this word I have found a space for various identities to intersect and coexist in a remarkably harmonious state which balances various elements of my heritage and experience. In this intersection of gender and heritage, one additionally finds the state of “becoming” as expressed through the creative space of folk performance. The ensemble created space for care and repair through this exploration of gender expression in combination with heritage identity. The support of other ensemble members in this process enhances the sense of belonging.

During fieldwork in Bulgaria in 2018, I became aware of traditional performances involving some alternative forms of gender expression. Following a workshop, with the Breznitsa ensemble, one of the older women departed for a tavern where she performed a solo piece presenting in the clothing and manner of a man. This is part of a traditional performance style in which women intentionally take on the clothing and manner of a man. Similar traditions involving men who present in women’s clothes for specialized songs or dances are practiced in surrounding cultures and regions.¹ In regards to tradition, there are practices such as the *Burrnesha* of Albania tracing back to the 1400s (PBS Independent Lens 2015) in which women may take up the role and attire of men, openly living and functioning within society as such. These culturally prescribed roles typically applied to families which had failed to produce male heirs or had lost their sons. Although there were expected rules ascribed to such positions, historical evidence shows a certain degree of fluidity and freedom of expression for women who lived in this way. Suffice to say, there is certainly evidence that cultural traditions do indeed exist surrounding women presenting in men’s clothing.

¹ I witnessed one such dance in 2015 during the EEFC’s Balkan Camp in Iroquois Springs New York. The dance was performed by Alexander Marković who specializes in dance from southeastern Serbia and Kosovo and holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Illinois-Chicago. Marković has conducted in depth fieldwork on dance in Romani and Serbian communities. In the dance Marković presented in clothing typically worn by women and carrying himself in what could be viewed as a more feminine manner. The purposes of these performances would vary depending on the roles, intentions, and embedded cultural meanings.

2.4 Representation, Presentation, and Appropriation

Facets of representation, presentation, and appropriation may be present to varying degrees in the activities of *Planina*. Arnd Schneider (2007) conducted research on conceptualizations of appropriation with consideration for processes of globalization in the realm of art. Schneider (2007: 216) explained that “the discussion of appropriation has important implication for studies of diasporas in the process of globalization since these involve particular conceptualizations of identity, authorship, and ownership of cultural and intellectual property.” Although the focus of Schneider’s subject was centered on visual arts, this could additionally be applied to performance arts. There was an acknowledgment of the interconnected nature of cultural exchange with processes of cultural transmission and awareness of otherness. *Planina* has been working with source and immigrant communities while making efforts to trace and preserve musical traditions. The ensemble’s mission is for representation, education and cultural sharing, however questions of appropriate presentations and concerns for appropriation have arisen in the past.

Performance attire is an element within *Planina* concerts in which representation, presentation, identity, and appropriation may surface and intersect. Aspects of gender, ethnic and religious identities or any combination of these factors may be present and intersect on the concert stage. *Planina* has a “Costume Manager,” cultural advisors, and many members sew or craft elements of their outfits. Much of the attire has been acquired in villages of the Balkans during field visits. For example, I acquired an apron to be worn for performances made on a loom by a singer from the village of Draginovo (see fig. 6 and 7). Concert attire is generally divided by men’s and women’s styles and includes clothing that contains religious styles of either Christian or Muslim.

The most recent interactions between *Planina* and source communities occurred in July of 2018 when the group traveled to the Muslim village of Draginovo to work with the local ensemble. *Planina* has direct connections with this ensemble through a local family who lives part-time in Colorado. Members of *Planina* were given a detailed explanation of an ethnographic display by a close friend of the ensemble who aided in establishing the exhibit in the *chitalishte*. The exhibit includes various traditional clothes and household items arranged as if in preparation for a wedding dowry (see fig. 8 and 9). During our time in Draginovo, we had the opportunity to view the dowry of a traditional village marriage

ceremony and attend the second day of the nearly week-long wedding celebrations (see fig. 10 and 11).²

In her research on Bulgarian wedding music, Carol Silverman has found that although it was popular during the socialist period it was condemned by the state and fans of this genre viewed it as a countercultural manifestation. Although this popularity has declined in the post-socialist period, wedding music has attained recognition in the West. At the peak of its fame in Bulgaria from the 1970s to the 1980s those leading innovation in this genre according to Silverman were Roma musicians. This gave rise to controversy as Roma were viewed as “other” by Bulgarians (Silverman 2007: 69-70). I have heard multiple members of *Planina* speak with conscious sensitivity considering the position of Roma people in society. Engaging with Bulgarian and Roma music has provided opportunities to discuss and educate on the state of these issues.

During longer more formal concerts, the performance typically includes a small “fashion show” in which the cultural advisor would call members forward and explains where their outfits originate (members of the ensemble each wear different outfits representing different regions and styles). Typically, women wear dresses or skirts and men wear trousers with a blouse. During a holiday concert held in a library in December of 2018, Valerie happened to be wearing *shalvari* Muslim pants which are intended for women. The pants can be so baggy that it appears to be a skirt, so she had to pull up on the material to show the audience that she was wearing pants (see fig. 12). Valerie expressed that there were times that she felt it was not appropriate for the ensemble to be wearing traditional folk attire depending upon the context of the specific performance. In one example, *Planina* opted out of wearing folk attire for the funeral of a former ensemble member. This was emphasized by Valerie as a suitable choice considering the goal of the performance was to honor the memory of a deceased loved one and the folk outfits, in this case, would have detracted from this purpose.

² Many folksongs address the sadness that young women once felt when they were married and had to leave their home to join the family of their new husband. Some tales involve a new bride moving to a distant village and being cut off from her friends and family. Although these traditions are less common, many women still live in a flat above the home of their husband’s parents. I know of multiple families in Dorkovo and Draginovo living in such arrangements. Some have experienced some degree of hardship due to the early conditions of the home immediately following the marriage.

Performance attire has raised other questions regarding authenticity from differing perspectives. At one time a Bulgarian member of the group did not feel comfortable wearing what the ensemble termed “traditional clothing” to concerts. She expressed that she should not have to wear a “costume” to be Bulgarian because she already is Bulgarian. This member also exclaimed quite disapprovingly that these clothes made her feel like she was dressing like her grandmother. In this instance, members of the ensemble attempted to smooth things over by explaining the educational goals and intentions of the group by wearing such clothes. This member persisted and was permitted to attend concerts in plain black clothing with a slightly “folksy” element added such as a colorful scarf or an embroidered blouse.

This performer’s standpoint seems to be in line with Shukla’s (2015) concept of traditional costume which is intended to depict an alternative place or time with the potential of being viewed as the clothing of someone besides the wearer. From the perspective of *Planina* performers who are not Bulgarian, this certainly harkens to be true, however, when applied to this individual it appears to have been in conflict with the personal expression she sought. Perhaps for American performers who do not themselves have Bulgarian ancestry there is a feeling of needing to “become” something more visually aligned with the music being presented, as Shukla would say to signal a different self through the costume’s portrayal. For this individual, it may have felt unnecessary in this regard, and furthermore could have made her feel that she was no longer presenting herself in a genuine manner. In this instance there appear to be elements of authenticity and essentialism at work. The non-Bulgarian performers seem to exhibit the desire to interpret and present something culturally authentic while simultaneously needing to navigate the diverse identities and experiences of Bulgarian-American performers within the group.

My personal experience demonstrates an interesting contrast to this individual’s perspective. There is Bohemian ancestry in my family with my great grandparents immigrating from Europe making me second generation. My grandmother on my father’s side spoke what she has only referred to as a Bohemian language and grew up in an immigrant community outside of East Saint Louis Illinois known as Little Bohemia. With this knowledge in mind, I sought out Bohemian concert attire to wear while performing with *Planina* (see fig. 13). It is interesting to observe that the distance created by the generational gap between myself and my family’s cultural heritage appears to have ignited a passion for this type of personal representation, whereas the ensemble member coming from Bulgaria may have already felt adequately connected with her cultural identity and thus found the idea

of “dressing up” as Bulgarian to be a bit absurd. While each example is consequential of their own accords, the processes leading up to these distinctions in heritage representation.

This representation becomes even more complex when brought directly to source communities in rural Bulgaria. During the 2018 field expedition, the group traveled to the village of Dorkovo where an international folk music festival would take place. Dorkovo is a mixed village with followers of both Christian and Muslim traditions living side by side. Although the festival is international drawing people from distant countries, we represented an anomaly as the majority of the members of our ensemble are Americans who perform music from Eastern Europe, rather than music from our own traditions. This created an interesting dynamic and although the group received only positive feedback about our performances which consisted almost entirely of Bulgarian music performed while wearing traditional folk attire, some of the members expressed some anxiety about our presentation. During one of our rehearsals, I initiated a conversation about concepts of appropriation in relation to our performances. Many of the members expressed concerns and anxieties surrounding this but ultimately concluded that our efforts to learn and recreate these traditional folk music performances appear to be largely admired and appreciated by locals (see fig. 14).

On the subject of appropriation Valerie (Interview, 2018) did not express concern despite the fact that the majority of members have no Eastern European heritage. She elaborated that from her perspective one cannot separate the music from the costumes and that *Planina* works extremely hard to create an authentic presentation. She did, however, express concern for religious appropriation rather than cultural appropriation as many of the outfits are specifically Muslim. This may be due to the fact that Olson Osterman has conducted extensive research among Muslim communities of Bulgaria. In an interesting contrast to Valerie’s concerns of religious appropriation, Keith (Interview, 2018) highlighted the fact that *Planina* presents Muslim elements in a positive light at a time when there is a great deal of Islamophobia within the United States. To perform in traditional Muslim clothes and teach about Eastern European Muslim culture is of great value in such politically tumultuous times.

It is certainly something I have contemplated as a Jewish person wearing and performing in traditional Muslim attire. I found that my experience resonated more with Keith’s perceptions of presenting Muslim identities in a positive light, with the added element of bridging two traditions which are often at odds. To sing the Ashkenazic songs I grew up with while presenting in Muslim clothes felt extremely poignant; as if it were a proclamation

of solidarity. Of course, these dynamics are extremely delicate and should be addressed with great care. There are those who may be offended by the group's presentation in Muslim clothing, however, as of yet, no such concerns have been voiced to the ensemble. On numerous occasions, I have witnessed lengthy debates during *Planina* rehearsals pertaining to the ensemble's authenticity with concerns voiced regarding potentially offensive song lyrics, and even the discontinuance of one song due to a community member's concerns of nationalistic implications.

In the study of folk ensemble performance, it is pertinent to consider the potential not only for cultural appropriation but for the commodification of culture. Concerns in this regard must take into consideration if marginalized or colonized cultures are involved as imbalanced power dynamics are inherent in such situations. Simply put these concepts are defined by unfair or unauthorized taking, ultimately cultural theft. Countering such concerns may not be an issue for the *Calpulli* as this group is predominantly Indigenous, however, some challenges arise in the case of *Planina*. In both instances, it is essential to remain conscious of the importance of being invited or encouraged to engage by the community and avoiding implanting oneself as a "white" or "Western" savior. As will be presented and discussed in this study, concerns regarding appropriation have been raised by members of the ensemble. As *Planina* is a non-profit with an ardent dedication to authenticity while maintaining continuous contact and communication with source communities this disrupts much of the potentially exploitive and destructive elements of such cultural exchanges.

2.5 Public Image and Personal Identity

As the image of *Planina* is guided by a mission statement to perform and educate about Eastern European and Balkan music the on-stage presence and image is carefully crafted and maintained. Music or traditional attire representing cultures beyond these regions is not permitted in the exception of certain instances when the group may be requested to share American folk music when traveling abroad or working with diverse groups. Although the formal boundaries of Eastern European culture may sometimes come into question this is typically resolved by a "majority vote" approach. These "behind the scenes" moments in which musical sharing goes beyond the cultural parameters set by the mission statement of the ensemble tend to be rather few and far between as the majority of group gatherings are geared towards concert preparations.

During the 2018 festival in Dorkovo *Planina* performed two short sets of 10 to 15 minutes. Both performances were very well received. When not viewing other performers,

the group was visited by various Bulgarian ensembles who taught us songs and sang along with those songs that we already knew. On the final night of our stay in Dorkovo, we were invited to visit with the former mayor of the town and his wife, who are old friends of *Planina* and had hosted the group in Dorkovo during an earlier trip in 2006. This gathering was different than any of the previous gatherings throughout the trip in that members of the group began sharing songs outside of our typical repertoire. In this kind of behind the scenes private gathering, there were songs of personal significance or interest being sung.

As I sat listening to songs from differing cultures and musical traditions, I felt compelled to share the Hebrew prayer song *L'dor va-dor* (From Generation to Generation) which held great meaning to me as it is connected to my cultural and spiritual heritage. Very few Jews remain in Bulgaria, and even less so in the smaller towns and villages. Even so, our host immediately recognized the language as Jewish. This was a unique and rare moment for me in the 6 years that I have participated in this group, in which people shared music from their personal backgrounds' outside of the Balkan music we customarily focus on.

This experience was profoundly significant for me. Reflecting upon the way I relate to the group illuminates elements of dual belonging; I am a member of *Planina* which I feel connected to through my Eastern European heritage, yet my identity is inherently linked with Jewish culture. Although I grew up in an inter-religious family, I was raised in the Jewish tradition. There have been times when performing for *Planina* in a Muslim Bulgarian folk costume it felt misrepresentative of my background, despite that being the very reason for my joining the group. I eventually discovered that a Bohemian costume was available and requested to wear, thinking specifically of my Grandmother who told stories of our family's origins in this region. However, I knew that the folk attire would either be Christian or Muslim, neither of which is representative of the religious heritage in which I was raised. Despite this sense of misplaced identity, it retained a sense of connection due to the fact that my Grandmother's family is Catholic. These dynamics can be related to what Kang-San Tan (2015) discussed as concepts of dual-, inter-, or multi-religious belonging.

There are undeniably personal elements to the way that the ensemble members relate to the music. When asked what role if any this music plays in her personal life outside of the ensemble Valerie (Interview, 2018) described a memory of singing a Hungarian song referred to as "Cradle Song" with one other member at the bedside of a former singer as she was taken off life support. The ensemble later sang at her funeral. I joined the group shortly after her passing, so I did not have the opportunity to personally meet this singer. Family and community ties are so prominent in this group that when I performed in my first concert with

the group, this singer's family was present to honor her memory and I ended up sharing music with this singer's daughter. Despite never having met this person, I have felt her presence through stories retold of her kindness and generosity. The emotional bonds formed through years of creating music together, synchronizing our breath and voices, watching for cues from each other as we perform; it is all deeply and powerfully intimate.

To call her kids into the house for a meal Valerie would sing the Croatian song "*Oja Buko*" which she had learned through *Planina*. Now she sings many of these songs as lullabies to her newly born grandchild. In regards to the question of feeling connected to any larger social movements Valerie said she feels that singing and teaching in this way feels linked to world peace and social justice movements. Much like Valerie, Keith (Interview, 2018) felt connected to larger global movements through his work as a musician. Something that he found particularly desirable in his work with ensembles and that he would like to expand upon was an outreach for inter-cultural dialogue to bridge gaps and differences. To Keith working with this music emphasizes the value of the diversity of world cultures.

Through my participation with *Planina*, there have been various opportunities for social engagement. In the Spring of 2014 when Southeastern Europe experienced flooding and landslides due to a cyclone, *Planina* organized a Balkan Flood Relief benefit concert which had close to one hundred attendees and raised around \$2,400 (see fig. 15). In another example members of the ensemble were invited by a social action group titled No Enemies to engage with community organizing based on music. This group was founded by members of a local band called the Flobots which has been very active in social justice movements even touring nationally with Rage Against the Machine and encouraging social engagement of youth. I attended several gatherings along with one other *Planina* member and we acted as song leaders by sharing Bulgarian and Roma music with youth and local activists. Other members of *Planina* participated in concerts organized by No Enemies. Actions with this group involved singing while walking through the Denver Art Museum during a special event, singing from the audience to engage public participation at concerts, in addition to sharing and learning songs with local community members.

Education is a central element of *Planina* performances. Each song is introduced by a different member of the group explaining the piece's origins and meaning to give the audience a cultural and historical context. If time and space allow for it, concerts may be followed by a reception where the performers mingle with the audience answering questions regarding the music, performance attire, and the ensemble. During one such reception following the 2018 concert in the library an audience member approached me with some

interesting questions. The director had introduced me to the audience as a visiting member from Estonia. This audience member took that to mean that I was in fact Estonian. He began by asking where the group members are from, which can be difficult to explain in a clear and concise way with such a large and diverse group. I told him that while most of us were from the United States, some of the members are from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Belarus, Macedonia, France, and Lithuania. I also explained that I was actually from Colorado but attending university in Estonia. This was clearly a bit confusing and overwhelming as he responded simply by complimenting my English skills before moving back towards the food table. While the group may be doing a decent job of educating audiences about the diverse cultures found in Eastern Europe, we still appear to struggle in the presentation of our personal backgrounds and relationship to the music.

CHAPTER 3: *Calpulli Calmecaztlán and Tzotzollin*

3.1 Contextualization

Eleven years ago, in 2008 I was introduced to a Native American community by my partner who is of Ute and Tewa³ descent. The connection was made through his search to reestablish meaningful connections with his heritage. We both became active members of an Indigenous *Calpulli* (large house or community). During the Aztec empire (1428–1521 CE) *Calpulli* referred to a neighborhood or political ward within a city in which members lived and worked in shared ownership and responsibility (Maestri 2019). Contemporary Indigenous and Mēxihcah communities use the term to refer to ceremonial circles and *Danza Azteca grupos* (Aztec Dance groups). As we began attending community gatherings and ceremonies, one thing that became immediately apparent to me was the importance of music within these traditions. The *Calpulli* we initially participated in was uniquely diverse with traditions of the Diné (Navajo), Apache, Ute, Lakota and Mēxihcah, and with the inclusion of those with non-Indigenous heritage. As a person of European heritage, I often felt like an outsider or a guest at these gatherings and aspired to act accordingly by not taking up too much space.

In the past few years, we have become more involved with the *Calmecaztlán* (Noble School) *Calpulli* which is under the leadership of David Atekpatzin Young (see fig. 16). The geographic orientation of the area of Colorado where the *Calpulli* is based has been described by Atekpatzin as being at a nexus point of many influences which impacts the expression of Indigeneity. While they maintain historical ties to Mexico City, they have been concurrently affected by Apache or Diné speaking people of the North. There has been continuous migration of Indigenous peoples in the area of Colorado over the last 500 years due to the influences of colonization. As a result, Atekpatzin affirms that Colorado has had active movements and migrations over a long period of time in order to accommodate these changes. With such detailed attention to the impact of historical movements on the contemporary community, it is clear that Atekpatzin employs a technique similar to critical emancipatory historiography (see fig. 17).

Members of *Calmecaztlán* have formed an ensemble known as *Tzotzollin*. This ensemble, which has been active for 25 years, grew out of the Two-Spirit community. The

³ The Ute are Indigenous people referred to under the grouping of Great Basin Indigenous people. For centuries their traditional lands have been the areas which are now known as Utah and Colorado with hunting lands extending into New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Tewa refers to Pueblo Native Americans of New Mexico; my partner has traced his family lines to the Pueblo communities of Santa Clara and Poaque.

ensemble is dedicated to learning, preserving and documenting ceremonial music with origins in three traditions; *Chanupa* way which is Lakota, the Native American Church (NAC) based on Comanche traditions, and *Danza Azteca* of the *Chichimeca* region in what is now Mexico. The performers tend to rotate between different musicians, but the group currently consists of four members. Although the ensemble is small there is considerable diversity within the group in regards to age, gender and sexuality (see fig. 18). This spectrum of representation certainly impacts the way the group is received by audiences.

Many of the performers are active in the academic community as writers and in the public sphere as well as consultants. Atekpatzin recently published a report on 19 April 2019 assessing oral and historical findings of the Apache presence in Boulder Colorado. In the title of the publication, he lists his affiliation with *Calmecaztlán* alongside his academic credentials. Another member of the group recently performed with the female Mexican trio *Las Dahlias*, at the 2019 inauguration dinner for the new governor of the state. The singer who is members of both *Tzotzollin* and *Las Dahlias* explained that she had once participated in a Romanian folk ensemble, but that she made the choice to leave because the music was not resonating with her culturally. She instead chose to focus her energy on the two ensembles that connect directly with her heritage by singing in Indigenous languages and Spanish.

Like the other ensembles in this study, the members of *Tzotzollin* are actively engaged with education. Atekpatzin is a core member of the ensemble and works with the other members of the group to build a multilingual repertoire of Indigenous music. Songs are sung in Nahuatl, Lakota, Cherokee, Apache, Spanish, and English. Some songs contain multilinguistic elements alternating between languages on different lyrics lines or between words interspersed throughout the piece. For example, *El Faisan (Sonora y Los Chichimekas)* or the Pheasant/Feather (Sound and the Indigenous Peoples) which opens with two verses in Spanish followed by two more in Nahuatl then ends in Spanish. This song is a contemporary migratory narrative of Aztec dancers who are described as beautiful feathers which sing and dance all the way town to *Tenochtitlan* now known as Mexico City (see fig. 19).

The two primary groups interacting in the regions now known as Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona prior to colonization were the Nahuatl speakers and the Apaches⁴. This was followed by around 400 years of colonization and enslavement by Spanish speaking

⁴ The Apache language has been conventionally known by anthropologists as under the designation of Athabaskan language groups while Nahuatl language is affiliated with Uto-Aztecan language groups.

Christians which heavily impacted various Indigenous groups of the region. Those who were either released or escaped formed *Genizaro* communities which were fully Indigenous yet comprised of people from differing tribes. Power and control shifted from Mexican to American hands creating a contemporary situation in which people have lost the sense of who they are and their conception of identity. They know that they are Indigenous people but in the context of so many changes, they have not always known how this Indigeneity can be expressed.

In a 2019 interview, Atekipatzin explained that “there was a need to express this Indigeneity in some way and that was expressed through music. Some music was held over the centuries but also some new music as a new way of expressing. So what people are doing is going back to old forms” (Interview with Atekipatzin 2019). Based on the description of these revival movements and what I have observed of *Calmeacatlán* I would again posit that in their efforts to reconstruct traditional practices they are engaging with critical emancipatory historiography. The conscious manner in which this knowledge is disseminated in the community through performance additionally allows for care and repair.

3.2 Sense of Belonging and Cultural Boundaries

Before joining *Calmeacatlán* we attended a Teepee Meeting with a neighboring *Calpulli*. This ritualistic calendrical ceremony is strictly structured with carefully executed formulas of temporally specific actions. The ceremony carries on for many hours into the night as people take turns singing prayer songs around a ritual fire inside the Teepee. A staff and gourd rattle were passed around the circle with a drum and whoever held these items would sing songs for the entire group as they prayed. As the staff and gourd approached me a friend suddenly leaned towards me and asked if I was going to sing. All the previous songs I had heard that night had been in Indigenous languages or Spanish, languages important to this community. Somewhat staggered by this unexpected suggestion I explained that I did not know any prayer songs. Knowing that I am Jewish he responded without hesitation, “sing a Hebrew prayer.” With this encouragement, I sang *L'dor va-dor*, the same song that would come to me later during *Planina's* field expedition in rural Bulgaria.

The experience of singing this Hebrew prayer song in this ceremony was immensely impactful on me. Simply put, I had never felt such power as I had that moment when I held the staff and gourd singing before the fire for the first time. The liminal space of the ceremony is remarkably potent but of equal importance to me in this encounter was the opportunity to sing something directly linked with my religious background. Although in

starkly contrasted environments, this song held the same power for me. That night in the Teepee my song was well received by those present which inspired me to seek out additional music suitable for future ceremonies. I later inquired with this *Calpulli* about using the Yiddish song *Tumbalalaika*, which they interpreted as to be when requesting for assistance in making an important decision or when asking for direction.

I am familiar with a few Yiddish songs I grew up hearing as lullabies in my childhood, but I needed more musical material that was relevant for the context of the ceremony. This is the point when my involvement with the *Calpulli* became inexplicably interconnected with the songs of *Planina*. I had initially sought to join a European folk ensemble in 2012 following a journey tracing my heritage through Eastern Europe. With grandparents and ancestors from Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Croatia, and Bohemia I was eager to learn more about the traditional culture and music. From one environment to the next the function and application of these songs changed impacting their format and delivery. Music like traditions evolves over time to meet the needs of those who bear them.

Besides singing Hebrew songs, I felt the desire to sing songs coming from Eastern Europe as this connected with regions of my cultural heritage, thus I began revisiting *Planina* material with fresh eyes. Within the framework of the Teepee Meeting, it was important that the songs be appropriate; there are times to sing songs requesting permission, healing, seeking direction, and for closing the ceremony. Knowing tobacco is sacred in many Native American traditions and that it plays a central role in the ceremony I began singing part of a Bulgarian song I had learned through *Planina* which has a line that speaks of readying the soil and planting Tobacco. In many Native American traditions, it is believed that the Tobacco carries prayers to the Creator and Spirits. I felt that singing this song which is about love and planting Tobacco seeds was a way of entreating our prayers to grow (see fig. 20).

During the ceremony that takes place near the Winter Solstice and Christmas season, I sang *Av Jerusalem* a carol sung in Ukraine and Southern Russia. As the *Calpulli* represents an amalgam of traditions many people grew up attending Church and some maintain Christian beliefs alongside Indigenous traditions. Somehow being a Jewish person singing Slavic carols did not seem in conflict with the spirit of this *Calpulli*. Some joked that Ashkenazi was just another tribe that happened to have origins on a different continent. There were times that I felt my efforts to present my own heritage rather than taking on Indigenous songs was appreciated, but at other times it felt a bit out of place.

A significant piece in the acceptance of my presence in this space and the invitation to sing was the nature of this particular *Calpulli*. During an interview with Atekipatzin in July of 2019, I inquired about his thoughts regarding my engagement with the Teepee Meetings in this manner. Offering what he called a “traditional response” he began by stating that if I had been in an established Indigenous community that “one, they would never invite you to do that and two, you should not do that...just sit back and pass the gourd, pass the drum and don’t sing any songs.” Members of these communities would be offended if I were to sing and as Atekipatzin explained: “they already have established norms and prejudices which they will not hesitate to express” (Interview with Atekipatzin 2019).

By contrast, the *Calpulli* in which I had attended Teepee Meetings is not a fully Indigenous community meaning there is more flexibility and leeway rather than rigidity. Speaking without judgment Atekipatzin referred to this approach as influenced by what he called “hippie,” “white,” and “American” notions which allow for a space in which all communities can be appreciated, included and respected. Atekipatzin emphasized that although this is not a bad thing it is an element which has “intruded into an Indigenous community.” As a newer *Calpulli*, he explained that this group is not about exclusion or isolation meaning that there is room for diverse expression. Expanding further upon this he explained that while singing in this way may be welcome “it doesn’t mean that it’s Indigenous, but what it does mean is that there is respect for diversity in there, and that is a key element of that community.”

In accessing the sometimes-obscure delineations of cultural boundaries and the potential for appropriation, deference must be made to the community itself to determine limitations and opportunities for expression. These dynamics may shift and evolve over time, but they should be defined and guided by members within the community. As a newer member of this *Calpulli* and as a non-Indigenous person it felt appropriate to sit quietly unless invited to sing. After receiving the invitation to share a song by an Indigenous member of the community and seeing a positive response I felt it acceptable to explore further expressions.

This was a process counseled between various members of the community and myself through continuous communication. There were times when I needed correction in order to be in traditional space in an appropriate and respectful way based on Indigenous teachings. Internal negotiations also occurred in which I worked to balance my comfort and sense of self within the framework of this *Calpulli*. Interestingly my non-Indigenous status presented less of an issue in this space than my gender expression and affiliations with the LGBTQI2-S

community. As a non-Indigenous person, I eventually felt it more appropriate to step back rather than to push against spiritual leaders and elders of the community. It was around this time that my partner and I began getting more involved with *Calmecaztlán* which allows for the open representation of LGBTQI2-S people.

3.3 Expressions of Gender and Sexuality

The core of *Tzotzollin* has always been the Two-Spirit members as the ensemble was formed through Two-Spirit gatherings that influenced the forming of the Two-Spirit Society which Atekpätzin helped to establish (see fig. 21). Atekpätzin emphasized that “to truly express yourself in an Indigenous way as a Two-Spirit person then you work on behalf of the community... You’re not isolated into a smaller community and that’s what the gay community does, it isolates itself” (Interview 2019). Although the Two-Spirit community would gather together for ceremonies, they would return to engage with the larger Indigenous community. Assimilation, urbanization, and in some cases rejection by traditional communities which have internalized Christianized concepts of gender and sexuality through colonization has driven some Two-Spirit people away from Indigenous communities and into larger cities. Faced with such challenges many individuals may turn to drugs and alcohol to cope, both of which occur at higher rates among Indigenous and LGBTQI2-S communities. Atekpätzin along with the members of *Tzotzollin* felt the need to disengage with such behaviors in order to remain engaged with the overall community in a healthy manner.

Speaking on the subject of Indigeneity, gender, and sexuality Atekpätzin underscored the flexibility of these identities stating “It’s not all that I am.” This point was articulated through what he called the process of “nouncing things.” Atekpätzin illustrated this through the example of a flower; “a flower is alive. Naming ignores what it has been and what it will become. Nouncing takes away the life of who we are. I’m so much more than gay. I’m so much more than Two-Spirit. I’m so much more than Apache” (Interview 2019). The overarching point is that these elements of his personality and identity are incapable of independently conveying the complexity and richness of his lived experience.

Atekpätzin has spoken about his upbringing in a small Native American community which revealed similarities in certain rural environments cross-culturally. He explained that although there was space for people with LGBTQI2-S affiliations there was no context for their existence. This would appear to relate to what was described by Bulgarian researchers during our discussions relating to village life in Eastern Europe. Although there may not be a

context for LGBTQI2-S identities or experiences, it has been possible in some cases for people to find a place within a traditional context.

Perhaps it could be said that Western culture has established a certain context by framing the LGBTQI2-S experiences as identities. Other cultures may approach these concepts differently, as behaviors for example rather than identities. Certain cultural statuses may provide the necessary framework. The concept of Two-Spirit people appeared to be present in many Native American tribes prior to colonization and assimilation. The conditions created in these processes have led to a state of detachment from these traditions, thus removing the cultural context which was once present. Engaging however with the space through tracing the historical roots of these traditions may be one route to re-establish this cultural context. This reparative work through reconstruction may also be related to the critical emancipatory historiography theory referred to by Schüssler Fiorenza.

In the *Calpulli* one must carry their spiritual medicine (meaning the tools and energy needed for spiritual healing) with pride and respect, in part, this means to know oneself in the context of the spiritual community. Atekwatzin has found ways to do this without compromising any aspect of his genuine self. The Indigenous concept of carrying one's medicine with pride and respect naturally corresponds with the practice of care and repair as this speaks to the importance of personal and community well-being. Conversely speaking, one cannot carry their medicine in a good way, as is said in Indigenous communities, under pressure to deny any aspect of themselves, such as when LGBTQI2-S people are pressured to change or remain silent.

Conflicts relating to LGBTQI2-S subjects often play out in the enforcement of gender-based dress-codes during community gatherings. The stipulations of dress-codes are often guided by the *Calpulli*'s beliefs surrounding gender and sexuality and will vary according to the type of event with distinctions made between ceremonies and performances. There have been instances in *Danza Azteca grupos* for example, in which dancers have chosen to incorporate subtly mixed-gender signifiers into their *trajes* or dance suits and *copilís* or headdresses. One *grupo* that I know of in Colorado has a Two-Spirit woman who acts as a *Sarjenta* or Leader, a role typically held by men. This individual wears a *traje* with what is known as a *matla* consisting of a long section of fabric hanging in the front between the legs usually worn by men. There are times during ceremony when roles and duties of individuals may also be divided by gender. Depending on the *Calpulli*, they may or may not acknowledge and include LGBTQI2-S people. During one ceremony I was chastised for wearing pants under my shirt and told that women should only wear long shirts which extend

to the ankles. In a different *Calpulli* dress-code was guided more by the individual's gender identity and the specific circumstances of the ceremony.

When I attended my first ceremony with *Calmecaztlán Calpulli* I felt comfortable disclosing my gender identity with Atecpatzin. This was after spending years hiding my identity while participating in a *Calpulli* that was not open to LGBTQI2-S people. Atecpatzin explained that he does not typically tell people what to wear during ceremonies based on perceived gender but rather that this is up to the individual to decide. However, on the day of the ceremony the majority of the people who arrived to participate happened to be men. In this case, Atecpatzin requested that I wear a skirt to bring a sense of balance to the space. The fact that this occurred as a discussion and a request with a clear explanation which tied into the traditions made me feel visible and whole as my genuine self for the first time in Indigenous ceremonial space. On that day I entered the lodge wearing a skirt as I had countless times before, but this marked the first time I had done so as an openly LGBTQI2-S person. For me this was an immensely curative and empowering experience.

3.4 Critical Emancipatory Historiography through Music

The performances of Indigenous musicians often utilize a biographical and meaning-centered approach drawing upon historical narratives. For example, the songs performed by *Tzotzollin* have unique stories to tell and each comes with a teaching. These songs carry various meanings and are commonly used during ceremonies as well. Even the name of the ensemble comes with a story; *Tzotzollin* is the Nahuatl name for a songbird or quail but also carries the meaning 'flowing movement,' with *Tzo* meaning 'flowing' and *Olin* meaning movement. Thus, with this combination of words, *Tzotzollin* may be understood as 'music that is complete' while also referencing the music of that particular songbird.

One commonly discussed motif during performances of the ensemble is that of "Our Lady of Guadalupe" and how her roots may be traced to the Aztec Goddess *Tonantzin*. This represents a core narrative which is regionally located and may also be linked with the beliefs and lore of a saint as Our Lady of Guadalupe is not only the Matron Saint of Mexico but has come to be a symbol of Mexican identity. When Atecpatzin's mother Dora Esquibel passed away in 2012, the community gathered to honor her with ceremonies and an altar which had the image of *Tonantzin* in a style similar to that typically used for Our Lady of Guadalupe (see fig. 22). During performances, stories are often shared between songs as part of a larger narrative explaining the origins of the traditions and how they evolved over time and even traveled with the people. Over the course of 8 years, I have been getting to know various

members of the ensemble and have observed their work both in ceremony and during performances in the community.

During the 2018 performance at Anythink Library in Thornton Colorado (see fig. 23) the performance opened with a ritualistic calling and honoring of the four directions. The song and rhythm used for this opening ritual are based on that which is used in *Danza Azteca*, the Indigenous Aztec prayer dances of Mexico. This prayer song is a way of asking permission of the Creator, Ancestors, and Spirits to proceed with the ceremony and performance. I have observed many *Danza Azteca* ceremonies over the course of about seven years and the way that *Tzotzollin* opened their performance follows the traditional *forma* (protocol or formation), but with a slightly different interpretation. As this opening piece came to an end the only audible sound was the breath of air, somewhat emulating the sound of wind, which was produced as Atekpatzin blew through an *Ateka Koli*, a conch shell used as a sort of trumpet (see fig. 24). The inclusion of all of these elements stems from the group's dedication to knowing and educating regarding the complex history of colonization and its impacts on Indigenous communities. This approach is akin to that of critical emancipatory historiography.

The songs did not appear to completely end, but rather blend as they transitioned from one piece to the next. As the group was transitioning from the first song into the next, one audience member applauded while the rest sat and quietly observed. This appeared to convey that the structure of this performance was not that of a typical concert. One member of the community explained to me that Indigenous performance does not necessarily involve applause. Although the individual who applauded was indeed an outsider of this community, this did not appear to be viewed in a negative way. However, there was a sense that this was a different space culturally than that of what could be thought of as a Western concert space.

The group was positioned in an open space near the entrance to the library just in front of the Information Desk and close to the computer space. It was certainly a high traffic area, which meant that the group got a considerable amount of attention from library patrons as they entered the building. The audience and those passing by were attentive and respectful. This was presented as not only performance but as a ceremony which created a sacred space. This could be thought of in terms of a ritual which Victor Turner (1987) termed as the "performance of a complex sequence of symbolic acts" which could be either secular or sacred in nature. The space was set with two large woven blankets that traditional Indigenous instruments made of natural materials were set upon (see fig. 25). To bring this kind of representation into a public library space makes a powerful statement for the community.

The performers wore plain white cotton clothes with *fajas* or red belts. The white represents purity and the red represents the blood of the ancestors. The *faja* is a symbolic link meant to keep the living connected with their ancestors. Their *huaraches* or shoes were made of leather. Tied just above their *huaraches* were *yotes* which are anklets that create percussive sounds with rows of seed pods (see fig. 26). Many youths were present in the library either visiting to use the computers near the performance space or attending a local STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) program housed in the building. The presence of the youngest member of the *Tzotzollin* certainly piqued the interest of youth in the library during the performance.

The sense of *Calpulli* or family was certainly present at this performance. One of the performers brought an elderly family member who sat with his walker just behind the group. Many close friends and members of the *Calpulli* ceremonial group attended the event as well. Besides these established connections, the performance was presented in such a casual and intimate format that people who were clearly new to this group felt welcome and were engaged directly by the performers in between songs. This is similar to the feelings present during *Planina* performances with long-time fans, family and close friends in attendance. With the *Calpulli* the spiritual element is more pronounced however both utilize a culture centered pedagogy.

Colorado has a high demographic of Spanish speaking people and Atekpatzin made a point to speak in both Spanish and English. At one point a small group of Spanish speaking children came up beside me and called out to the performers “¡Hola!” (hello), to which *Tzotzollin* performers responded with a big smile. Several times the performers spoke directly to specific audience members in both Spanish and English. During the performance, a toddler stumbled up and communicated through sign language that she wanted “more!” which her mother relayed to the performers. The baby then waved to the elder sitting across from the performers who waved back throughout several of the songs. These kinds of interactions felt not only appropriate to the group and the space set by the performance but encouraged. There was a strong sense of cross-cultural and intergenerational communication taking place during the event.

One piece of particular interest was a song done in the tune of the Christian hymn and spiritual “Amazing Grace” sung with Lakota lyrics. The singer explained that the Lakota lyrics contain a simple humble message asking the Creator for help and support. The choice to sing in a Native American language to the tune of one of the most popular Christian hymns in the United States is in itself quite striking. This musical choice becomes even more

intriguing if one is to consider the origins of the Christian hymn. “Amazing Grace” was originally penned by Englishman John Newton in 1779, a man who faced many struggles despite having a certain degree of privilege.

Newton was conscripted into the Royal Navy at a young age and suffered for many years. When his service ended, he used what skills he had gained in the navy to work in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. While working an extended sea voyage his ship was ravaged by a terrible storm which nearly took his life. Due to this experience, he vowed to dedicate the remainder of his life to the ways of God and he thus became ordained in the Church of England in 1764 (Aitken 2007). These origins aside, the song “Amazing Grace” became an emblematic African American spiritual. Considering this history in combination with the reality that many Native Americans have been Christianized in the process of colonization, the performance of a Lakota prayer to this tune makes an extremely powerful statement. This attention to historical detail is certainly relatable to the critical emancipatory approach.

Atekpätzin refers to this kind of blending as an amalgam of traditions which reflect the reality of Indigenous people healing from colonial movements. In my own personal experiences of singing, I can relate to this concept through the complex emotions felt when I sing Polish music knowing that although I have family who immigrated from the region of the world, they did not have good experiences due to anti-Semitism. Thus, my Jewish and Polish ancestry may appear to be somewhat at odds. This experience reflects the reality of living in a complex world with overlapping identities and histories which may at times contradict. Due to the often-brutal processes of colonization, many Indigenous people today have a mixed background which includes the heritage of their oppressors.

Tzotzollin appears to take a very conscious and intentional integrated approach which addresses the history of colonization on the music and traditions. When explaining the origins of the songs and traditions Atekpätzin often speaks of an amalgam of different elements combining and evolving over time. The Spanish and English languages of the colonists are sung alongside Indigenous languages rather than being excluded or rejected as other or somehow impure. These aspects of language and culture have impacted Indigenous traditions over the years and this group includes these elements in a very conscious way by speaking in detail about the overall historical evolution. This not only speaks to the experience of many Indigenous peoples; it additionally has the potential to appeal to and reach a broader audience. As their goals include both preservation and education, they are very intentional in their approach. One of the many ways Atekpätzin has engaged with this approach has been to work with the Colorado History Museum in their creation of a bilingual Chicano Movement

History Portal (see fig. 27). This breaks down barriers of exclusion which are often formed through attitudes of elitism and purity; they instead welcome people from various backgrounds to come to know these traditions in a respectful and inclusive manner.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the creative and innovative ways which musicians have been applying performance in connection with their heritage as a means to undermine and challenge the patriarchy. There has been an outline of the processes by which folk performers are tackling the daunting subjects of authenticity and appropriation in their efforts to preserve and share traditional music in connection with heritage identity. Emphasis has been on positive and empowering statements with attention to gender as it intersects with other identities such as Indigeneity and sexuality. These insights were gained through participant observations which were conducted with the Eastern European folk ensemble *Planina* and *Calpulli Calmecatlán* along with the ensemble *Tzotzollin*.

Through the autoethnography, interviews, and participant observations presented in this study, it can be ascertained that the scope of influence these ensembles has is holistic and far-reaching; stemming from the personal, expanding into the community, and spreading through international networks. After conducting fieldwork with ensembles and musicians in the United States and Eastern Europe it is clear that there is no shortage of leadership by women, sexual minorities and Two-Spirit people. While the ensembles examined in this study were not necessarily designed with the intention of challenging societal structures of oppression, by their very nature they defy systems of the patriarchy through education, community engagement, and transnational networking.

An interesting point to consider is that each group did not set out with these specific goals in mind, but it is rather corollary to other primary objectives. This appears to be the result of a very conscious engagement with heritage and music. This sense of the self is made known through the process of becoming. This is not represented by a final destination nor a fixed point or identity but rather through the continuous exploration of the self. Through the autoethnography presented here and perspectives gained through the inquiries of this thesis, it would appear that this occurs through a combination of internal dialogue and examination of cultural boundaries which are then related back to the sense of self. In terms of the ensembles, this must then be negotiated within the context of the group per their goals and intentions regarding their public image. Varied approaches to the reconstructive process have been presented considering the perspectives of individuals and ensembles in relation to larger community networks. The process of becoming as an individual approach may be combined with critical emancipatory historiography for more far-reaching impact.

The concept of amalgam can certainly be applied to explain the interest of the members of *Planina* who may not have Eastern European descent but do have European heritage. Here one may find a sort of heritage composite sought by white American descendants of European immigrants with a desire to connect with a similar cultural legacy. The sense that these singing traditions could be closely related to the cultures which my Russian grandfather from Vilnius or my grandmother from Croatia lived within certainly impacts my relationship to the content of the music. That is not to say that Europe is a monolith, but rather that the extra effort to understand linguistic and cultural nuances, as can be seen in the activities of the members of *Planina*, can aid in gaining contextualization of one's own heritage identity. That so many white Americans of European descent have a cultural lineage which is a composite puzzle needing to be reassembled leads to challenges in establishing a coherent sense of heritage identity. Uncertainty, however, is not the same as absence, and additional clarity may often be attained through exploring one's origins. The approaches presented in this study present a conscious engagement with one's heritage which could provide suitable guidelines for white Americans grappling with their sense of heritage and cultural identity.

Identity may become so complex in the context of history and society that one's genealogy may contain the heritage of a once oppressive culture and that of the oppressed, which has become represented within one body as a descendant of both legacies. Atekpätzin's explanation of the amalgam likewise reflects the many intricacies related within the kyriarchy, particularly considering the impacts of colonization, displacement due to war as was the case with my family or forced migration due to lack of economic opportunities. This may be true for Indigenous people with some mixed background due to the impacts of colonization or white Americans with a familial history of migration. Many of the musicians I have observed utilize an approach similar to critical emancipatory historiography in their heritage reconstructive work which is an effective and empowering response to such challenges. This is also an effective approach to decolonizing complicated and painful pasts.

This in combination with a conscious approach creates a space for care and repair to take place for performers and audience members alike. The potential for this is far-reaching as it may occur among musicians as they work through personal elements of identity and heritage and with audience members who are exposed to the educative and representative aspects of the performance. Performers and community members may find a sense of belonging through connections established through music. Even those who are not included in the heritage being presented may find inspiration to seek out their own traditions through

similar processes. Through participant observations with ensembles, I witnessed continuous debates regarding concerns of authenticity which may hold the group accountable to source communities but concurrently has the potential to limit access by favoring purity and idealism of essentialism.

While it is essential for folk ensembles engaging with cultural heritage to remain connected with source communities and retain an awareness for the appropriate cultural nuances, expectations relating to authenticity should not become so rigid as to impede access as this has potential to disrupt the sense of belonging and an individual's connection with their heritage identity. Extreme essentialist and purist attitudes towards traditions already in a position of under-representation may lead to further marginalization. When taken into account, artistic interpretation, cultural evolution, and modern expressions must allow for a degree of flexibility. *Tzotzollin* utilizes a culturally and historically conscious approach without limiting their repertoire based on purely Indigenous languages. This reflects the contemporary amalgam of the music and traditions of Indigenous peoples while making performances more palatable to the larger community.

When encountering an individual expressing interest in the performances and practices of either *Planina* or the *Calpulli* I always make a point to encourage the engagement with their own cultural legacies. This is particularly important for people of white backgrounds wishing to pursue Indigenous traditions in ways which could lead to appropriation. The experiences presented in this autoethnography and the interviews with Atekpätzin (2019) emphasize the importance of permission from source communities regarding participation as an outsider in the space of a *Calpulli*, the recognition of the limitations and continued negotiations of involvement. For example, although I may engage with the *Calpulli* as an openly non-binary queer person, that does not mean that as a white person I may now claim the identity of Two-Spirit.

Perceptions of cultural traditions by performers, ensemble directors, and audience members surrounding gender and sexuality certainly impact the way such expressions play out in rehearsals and during performances. In the case of *Planina*, expectations have been projected onto performers regarding their outward appearances for concert attire and attitudes or expressions during certain songs. Although my autoethnography revealed some leniency in this regard, others expressed some discomfort in the pressure to conform to such requirements. It would appear that kyriarchal dynamics impact beliefs regarding cultural traditions both within *Planina* and ensembles observed in Bulgaria. It seems that it is possible to establish a niche in which such expressions may venture beyond conceived boundaries and

in fact link back to cultural traditions. Examples of this would be my *boychik* presentation with *Planina* or the leadership of Two-Spirit people within the *Calpulli* and *Tzotzollin* found in sections 2.3 and 3.3 addressing expressions of gender and sexuality.

In the search for belonging, one discovers the edges of certain boundaries. Rather than viewing this as a limitation, I have found inspiration to delve deeper into my own cultural groundings. The delineations of these perimeters are not static but rather evolving with each new generation and situation. They must thus be continuously accessed and negotiated. The demarcations of traditions should not be determined exclusively or strictly by essentialist guidelines, although it is clear that some degree of control by source communities is necessary to ensure the continuation and preservation of traditions. While this is achieved with ease by the *Tzotzollin* as the members are all Indigenous, *Planina* has had to work to establish and maintain links with source and immigrant communities.

Through the reflections needed to compile autoethnographic material, I came to realize that my work both with *Planina* and the *Calpulli* has utilized an approach not much unlike that of critical emancipatory historiography. This is demonstrated through the tracing of my multireligious and predominantly Eastern European heritage and the negotiation of cultural boundaries after being invited to participate in an Indigenous community. Navigating the intricacies of a cultural legacy which necessitates the consideration of the often tumultuous religious and political trends of Europe as it would have impacted my ancestors coupled with the colonial history for my own nation of birth is indeed a daunting task. Knowing that my ancestors were oppressed for living in Poland and speaking Yiddish, I do not feel the desire to learn the Polish language. However, learning to sing a Polish song and connecting with those from this culture has brought me great joy and deepened my connections to the community. This additionally engages with care and repair. The instability of status relating to privilege and oppression presented in my own heritage reflects the complexities represented in the kyriarchy.

Further explorations on the impact of critical emancipatory historiography in combination with conscious efforts to create space for care and repair when working with heritage-based music has great potential. After completing this study, I would suggest an investigation into the implementation of ensembles founded based on the intentional exploration of cultural lineage and music programs to further delve into the possibilities of such endeavors in assisting individuals in the journey of understanding their unique heritages. Additional analysis of the process of construction for white cultural identity in the United States may aid in gaining an understanding of intercultural relationships and how to raise

awareness regarding trends of appropriation versus culturally appropriate representation. In dealing with these concepts it is essential to understand that they do not exist or occur in a binary or fixed manner but rather must be accessed based on the unique circumstances present in order to gain a contextualized awareness of the situation.

The amalgam as an approach to relate to heritage identity requires further inquiry and examination from the perspectives of differing and intersecting cultural backgrounds. Framing heritage identity as a process of becoming, coupled with the concept of the amalgam opens numerous possibilities which allow for space and flexibility to accommodate the complexity of the human experience. I intend to pursue further development of these themes through continued work with folk performers and music institutions.

The analysis presented through this thesis has provided insight into forms of empowerment through music associated with heritage. Much as I experienced at my first performance at the age of three, awareness of these intricacies is not essential in order for the performer to gain a positive outcome. Intentionally associating these practices with the construction of heritage identity in efforts to gain a deeper sense of self in relation to the local community and expanding to find links to historical global trends and movements has great implications. Considering the manner by which the performers relate to the music as seen in this study it can be said that these truly are songs of and for the people. These are songs which aid in orienting oneself as an individual in society and to understand connections with broader cultural networks and communities. These are indeed songs for the end of the kyriarchy.

Résumé

LAULUD KÜRIARHIA VASTU: TOETAMINE JA TERVENDAMINE FOLKLOORIANSAMBLITES KRIITILISE EMANTSIPATOORSE HISTORIOGRAAFIA ABIL

Teema

Magistritöös uurin folklooriansamblite liikmete tegevust, kes kasutavad muusikat oma kultuuripärandiga seotult selleks, et teha positiivseid ja võimestavaid avaldusi, rõhuasetusega soolisusel ja selle kokkupuudetel muude identiteetidega nagu põlisus ja seksuaalsus.

Eesmärgid

Uurimistöö annab ülevaate protsessidest, mille abil folklooriansamblid saavad hakkama selliste probleemsete teemadega nagu autentsus ja omastamine olukorras, kus ansamblite eesmärgiks on säilitada pärimusmuusikat ja jagada selle kohta teavet. Magistritöös vaadeldakse loovaid ja innovatiivseid viise, mida folklooriansamblite liikmed oma pärandiga seotud etteastetes kasutavad küriarhia õõnestamiseks ja vaidlustamiseks. Uurimuse eesmärk on esile tuua pärimusmuusika adaptiivsed ja uuenduslikud tõlgendused, mida inimesed loovad selleks, et säilitada oma hääli pidevalt muutuv ja üha enam globaliseeruvad ühiskonnas – hääli, mis on iga üksikisiku jaoks ainulaadne ja ehe, kuid mis samal ajal võib olla kaasatud riikidevahelistesse ja isegi ülemaailmsetesse liikumistesse. Töös analüüsitakse ja võrreldakse soolisuse ning seksuaalsuse traditsioonilisi ja tänapäevaseid avaldumisvorme, võttes arvesse nende kultuurilist ning ajaloolist konteksti.

Uurimisküsimused

- Missuguseid asjakohaseid meetodeid kasutavad Ameerika Ühendriikide põliselanikud ja valged inimesed suhestumisel oma pärandi ja kultuurilise identiteediga?
- Missugusel määral mõjutavad soolisust ja seksuaalsust ümbritsevad kultuuritraditsioonid folklooriansamblite väljendusvahendeid esitussituatsioonides?
- Milliseid rekonstrueerimisviise rakendatakse olukordades, kus traditsiooni edastamine on katkenud, ning kuidas on võimalik inimesel end selle protsessi abil võimestada?

Teooria ja metodoloogia

Magistritöö erinevaid osi ühendavaks lüliks on Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza esitatud küriarhia käsitlus ja tema poolt välja töötatud kriitiline emantsipatoorne historiograafia. Lisaks on olulised soolisuse kontseptsioonid ja avaldumisvormid, sh ka need, mis ulatuvad kaugemale binaarsete raamistike piiridest, mis omased lääne kultuuridele. Küriarhia mõiste hõlmab omavahel ühendatult ülemvõimu, rõhumise ja alistamise süsteeme. See lähenemisviis vastustab binaarset mõtlemist, tõstes esiplaanile ühiskonna keerulisuse, millele on omane ebavõrdsus. Küriarhia tingimustes võib inimene teatud olukordades kogeda privileege, kuid teistes seevastu rõhumist. Küriarhia kui struktuurse kontseptsiooni eesmärk on laiendada patriarhaadi mõiste tähendusvälja ning see hõlmab täiendavalt ühiskondlikku ja institutsionaliseeritud rassismi, transmisogüüniat, homofobiat, diskrimineerimist klassikuuluvuse või puude alusel, kolonialismi, etnosentrismi ja muid domineerivate hierarhiate vorme. Püüdes sügavamalt mõista selle maatriksi olemust, otsustasin kasutada lähenemist, mis uurib ja võrdleb folklooriansambleid kahe erineva juhtumianalüüsi põhjal.

Empiiriline aines

Uurimistöös toetun osalusvaatlusele, mis sai võimalikuks tänu minu enda seotusest kahe Ameerika Ühendriikide Colorado osariigis tegutseva ansambliga: nendeks olid folklooriansambel *Planina: Songs of Eastern Europe*, mis keskendub Ida-Euroopa rahvaste pärimusele, ning Ameerika põliselanike *Calpulli* ehk spirituaalne perekond ning sellega seotud ansambel *Tzotzollin*. Töös käsitletakse väiksemate lokaalselt orienteeritud ansamblite tegevust, et tuua esile nende seoseid suuremate sotsiaalsete liikumistega. Need muusikud ja ansamblid esindavad ühiselt kultuurilist pärandit, millel on teatav rahvusvaheline mõõde ning mis laiendab nende tegevust riigipiiridest kaugemale. Jälgin ja võrdlen võimalusi, kuidas Ameerika Ühendriikide põliselanikud oma kultuurilise identiteediga suhestuvad ja seda konstrueerivad, pidades samas meeles küsimust, kuidas valged inimesed ja need, kes on ära lõigatud esivanemate pärandist, suhtuvad kultuuripärandisse positiivselt, omastamata teiste rühmade identiteete. Need juhtumid on osa suuremast tervikust, esindades ülemaailmset uurimisparadigmat, mis toetab liikumist, mis on olemuselt riikideülene ning mis tegeleb tänapäeval traditsiooni säilitajate sotsiaalsete nähtustega.

Peamised tulemused

Uuritud ansamblite olemus on holistiline ja haare kaugeleulatuv; nende mõju lähtub üksikisikust, see laieneb kogukonnale ja levib rahvusvaheliste võrgustike kaudu. Pärast välitööde läbiviimist ansamblite ja muusikutega Ameerika Ühendriikides ja Ida-Euroopas on selge, et folklooriansambleid juhivad sageli naised, seksuaalvähemuste ja kolmanda soo (*two-spirited people*) esindajad. Kuigi selles uurimuses vaadeldud ansamblid ei olnud tingimata loodud rõhumise ühiskondlike struktuuride vaidlustamiseks, trotsivad nad oma olemuse ja tegevusega küriarhiat hariduse, kogukonna kaasamise ja riikidevahelise võrgustumise kaudu. Edasisel uurimistööl kriitilise emantsipatoorse historiograafia mõju kohta on suur potentsiaal, kui seda kombineerida pärandipõhise muusikaga töötamisel teadlike jõupingutustega toetada ja tervendada.

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Annex 1: List of Figures



Fig. 1. Powell, Savannah. “The stage in front of the village *Chitalishte* during the Dorkovo International Festival for Authentic Folklore. The ensemble performing is from the nearby village of Draginovo. Planina close relationship with this ensemble through a family which splits their time between Colorado and their natal home in Bulgaria.” 2018.



Fig. 2. Olson Osterman, Laura. “Plaque and proclamation from the mayor of Velingrad to *Planina* for their dedication to learning and preserving the traditions of Bulgarian singing.” 2018.



Fig. 3. Cordova, Jason. “*Planina* members singing and dancing with children at the REECA (Russian / Eastern European / Central Asian) Heritage Camp.” 2016.



Fig. 4. Powell, Savannah. “Workshop with Draginovo ensemble, recording of a village elder who shared songs she remembers as they were sung in the village in her youth.” 2018.



Fig. 5. Cordova, Jason. “An image from one of *Planina*’s concerts in which I wore my *boychik* outfit (third from the right).” 2015.



Fig. 6. Powell, Savannah. “A member of the Draginovo folk ensemble demonstrating the use of a traditional loom. I bought an apron from her to be used during my performances with *Planina*.” 2015.



Fig. 7. Cordova, Jason. “Leading song and dance games with *Planina* at the REECA Heritage Camp while wearing the apron I purchased from the weaver in Draginovo.” 2016.



Fig. 8. Powell, Savannah. “The ethnographic display in the Draginovo *chitalishte* arranged by close friends of *Planina*.” 2018.



Fig. 9. Powell, Savannah “*Planina’s* cultural advisor (back center) and the exhibit curator (front left) explaining elements of the bride’s traditional garments.” 2018.



Fig. 10. Powell, Savannah. “Wedding couple in Draginovo in front of the dowry all handmade by the bride’s mother.” 2018.



Fig. 11. Powell, Savannah. “Village wedding celebration in Draginovo.” 2018.



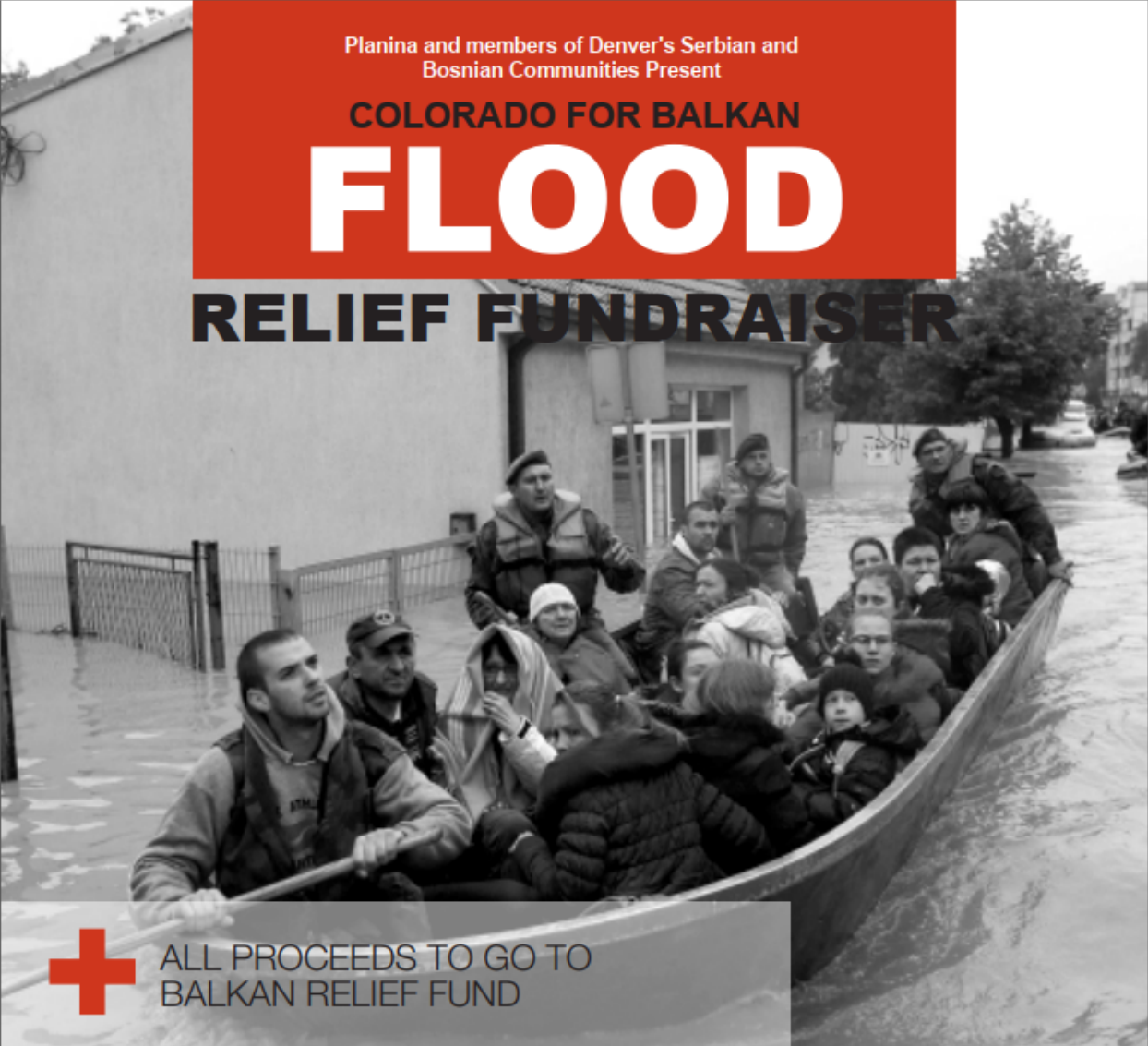
Fig. 12. Cordova, Jason. “The “Fashion Show” in which *Planina*’s cultural advisor explains the origins of the performance attire. Valerie Brown is displaying that she is wearing Muslim *shalvari* pants made for women.” 2018.



Fig. 13. Cordova, Jason. “Wearing my Bohemian attire (far left) during a concert at Dazzle Jazz Club in Denver Colorado.” 2014.




Fig. 14. Kermiet, Sharon. “*Planina* members sang a few songs with Dorkovo ensemble members just before the opening of the international folk music festival. The younger singer second from left in blue has been singing with *Planina* since she was a high school student and joined with her mother. I am wearing Muslim *shalvari* (far right) which I just purchased from a singer in the village of Breznitsa.” 2018.



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Program of Songs from Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia
Special Guests: Petar Teodosijev, accordion, and Meg York, clarinet
Saturday, June 7, 5:00 p.m.
The Oriental Theater, 4335 W 44th Ave, Denver, CO 80212

Suggested minimum donation: \$15. All proceeds to go to Balkan flood relief.

Fig. 15. *Planina*. “Flyer for the Balkan Flood Relief benefit concert which had a turnout of nearly 100 people and raised close to \$2,400.” 2014.



Fig. 16. Esquibel, Kathy. “Atekwpatzin (center) during a *Velacion* ceremony with the *Calpulli Calmecaztlán* (Noble School).” 2017.

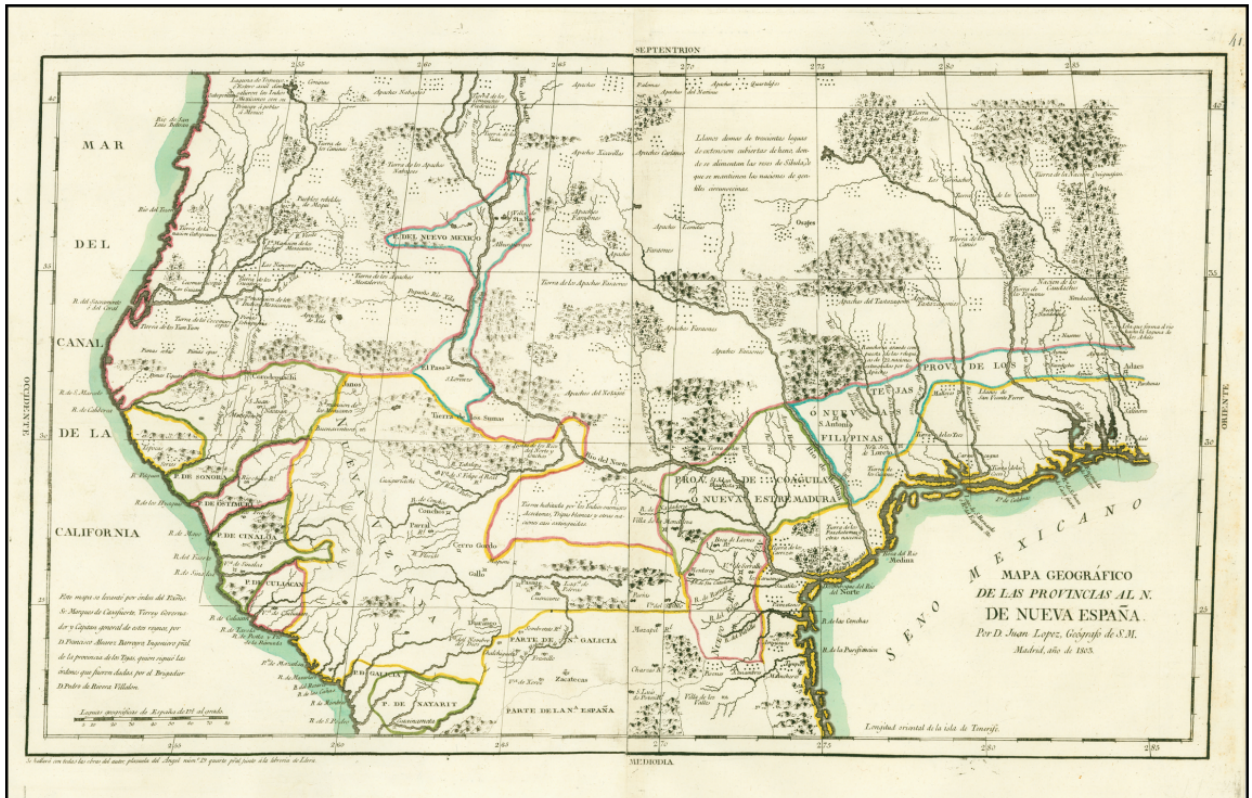


Fig. 17. Young, David Atekpätzin. “An Assessment of the Archaeological, Geographical, and the Oral and Written Historical Findings Regarding the Presence of the Apache in Boulder, Colorado.” “Atekpätzin explains the cultural and linguistic history of the area now known as Colorado through an assessment of geographical history and various maps. “This map which is the Mapa Geográfico de las Provincias al Norte de Nueva España por D. Juan López, Geógrafo de S.M. Madrid año de 1803, references two defined areas here where we reside: Teguayo and Apachería. It specifically names thirteen Apache groups that occupied the area drawn on the map. It ends at about 41 degrees north or somewhere in present-day Colorado. The map of 1803 tells us that this area had two primary linguistic groups: The Apache speakers and the Nahua or Tehua speakers.” 2019: 9-10.



Fig. 18. Powell, Savannah. “*Tzotzollin* performing with instruments and ceremonial objects placed on a blanket in the center. The elder family member of one of the performers can be seen sitting on the far end near the center with a walker beside him.” 2018.

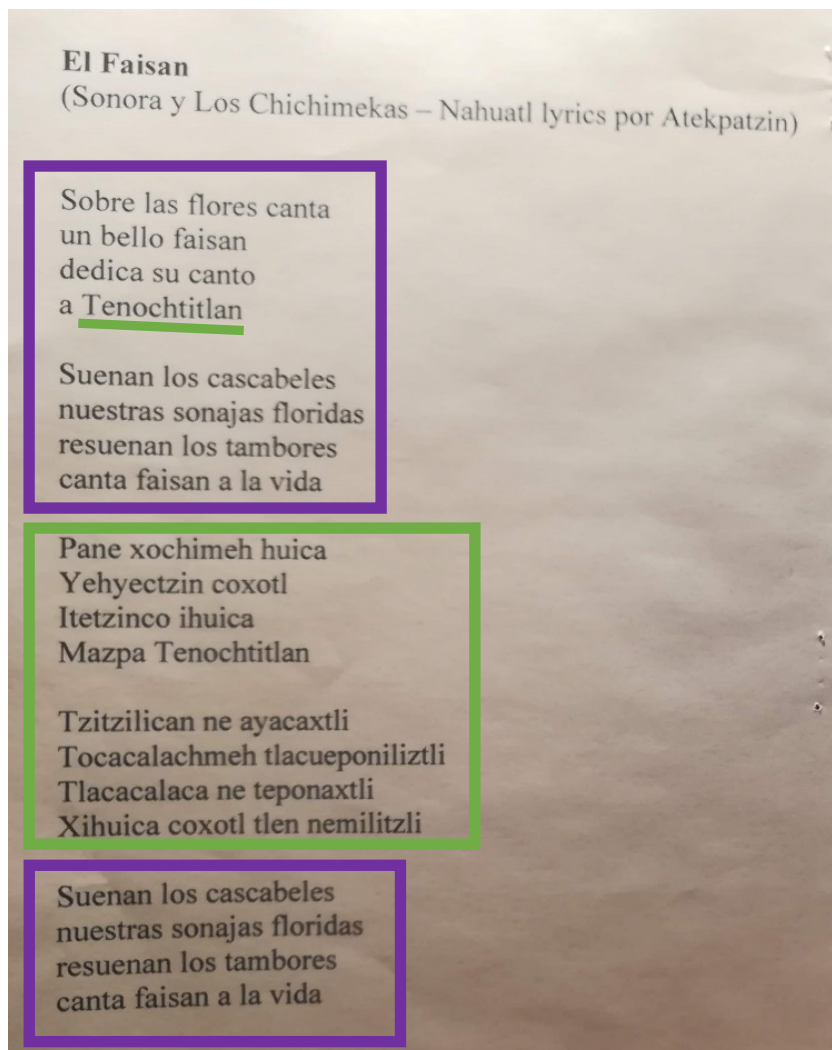


Fig. 19. Young, David Atecpatzin. *Tzotzollin*. “The lyric sheet for *El Faisan (Sonora y Los Chichimekas)* or the Pheasant/Feather (Sound and the Indigenous Peoples) which opens with two verses in Spanish (outlined in purple) with the Nahuatl name for the city of *Tenochtitlan* followed by two more in Nahuatl (outlined in green) then ends in Spanish (outlined in purple).” 2016.

Mori Alil ago mori navon sha ide -2 (Alil is going outside)

Tova momiche mori kitka my dade-2 (The girl gives kitka to him)

ALILE, BLAGA DUSHO MEDENA

ALILE BLAGA DUSHO SHEKERNA

Mori Alil ago mori na oran shide-2 (Alilis going to dig the soil)

Tova momiche , mori s nego jotide-2 (The girl goes with him)

ALILE, BLAGA DUSHO MEDENA

ALILE BLAGA DUSHO SHEKERNA

Mori Alil ago , mori, brazni sha brazni-2 (He makes the soil ready for planting)

Tova momiche mori tjutjun posadi -2 (She plants tobacco there)

YALILE, BLAGA DUSHO MEDENA

YALIE BLAGA DUSHO SHEKERNA\\ \\ \\

The girl goes after Alil everywhere- She is in love with Alil

Fig. 20. Kepchelev, Milyo. *Planina*. “Lyric sheet from *Planina* for *Mori Alil ago* which has a line about planting Tobacco which I have sung in Teepee ceremonies.” 2015.

Two Spirit Society of Denver



The Two Spirit Society of Denver is a dedicated group of GLBT Native Americans in the Denver area who are united by their struggle to restore Two Spirited people to their rightful place in the sacred circle. The Two Spirit Society of Denver seeks to achieve this goal using the following methods:

- Provide support for GLBT Native Americans
- Provide community outreach to GLBT Natives, elders, and the non-native community
- Provide cultural education regarding traditional Two Spirit functions in Native American Society and guidance in reclaiming that role in contemporary times
- Provide a forum and plan of action for social change in Native American communities

Fig. 21. SoulForce. “Screenshot with a brief description of activities of the Two-Spirit Society of Denver which Atektpatzin helped to found. There is now a network of Two-Spirit Societies throughout North America.” 1998.



Fig. 22. Gaintan, Refufia. The Nation Report. “Ceremonial altar for Atecpatzin’s mother Dora Esquibel who was an Indigenous, Chicana/o and migrant rights activist. Note the image at the head of the altar which depicts *Tonantzin* in a style similar to those used for of Our Lady of Guadalupe.” 2013.

MUSICAL INTERLUDES

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Tzotzollin is a group of musicians and singers dedicated to learning, preserving and documenting ceremonial music indigenous to Turtle Island (Mexico, United States and Canada). Tzotzollin has been recording and sharing these songs to remind everyone that indigenous ceremonies and lifeways are still alive and thriving.

Fig. 23. *Tzotzollin*. “Flyer for the performance by *Tzotzollin* at Anythink Library in Thornton Colorado.” 2018.



Fig. 24. Powell, Savannah. “Atekipatzin’s *Ateka Koli* trumpet shell, painted by him with the Rain God *Tlaloc*.” 2018.

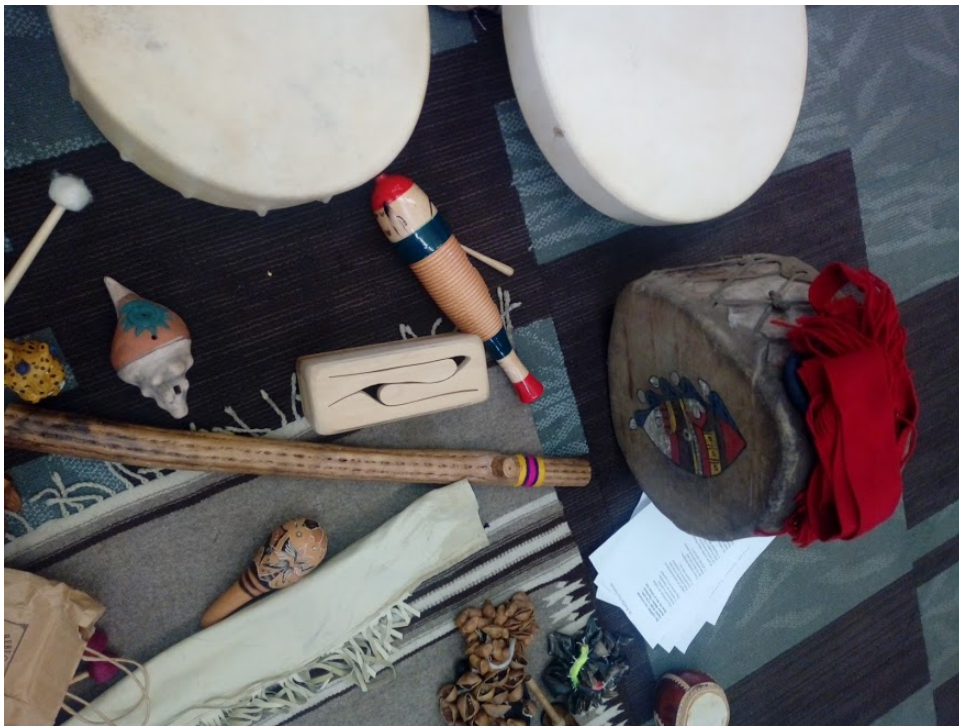


Fig. 25. Powell, Savannah. “Indigenous instruments made of natural materials used by *Tzotzollin*.” 2018.



Fig. 26. Powell, Savannah. “Image from *Tzotzollin*’s library performance. They wear traditional clothes made of cotton. The white represents purity while the red sash is for the blood of the ancestors which symbolizes their continuous link. Their *huaraches* or shoes are made of leather and tied above are percussive seed pods known as *yotes*.” 2018.



Fig. 27. Powell, Savannah. “Atekpätzin aided in curating the Chicano Movement History Portal at the Colorado History Museum. This is a *Folklorico* dance dress donated by Atekpätzin that was once used by his sister.” 2018.

Annex 2: Interview Questions

1. What inspired you to start singing or join an ensemble?
2. Are there any specific reasons you sought out this kind of music?
3. How do you select songs, repertoire?
4. Does this music (or any specific songs) hold any particular meaning to you?
5. Does it in any way make you feel connected to some sense of heritage? How?
6. What do you wear for performances? Does this hold any particular meaning or symbolism for you?
7. Is there any particular way you experience or engage with your gender expression for performances (clothes, make-up, songs, lyrics, vocal styles)?
8. Do you feel free to express yourself in a genuine way? What does that look like?
9. Did you change anything about the way you present yourself when you began performing? What and why?
10. Do you feel that gender has impacted the way you perform or interact with other musicians? How?
11. Does gender play a factor in the way the ensemble is run? How?
12. Are there any goals/intentions behind performances for the audience?
13. Do you do outreach to any specific groups or communities to organize concerts and events?
14. How is the musical material chosen? What amount of attention is given to lyrics, themes, and meanings of the songs?
15. Is there any interpretation and is this shared with the audience in any way? How?
16. Are there any personal meanings and uses that you have in your own life separate from the ensemble for the music?
17. Are there any ideological goals or intentions either behind the ensemble, the music, or your own engagement as a musician?
18. Do you feel connected with any larger social movements as a musician or through your ensemble?

Additional Question asked to Atepatzin:

1. Can you describe the way you conceptualize the amalgam as related to heritage?

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14/08/2019