"You're in the Right Place at the Right Time": Double Consciousness, Cultural Memory, and Cultural Representation in College Gospel Choirs

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Dedication

This thesis is first and foremost dedicated to my Lord.

This study is also dedicated to my mother, Lee Anna Kyle-Logwood and my grandparents, James Frank Kyle Sr., and the late Annie Mae Kyle, Billie Lee Moore-Stokes and Earl J Stokes

Additionally, this document is dedicated to my paternal parents (Earl and Alisa Stokes) and host of aunts, uncles, godparents, siblings, cousins, and an amazing circle friends and mentors who were long-suffering and patient during my writing process. While this dedication may seem a bit extensive, I could have never made it without each and every one of you.

A myriad of thanks to my hearts, my little cousins Kalynn, Micah, DaeShawn, Laila, and Eli, who always reminded me to laugh in spite of trouble and frustration and to always make time for fun throughout the journey they often called “fleeces (instead of thesis) writing.”

Special thanks to my Berea College family—your investment in a life of great promise has made all the difference.

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Abstract

Gospel music exists within a rich cultural and historical space—at one level, it is part of an important Black musical tradition and at another, it is part of mainstream American history. College gospel choirs, then, mediate the divide of being part of the Black diasporic, religious music aesthetic while co-existing in the academic setting within a largely White-European western art music arena. Moreover, they provide space for students to commune socially, express faith, and gain cultural knowledge. I argue that through the theoretical lenses of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation, one can clearly understand the position of gospel choirs on university and college campuses in how they facilitate community, express and define "Blackness," and interact with the greater academic community. Furthermore, such investigation provides opportunity to understand the perpetuation of gospel choirs in the academic setting today.

This ethnographic survey and fieldwork-based research project was undertaken during the academic years of 2010-2012. Outlining my project, I first introduce the concept of African American sacred traditions by visiting the existent scholastic work on gospel music. I then summarize the history of college gospel choirs and explore the provided frameworks, thereby accessing the role of college gospel choirs in academia. Employing my own fieldwork experiences, I apply the theoretical ideas of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation to my observations. I share my findings about how gospel music on college and university campuses provides opportunity to understand diversity and foster community. This thesis concludes with suggestions for continued study in African diasporic music and gospel music, as well as a reminder that African American musics must be experienced to be fully understood.

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Chapter 1

"The Lord is Blessing Me Right Now, Oh Right Now"[1]

Singing in the College Setting

Entering the Berea Baptist Church sanctuary, I saw the large golden cross behind the baptismal pool with purple fabric draped across it, and knew the Berea College Black Music Ensemble's (BME) spring concert would prove to be a special occasion. As the first one to arrive at the church, I seated myself on the left side of the center aisle of the sanctuary. Glancing around, my mind became aware of numerous colorful wall banners with the sayings "King of Kings" and "Lord of All" adorning the church. Gradually, while I took in the environment, other congregants began to arrive and light chatter filled the air. People had traveled to the small, central Kentucky location from as near as down the street to as far away as Oregon for this occasion.

The high attendance made it quickly evident that the BME, the gospel choir hosting and singing at this event, held a special place in the hearts and history of those gathered. Like myself, an alumnus of the BME, many of the attendees had been part of this choir in various ways. Some were members of the group when they attended Berea. Others present were parents of current or former members, and some attendees had been part of the Berea community their entire lives and attended out of their own tradition.

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[1] The title of this thesis and the title of every constituent chapter are phrases from various gospel songs that I deemed appropriate for the material covered within the text. The title "You're in the Right Place at the Right Time," while being a song text, is an apt phrase for arguing that now is the right time to study gospel choirs on university and college campuses (McKissick, 2005). The title of chapter 1, "The Lord is Blessing Me" is further discussed in this chapter as a cornerstone selection of both my college experience and this text (Trotter, 1999).

Regardless of the reasoning that brought them to this event, the primary truth existed that they were present and about to have a unique, and possibly meaningful, experience.

Suddenly the sanctuary grew quiet and then the song "I don't know what you've come to do, But I came to praise…I came to praise HIS name" melodiously and jubilantly poured from the voices of the Black Music Ensemble members as they marched into the sanctuary, signifying the start of the concert-service. As they processed, the choir's black[2] robes trimmed in purple and gold swayed to and fro, displaying ocean wave-like movements and mimicking the rhythm of the music. The ensemble processed into the choir-stand, clapping and singing, all while their voices were accompanied by traditional gospel instrumentation. A Hammond organ with a Leslie speaker-box provided the "essential gospel sound," as described by some people in attendance, as it doubled the voices and also echoed their call. A piano followed in the same style as the organ and the accompanying musical structure was supported by an electric bass guitar and drums providing even more noticeable syncopated rhythms.

The first song came to a close with declamatory statements of praise-and-worship from the congregants, many of whom—including myself—were now standing, clapping, and celebrating. We were rejoicing in the success and skill of the performance, ecstatically supporting the members of the ensemble, and praising God. Then, just before the sanctuary grew quiet from this rejoicing, a man in the audience yelled "hallelujah." His yell led to *shouting* from various congregants around the sanctuary—a worship

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[2] In keeping with many authors' usage, the term *Black* with a capital "B" will be employed to refer to African American and African diasporic people and culture. Conversely, *black* with a lowercase "b" represents color.

practice wherein people, overwhelmingly excited with the Holy Spirit and the activity of worship, begin dancing in a fashion similar to a ring shout, wherever they were in the sanctuary.[3] Others joined this shouting-dance from various locations (wherever they were physically placed) within the sanctuary, accompanied by the "gospel walk-up"[4] on the organ and piano.

In the midst of all this activity, I vividly recalled my days as a member of the ensemble and how the rehearsals, which culminated each semester with services like this one, were crucial both to my musical development and to my personal growth. These reflections inspired my desire to research the importance of gospel choir participation in the lives of many college and university students

While I was a student at Berea, nearly every Wednesday evening, many fellow students and I filed into the campus music building for gospel choir rehearsal. We arrived and were greeted by our directors. Dr. Kathy Bullock, our primary director, would call out "The Lord is Blessing Me," prompting our accompanist to play the up-tempo tune traditionally found in African American Baptist and Pentecostal churches. The song, a mainstay of our choir rehearsals, consisted of a quick chorus: "The Lord is blessing me, right now, oh right now. He woke me up this morning and started me on my way; the Lord is blessing me right now" (Trotter, 1999). From there, each section—sopranos, altos, and tenors and basses—would each sing their own riff, with an

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[3] This concept of *shouting* as a part of African diasporic cultural practice will be further discussed and investigated later in this text.

[4] The gospel walk-up, as referred to here, is a rising piano bass line that outlines the major triad but includes chromatic steps between the 3rd and the 5th and then the 6th and the octave. This is performed in a style reminiscent of the blues and contains rhythmic drive similar to that found in boogie woogie.

overlapping phrase structure, again ending on "He [God] woke me up this morning…the Lord is blessing me right now." This high-energy selection regularly rebooted the momentum of the singers, and provided an atmospheric focus of the rehearsal space. This would then be followed by a student-led prayer that reiterated the role of God, both in the music and in the lives of the students.

Students of varying cultural identities filled the BME rehearsal hall, a situation quite juxtaposed to the predominantly African American church that is the customary home of gospel music. Scanning the room, one would clearly see about seventy-five people in attire varying from suits to basketball jerseys and dresses to jogging pants. And this vast array of apparel hosted a myriad of ethnicities, cultures, faiths, and backgrounds summoned by their love of music and united by the gospel choir experience and the community-centered rehearsal. As deemed by the directors, the choir rehearsal room was a place of sacred solace—a location where focus hovered around the music and relied upon the spirit of community among the choir members.

Rehearsal provided a space for students who choose to lose all inhibitions and limitations imposed upon them by society outside of the rehearsal and liberated them to, simply, sing. Focus on skin color, popularity, clothing, or any other student-life distraction became unimportant to the ultimate reasons we gathered. While the music served as the primary reason for initially gathering, the level of community engagement fostered within the ensemble brought us back and kept us united each week. As the opening song and prayer concluded, our choir director reminded us of how glad she was to see the group once again. She reiterated that the goal of rehearsal was rooted in

improving the performance of the repertoire, but that the intent of our assembly remained that of the founding members of the choir: to provide a location for fellowship and support for personal growth in the academic environment. This component of the BME greatly promoted the idea and understanding of leaving stressors outside of the rehearsal. And the act of leaving stress behind and interacting with renewed energy allowed for opportunities to bond and create community.

After the introductory period, repertoire rehearsal began, a practice period wherein emotive, joyous singing and self-expression played the central role. In one rehearsal, I recall, the first piece practiced was a groove-based, jazzy-style song with a message of triumph: "Got a story to tell you, about some things that I've been through, but I'm healed, oh I'm healed. My God has touched me, delivered, he set my soul free" (Lawrence, 2004). These words resounded in the rehearsal space and echoed through the halls of the music building. Some people made the songs uniquely personal, singing with tears in their eyes or with their hands raised. A few members took time after rehearsals to discuss how much the music moved them emotively. Others sang simply for the joy of singing and being with friends. No matter how one identified why he or she sang, the role of the choir to provide a place of community and self-expression always found actualization. This experience motivated members to work hard and return to subsequent rehearsals.

After graduating from the college, I worked as the Assistant Director, and briefly as Interim Director, for the BME. Serving in this role, I reflected upon my undergraduate gospel choir experience and how it had impacted my own life and the lives of my

students. I was motivated by the memories and the stories of students to investigate the role of gospel choirs within student life. As a life-long gospel choir participant (my mom enrolled me in my first gospel choir at age three), the first thing I did when I arrived at Berea College was join the gospel choir. After a year filled with fun and exciting performances, I had a familial loss that made me appreciate and value my college gospel experience even more.

During my freshman year at Berea College, my paternal grandmother passed away. I was heartbroken. Just three years prior, my maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather passed away, and at the time I had not fully recovered from those losses. The funeral events required me to leave school for eight days, just weeks prior to finals. When I returned to campus I was behind in all my classes with no real way to catch up, even if the instructors gave me extensions. I began to consider how all of this would affect my grades and my scholarship. I knew that I had missed too much to successfully pass. After voicing my concerns to my choir director, she immediately went to task on my behalf. Later in the afternoon of the same day, members of the choir showed up at my residence hall to tutor me in subjects and topics I had missed while away for the funeral services and to offer encouragement. By the end of the following week, I was completely caught up on all my missed work and prepared for finals.

This experience was the first time I genuinely recognized my role in being a part of community and how, specifically in terms of the gospel choir, the community unites to assist and support its members. Individuals in the choir had to recover from whatever challenges they faced in order for the entire choir community to recover. I argue that this

"resilience policy" of sorts comes from African American church traditions, after which college choirs model themselves.

I also thought about my students who often shared their collegiate experiences with me and, later, told me (through participation in my surveys for this project) about how participating in the choir helped them overcome challenges. One student, J.Y.[5] discussed how BME helped him persevere through his first year of college. He stated, "BME was my fun time, my down time. I got to see friends, catch up with folks, and even sing a little! And that was really needed with all my family craziness and the difficult classes I had all day long. I looked forward to going to BME at the end of the day" (personal communication, November, 11, 2010).

Another student shared how his BME experience brought him joy. B.P. explained, "Even though I could only be in the choir for one year, as the sports I played caused a time conflict, I was inspired and made friendships that lasted all the way through now [his senior year]" (personal communication, November 17, 2012). I recognized that participating in the choir promoted a positive temperament in many of the students with which I dialogued. And their excitement about participating in gospel choir (along with my own experiences) challenged me to make the choir community as strong and as encouraging as possible when I was teaching. Moreover, my memories and the student stories inspired me to more deeply understand gospel choirs on various campuses in this project.

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[5] Informants are identified in this thesis in one of two ways. Informants willing to be identified are labeled by initial (first and/or middle) and last name. Informants unable or unwilling to be identified are labeled by initials only.

Furthermore, I considered how many of the gospel songs we learned carried themes of endurance and resilience, mimicking the choir's communal actions, such as those displayed during my familial loss. Various song lyrics served as a reminder that, through emotional difficulties, perseverance was, and is, integral to success. Many of the songs, like the one in the title of this chapter, promoted the idea of blessed success no matter one's current circumstance and inspired performers and listeners to continue life's journey with the support of those singing and encouraging you to do so.

The desire to know more about the role of college gospel choirs led me to inquire into how these ensembles develop and continue to thrive today. Though I discuss this issue in-depth later, I answer it in summary here. College gospel choirs, in their current practice, began around 1969 in many schools and have been a part of the social and academic arena since then (see Boyer, 1979). They prosper for a variety reasons. First, they allow barrier breakdowns and temporary dismissals of walls among races. Further, these ensembles provide a place for those active in gospel traditions to experience uninhibited spirituality through song away from their conventional settings—their churches, youth groups, high schools, and other institutions. Above all, these ensembles thrive due to the fostering of community, connectedness, and musicianship all in one setting—making it a significant addition to college music scholarship and social life. They provide a distinctly unique cultural and choral experience for students and the campus community.

Statement of Thesis

Gospel music exists within a rich cultural and historical space—at one level, it is part of an important Black musical tradition and at another, it is part of mainstream American history. No argument clarifies this point greater than W.E.B. DuBois's idea of *double consciousness.* Double consciousness, as defined by DuBois, is the state of being "of the Black diaspora" while functioning in a non-Black dominated world (see DuBois, 1994, p. 8). This duality applies to college gospel choirs as researched here in a variety of ways. College gospel choirs have had to mediate the divide of being part of Black diasporic religious music, while co-existing in the academic setting with White-European western art music. Additionally, participation in the college gospel choir serves as a socializing extracurricular activity for students, but also as some students' only connection to their musical experiences prior to attending college. On a larger scale, gospel music in academe has a duality in being a popular performance art, bringing a diverse group of students together, while also presenting one incarnation of what it means to be part of the Black American sacred music tradition.

College gospel choirs, and the music they perform, present public imagery of what being "Black" means. For an ethnic group that has, and often continues, to use the church setting as its political platform and the heartbeat of community, college gospel choirs display a musical practice that represents a large component of the African American life experience. This idea of cultural representation, as termed by Eric Lott, shows how a specific cultural sect is presented to the greater national community (1995, p. 98). College gospel choirs, though developed from within the Black sacred music

tradition, have become one of the ways that African American culture is represented to the larger American community and the greater global society. Though at first these ensembles provided performance placement for African American undergraduates who had been excluded and ostracized due to their ethnicity, they now include students, faculty, and community members of varying ethnic backgrounds. Additionally the groups present an updated public image of what it means to be part of the "Black sacred-music community."

Prior to the establishment of these choirs, presentations of African Americans were often limited by the social restraints of slavery, minstrelsy, and race-based oppression—witnessed in the protest activities and records of the Civil Rights Movement (see Lott, 1995, p. 97-8). Formed after those restrictions, these ensembles challenge limitations by providing fertile academic grounds for sharing the history of African American culture within the context of the school or institution's own history. The ensembles represent an aspect of African American culture today and provide ample opportunity to discuss the academic institution's engagement in race relations throughout its history.

Understanding the concepts of double consciousness, cultural representation, and cultural memory, then, allows one to understand the position of college gospel choirs on campuses. Carter G. Woodson argued in his landmark text, *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1933), that African Americans and their role in history, in terms of education, have often been "vitiated by the necessity for all to combat segregation and fight to retain standing ground in the struggle of the races" (1933, pt. 353). He explains that "in the

teaching of fine arts, the[se] instructors usually started with Greece by showing how that art was influenced from without, but they omitted the African influence" (1933, pt. 362). Therefore, I argue that by investigating double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation, with gospel music and college gospel choirs as a vehicle, there is an opportunity to (re)gain an absentee component of greater American musical history and provide space for additional study (as called for by Eileen Southern, 1979) and inclusion of African American sacred music in academia.

Double Consciousness, Cultural Memory, and Cultural Representation

This study is framed with three major concepts important for studies of African American culture: double consciousness; cultural memory; and cultural representation. Through these ideas, I argue for the significance of gospel music ensembles within the college experience.

Double consciousness is the idea of existing as Black in a non-Black world. Continuing my discussion of W.E.B Dubois, who initially coined the term, double consciousness exists as "the peculiar sensation…of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (DuBois, 1994, p. 8). He articulates the problematic nature underlying this perspective in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903/1994). DuBois expresses how Black existence served as equivalent to being "a problem" and that people would state such in colorful ways. White people would ask DuBois questions about various racial injustices or make off-handed comments about knowing "good" Black men. But never would the true dilemma of reconciling Black existence with how others viewed Blackness be addressed. For this reason, DuBois often pointed out that he would silently

observe the injustice of his required double consciousness (1994, p. 3). This conceptual awareness of existing as Black, or of the African diasporic community, while also being a physical part of the American, "non-African-diasporic" world presented numerous challenges to Black people. Double consciousness presents the need for consistent cultural code-shifting—that is transitioning between the double-mindedness's two modes of thinking and interacting.

Paul Gilroy expounds on W.E.B Dubois idea, explaining double consciousness as emerging from the "unhappy symbiosis between three modes of thinking, being, and seeing" as a quality of blackness in a non-Black society (Gilroy, 1995, p. 127). "Thinking," in Gilroy's position, represents "racial particularism" (1995, p. 127), or rather a race-based focus centered on "being Black." "Being" speaks to the nationalistic challenge faced by African Americans, specifically during DuBois's time wherein African diasporic people in America were neither slaves nor citizens. And "seeing" represents the worldview or global identity presented to African Americans. Much like DuBois argument, Gilroy's stance challenges one to search out the underlying meaning of the "unhappy symbiosis"—that is, to pull apart the aspects that create doubly minded individuals and identify the characteristics that make them such. Gilroy's argument inspires one to search for meaningful understandings of those characteristics to better gain insight into their effect. For this research, the concept of double consciousness and its attributes will be extended by examining it for not only African Americans, but people of varying ethnicities participating in gospel ensembles.

My application of double consciousness provides a new perspective for viewing gospel choirs that takes into account various choir members' ethnic and racial backgrounds and life experiences. Double consciousness provides a non-traditional perspective for viewing gospel choirs; as opposed to viewing the ensemble as a solitary singing unit, this concept allows for this study to understand the individual's role within the group. Additionally, double consciousness reflects the position of African American sacred music, normally found in religious settings, being placed in an westernized university setting and investigated in a non-race-specific, secular context. The music, obviously of the African diaspora, carries elements noted by Tilford Brooks as African retentions (Brooks, 1984, p. 24). Understanding gospel choirs within the context of double consciousness also lends credibility to the idea that the ensembles promote a culturally enriched education while playing significant social roles.

An additional circumstance of this dual consciousness finds expression in the performance practices of gospel music. Though many of the ensembles, as will be later discussed, began as predominantly African American choirs, today this music is often performed by people of varying ethnicities and cultural heritages—again showing its "American-ness," while at its essence, being a African diasporic music. This interaction displays the dual nature of the music. Double consciousness also relates to how the music program hosts the African American choral experience; how the institution, overall, receives the ensemble; how students of multiple ethnic and cultural groups interact within the setting; and, more so, how the experience affects students' thinking

about the music. All of these ideas will be visited in the context of the choirs included in this study.

The connectedness of gospel music to both African American history and greater American history also assists in understanding college gospel choirs in regard to cultural memory. Cultural memory, in this setting, addresses how music and memory relate. This concept, as defined by Floyd, explains that memory drives music and music drives memory (1982, p. 8). The cultural memory component inspires perpetual, dynamic change within college and university gospel choirs for their continued adaptability and success. As discussed in later chapters, the memories early college gospel choir participants had of their "back-at-home" vocal ensembles led to the creation of the college gospel choirs. As evidenced through my interviews, contemporary choirs continue to rely on the collective memory of how church gospel choirs functioned.

Cultural memory, as applied here, speaks to the role of communal recollection within the context of college gospel music choirs. Cultural memory, as defined by both Samuel Floyd and Guthrie Ramsey, expresses the existence of gospel music and its role in academe. Floyd continues by explaining that Black-music making was the translation of memory into sound and sound into memory (1982, p. 9), that is, the cyclical nature of cultural memory as it affects music. Floyd's discourse refers to his grandfather's enslavement, which subjectively affected how he lived, sang, and referred to other aspects of life. This historical significance—whatever the remembered is, even when it is a collective non-memory embodied as memory—finds expression. In gospel music, this can be found both in circumstantial experiences attested to in the song context, and in the

Biblical stories embedded in the lyrics of the songs and given new meaning. An example of this idea is found in both literal and metaphorical "giants" discussed below.

Guthrie Ramsey connects contemporary scholarship with use of subjective cultural memory. Ramsey states, "A growing body of other scholars, writers, and intellectuals…have used 'the personal' [or their personal connection to the melody, lyrics, or a combination thereof] as an important aspect of their work" (Ramsey 2003, p. 30). Ramsey supports Floyd's idea by stating "all black music making is driven by and permeated with the memory of things from the cultural past and that recognition of the viability of such memory should play a role in the perception and criticism of works and performances of black music" (Ramsey, 2003, p. 33). This echoes Bruno Nettl's stance, which states, "For understanding music, the significance of its relationship to the rest of the culture is paramount" (2005, p. 215).

This use of "the personal" exists, in one incarnation, within the context of lyrics frequently sung by gospel choirs. Though the songs are Biblically based, they tend to not reiterate the Bible narratives word-for-word. Rather, these songs celebrate the moral positions of the narratives, exemplifying their victories from a translated, personal perspective. For, example, the story of David and Goliath tells of a small boy who, because God sided with him, defeats the giant, Goliath. This tale, as translated to a gospel song entitled "Giants" (Lawrence, 2006) expresses the essence of this story in a personal manner.

The song states how every person has "giants," a metaphor for problems and challenges proving difficult to overcome, but this statement is accompanied by a joyous

reiteration that "giants do die; the bigger they are the harder they fall" (Lawrence, 2006). The text, then, uses the story as a springboard for moving forward. Interestingly enough, the next line of the song says "just walk around the Jericho walls." This line comes from a separate Bible narrative (Joshua 6), the account of the Jericho walls tumbling down. This Biblical reference serves as another vocalized reminder of a "giant's fall," in this case, the personal "giant" of the Israelites, the walls of Jericho. In this way, gospel songwriters employ subjective cultural memory to Biblical themes when writing songs. Gospel performers then apply their personal experiences within performance to make songs relevant for themselves. And, in keeping with this traditional approach to gospel music, I argue that university and college gospel choirs embrace subjective cultural memory to personalize the songs for their own individual and corporate understanding, and utilize collective cultural memory to model the ensembles after African American church choirs.

Cultural representation speaks to how a group or culture is presented to the greater national and international community. Cultural representation, as termed by Eric Lott (1995), is concerned with Black misrepresentation and displays social normatives, accurate or not, as they are used to depict a specific cultural group to the general larger society. In the case of Lott's research, specifically, the focus is upon minstrelsy as "'Blackness' and Black cultural practices [brought] into American life" (Lott, 1995, p. 98). He explains that through newspapers and advertisements for minstrel performance, the black-faced actors created "for the first time, a sense of popular Black cultural representation," regardless of how accurate or inaccurate the portrayal; society identified

characteristics, styles, and ways of life recognized as "Black" (Lott, p. 98). He explains that black-faced white performers, unaware, had taken on the challenge of creating the "public-face" of African American culture with incredible inaccuracy because "what was on display in minstrelsy was less Black culture than a structured set of White responses to it" (Lott, 1995, p. 101). Lott continues, expounding that "simple restoration of Black authenticity" has been and will be no easy feat (1995, p. 103). African Americans have had, and will continue, to challenge the practices that created generational "ideas" defining Blackness. Lott's argument here is applied to observe gospel music and how it plays a role in both redefining and reclaiming the cultural representation of African America. Additionally, Lott's argument provides opportunity to teach what "Black" is through lived experiences and to "un-teach" past, often inaccurate representations.

The Role of Voice as Framework

The conceptual idea of "the voice" as presented by Aaron Fox (2004) explores the mediation of speech and song within community based performances. In this ethnomusicological text, Fox studies the working class culture of Lockhart, Texas by attending a local bar called "Ann's Place." During his time there, Fox recognizes the importance of country music to the people with whom he interacted. Fox explains that people often spoke poetically and interspersed their speech with lyrics and lyrical phrasings. Moreover, Fox noted that there was an ever-present entwining of everyday, or as he calls "ordinary," speech and country song performance, and the vast "in-between speaking and singing" practice referred to in the text as "verbal art" (2004, p. 272).

I suggest that the use of voice in African American gospel is, arguably, similar to that found in the Aaron Fox text, *Real Country.* Historically, speech/sung sonorities have been the primary means of emotive conveyance in the gospel community for expressing faith, solidarity, and hope. According to C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya (1990), "Good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions of a successful ministry. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise" (1990, chapter 12, section 1, para. 2). African American worship has always used music and the speaking/singing voice, "verbal art" as Fox calls it, as part of its core (Fox, 2004, p. 272). In understanding double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation of college and university gospel choirs, one must also take into account the performative aspects of the voice.

Methodology

Previous research on gospel music contains limited information on college gospel choirs. Existing scholarly works focus primarily on the history of the genre in both sacred and secular settings (see Arthur, 2004, p. 4). In fact, few articles, and even fewer books, discuss college gospel choirs at all. Some research, in regard to these ensembles, has been conducted "in the field" but not necessarily with the goal of explaining their academic position. None focuses on the college gospel choir as a vehicle of double consciousness or deals with the significance of cultural memory or issues dealing with representation. To gain insight into gospel choirs in college settings I relied heavily upon the scholarly works available (as I discuss further in the review of literature), but more

so, I emphasize the fieldwork I have conducted in keeping with traditional methods found in ethnomusicology.

Ethnomusicology, for the purposes of this study, is the study of music involving interaction with living performers, their audiences, and the setting from which their music develops. Due to this interactive component, research in ethnomusicology calls for a high level of participation among the individual(s) being studied (Nettl, 2005, p. 215) and transcendence of traditional research limitations (Shelemay, 1996, p.19). Thus the methodological practices for this research include use of participant observation surveys and ethnographic interviews with participants.

The survey conducted was my own creation, designed after James Spradley's model and consisted of typical, specific, guided, and task-restated questions (Spradley, 1979, p. 61) (survey questions appear in the appendix). Additionally, Ruth Stone's definition of phenomenology emphasizes "the sensations and interpretations of individuals as important and critical [to] data" (Stone, 2008, p. 165) and makes understanding participant responses a priority in this research. Compiling information, as described by George Marcus and Michael Fisher, then consisted of "focusing on the person, the self, and the emotions—all topics difficult to probe in traditional ethnographic frameworks" (Marcus and Fisher, 1986, p. 46). Understanding James Clifford's ideal of ethnographic authority based on experience (1986), I challenged myself to step out of my own personal knowledge of the choir and investigate why and how college gospel choirs function. To conclude the research and write the ethnographic report, I studied Aaron

Fox's discussion of characterization and voice in his study of the patrons of Ann's Place in Lockhart, Texas (Fox, 2004, p. 301).

An additional component of this fieldwork is the collection of photographic, audio, and video recordings produced by myself and provided by the ensembles studied (see J. Baily, 1989). Having the opportunity to place faces and voices with the stories and experiences shared through this research has proven invaluable in expressing and understanding the personal nature of gospel choir participation. More so, having video and audio of the ensembles allowed me to revisit the rehearsals, the concerts, and the moments of epiphany—when people expressed why the choir held importance to them, their school, and in the history of the genre—to identify the key aspects of the role of the ensembles.

My own position as a participant in college gospel choirs has served advantageously throughout this research. Having been a member of the BME choir from 2004 to 2008 and serving as one of its directors from 2008 to 2009, I made valuable connections with other gospel choirs, their administrative staffs, and directors. Those interactions have played significant roles in the research presented here. I have actively attended, observed, and noted the actions and behaviors of these ensembles in their private rehearsals and before public scrutiny. Also, informants' awareness of my desire to accurately portray the music established my credibility in conducting this research. Furthermore, my position as a gospel choir director enhanced my reputability with other ensemble directors. My role as a participant also afforded me the opportunity, with some of these ensembles, to gain the insight into reception from the ensemble's own stance.

Much information in this study came from college gospel music participants. This includes the college faculty and employees who work with these ensembles and the students themselves. Dr. Kathy Bullock, director of the Berea College Black Music Ensemble provided a wealth of information for this research. Moreover, her advocacy for gospel choirs served as inspiration for inquiry. Dr. Donna Cox from The University of Dayton, Ohio, shared with me her knowledge of gospel choirs, advocacy of sacred music in the classroom, and pedagogical practices in gospel. Additionally Alexis Tidwell, the former student-director of The University of Tennessee Love United Gospel Choir (LUGC), provided excellent information for the student-based component of this study. Numerous students of the schools included in this research completed surveys about participation in gospel choirs and shared their experiences.

Scope

In defining my research, I narrowed the scope to specific academic institutions. This study included selected schools with gospel choirs serving as classes, clubs, student organizations, or some combination. I focus on three institutions: Berea College, The University of Tennessee, and The University of Dayton in Ohio. The gospel choirs of each university brought a unique combination of characteristics valuable to this research. The Berea College Black Music Ensemble (BME), of Berea, Kentucky, is a small private school gospel choir that serves as both a club and an academic class. The University of Tennessee Love United Gospel Choir in Knoxville, Tennessee, represents a large public-institution, student-led/club gospel choir. The University of Dayton Ebony Heritage Singers (EHS), located in Dayton, Ohio, represents a large private school and its

ensemble exists primarily as a music class. In my study, I draw from a combination of personal experience and ethnographic fieldwork, completed primarily from fall 2010 through spring 2012.

Review of Literature

Over the last thirty years, public interest in gospel music has been quite prevalent. Nonetheless, there is still limited scholarship available on the subject (Arthur, 2004, p. 14). Because of this, I utilized numerous texts about teaching, musicology, pedagogy, and history to gain foundational knowledge for developing this study and to help shape how I approached the framework ideas. Here I have provided a brief discussion of the writings, in addition to the texts previously discussed, that proved to be extraordinarily useful in my research.

Grasping the complex history of gospel music required the use of numerous sources. Some writings focus on the foundations of the gospel genre, others on the development of the style, and even others discuss how Christianity and church choirs intermingle. But few texts were wholly encompassing of gospel music history. As such, I utilized *The Music of Black Americans* (1997 [1971]) by Eileen Southern, *America's Black Musical Heritage* (1984) by Tilford Brooks, and *People Get Ready!: A New History of Gospel Music* (2004) by Robert Darden. Each of these texts provided me with various components of the history of gospel music and the social developments leading to college and academic gospel choirs. Both Southern and Brooks provided discourse on gospel music as it found place in mainstream America and in the African American community. Darden's (2004) scholarship approaches the history of gospel music from

his position as non-traditional performer with the goal of depicting gospel music in the context of global activities. Combining research from these three texts allowed me to produce a condensed history of gospel music, specifically focused on the activities that led to the creation of college and university gospel choirs.

Overall, there is limited material available about gospel music teaching practices in general and public education. A few texts, however, helped me bridge the ideas of African American musical traditions and academic performance and pedagogy. These works included texts by Rosita Sands (1988, 1996) and Pearl Williams-Jones (1975). The scholarship by Sands discusses Black musics as a component of formalized education. The earliest (1988) provides a comprehensive list of materials and methods designed specifically for incorporating African diasporic music, including gospel music, in the general music classroom. The latter article (1996) provides general guidelines on how to teach Black musics and use them as an educational tool for cultural understanding. The article by Pearl Williams-Jones (1975) discusses gospel music in terms of music theory, composing, and performance. These texts added to my understanding of how African diasporic musics, especially gospel music, can, and has, entered academic settings.

The frameworking concepts of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation required a unique approach in regard to gospel music. No existing works studied college gospel music through these theoretical lenses. As such, I had to discover texts that suggested the conceptual ideas and then apply my fieldwork and their contents to the frameworks for a well-rounded study. In terms of thoughts on double

consciousness, I reviewed works by Horace Boyer (1995 [1979]) and bell hooks. Boyer's book is one of the most extensive discussions of the developments in gospel choirs from 1945 until 1965.

In reference to double consciousness, Boyer (1995) explains that, "the problem of 'twoness' was nowhere greater than in the 1950s when gospel invaded the African American church" (p. 194). This twoness existed because no one in the congregation had knowledge of how to receive the new style, which carried numerous characteristics of secular music, into the sacred setting. While not concentrated heavily on this topic, Boyer does introduce the idea of gospel music having existed in a space of double consciousness since its inception. bell hooks (1994) presents a social critique of existing educational structures. In her text, hooks challenges educational systems and contemporary teachers to delve into what it means to educate the whole person, including the culturally sensitive and aware aspects of self. These two texts help position gospel music as a double conscious concept and inspired me to understand how gospel choirs on college campuses challenge the traditional musical structure and discussions of ethnicity, diversity, and social interaction.

How cultural memory affects musical participation was evidenced in a few particular texts I studied. Some that promoted my understanding of cultural memory in terms of gospel were by Jan McCrary (2001), R.E. Phillips (1982), and Robert Allen (1991). Each of these texts employed fieldwork surveys and observations (similar to those discussed in the methodology section of this thesis) to investigate participatory and performative characteristics in musical performance. Phillips (1982) and Allen (1991)

focus on gospel music specifically, while McCrary (2001) investigates traditional choral ensembles. All of these works, however, questioned informants' roles and utilized their feedback to understand participation. For my work, I borrowed the ideas of these texts—specifically the technique of directly asking participants what motivated their participation—as a means to grasp how and why students choose to participate in gospel choirs. Additionally, these works inspired me to also question the motivations students have for continuing to perform the music in their later years of college and after graduation.

A selection of the literature I studied introduced me to, and challenged, my thoughts on cultural representation. When I started this project, I was primarily interested in gospel choirs as a representation of "Blackness" by the African American students. After reviewing the Kahan Sablo's (2008) and Mellonee Burnim's (1980) scholarship, I recognized the need to widen my scope and to take into account the number of non-Black students who participate in, and fully support, their respective gospel choirs. Sablo's text investigates how African American students are often marginalized at primarily White institutions. The article explains that "participation decreased feelings of marginalization and enhanced feelings of social integration" for African American students who were otherwise often uninvolved on their campuses (2008, p. 5). Burnim further illustrates the role of gospel music as part of culturally enriching education and discusses how gospel can be seen as less of just-a-genre and more of a "complex of ideology, aesthetic, and behavior" (Burnim, 1980, p. 68).

Combining my thoughts on these two texts, I considered what it would mean to think of gospel choirs as not only a community of African American experience for African Americans, but rather a social community for students of varying ethnicities who found support within the academic gospel setting. Additionally, the approach taken by Burnim inspired me to think of gospel music as not just a musical style, but an all-encompassing lifestyle: as a foundation community, an outlet for performance, and an inclusionary, participatory experience.

Two additional theoretical ideas helped frame my study of gospel music: Lawrence Levine's theory (1977) of gospel music bridging the nexus of sacredness and secularity, and the idea of gospel music existing as both a performative and participatory genre, as presented by Thomas Turino (2008). As an insider to the gospel tradition (as will be discussed throughout this text), I always saw gospel music as permeating every aspect of my life, so I never thought of the need to write about how the genre navigates both the sacred and secular realms. In his text, Levine presents gospel music as developing through the "sharpening dichotomy" between sacred music and secular music in African America (1977, p. 179). He explains this as due to the history of the music as a syncretic form developing from early Black hymnody and the blues. Turino's text (2008) speaks to the performance traditions of various genres. Although not centered on gospel, he discusses how some genres of music are performative; that is, designed to be observed and applauded. Conversely, he also addresses musics as participatory, in which attendees and trained participants interact with one another during the performance. Turino then explains some musics can, and do, successfully exist in both the participatory

and performative settings. From these two studies, I was able to investigate how gospel music on college campuses functions as a sacred music in a secular context and how the genre serves in both participatory and performative contexts.

My research, then, contributes to the body of scholarship on gospel music by addressing college gospel choirs, specifically, and by emphasizing the need to preserve, develop, and promote this genre of music in academia. As previously stated, I frame my argument around several concepts that have been unnoticed or under researched in the literature on gospel music. The ideas of double consciousness are regularly suggested in writings of gospel music in academe, but never fully explored. The role of the choir in representation of Black culture tends to be unknown and under theorized. And the position of gospel choirs, especially college gospel choirs, in the cultural memory of the United States is often a superficial notion of the ensemble. However, here I present this tradition in terms of its inherent significance for American cultural memory.

Vocabulary

There are certain terms frequently used to discuss the activity and characteristics of a gospel ensemble that may not be known or familiar to a non-participant or in a classroom setting. Some of these terms are derived from the church setting, from which this music developed; others have developed within the college choir context. Importantly, the terms used here were taken from my experience, my fieldwork, and from other gospel choir directors. The relevant terminology has never been through a "codification" process; thus my explanation of these terms also relies heavily upon the participants and particular contexts within this project.

Key terms delineate roles of members, staff people, instrumentation, stylistic characteristics of the song, conceptions of gospel performance and its settings. With regard to the ensemble, the term "director" defines the primary conductor of the ensemble. This may be either a faculty person or a hired staff person (frequently one who avidly participates in gospel music in the community) overseeing gospel choir courses or the student leading an extracurricular gospel group. The term "advisor" refers to the faculty person who is responsible for the group if it is student-led. In the case of academic-based gospel choirs, the director and advisor may be the same faculty member.

There are specific terms used, also, to discuss components of the music. Any gospel song contains the "choir," "sections," and the "lead." The "choir" refers to the ensemble singing together. "Sections" refers to divisions based on voice type—sopranos, altos, tenors, and frequently basses. The "lead" denotes a soloist singing a specified section of the song and often providing ad-lib in between phrases when the choir sings. The "chorus" is the section of the song that the choir sings together, often repeated periodically throughout the song. The "solo" is the part that the soloist, or "lead" sings, dispersed in between choruses. Additionally, there may be a "vamp," a tag in the latter portion of a song where each section of the ensemble has a specified riff.

Within the context of performance there is a unique set of vocabulary terms as well. The primary venue for gospel performance tends to be a concert setting designed in the style of an African American church service; as such, many aspects of the concert are similar to that experience. A "praise break" is where up-tempo music plays independently (often including the gospel walk-up mentioned earlier) while congregants

and choir members clap, shout, and participate in glossolalia, or speaking-in-tongues. "Shouting" as described earlier, involves people who are excited in worship, dancing in a fashion similar to that of the ring shout typical of earlier eras in African American sacred music and religious history. Examples of a "praise break" and "shouting" are recalled and described in vivid detail in chapter three.

Chapter Outline

Throughout this text I present three primary points for thought: (1) the continued need for collegiate gospel choirs, based upon the cultural and social education that may be gained from them; (2) the need to expand the standard music curriculum to include gospel; and (3) to challenge the status quo acceptance of gospel music being "less than" any other academically quantified music. In the following chapters, these arguments are presented in the context of the history of gospel music, my fieldwork research and experiences, and the conceptual frames of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation.

In chapter two, I address the foundation of gospel music in the academic setting. I argue that academic gospel choirs must be contextualized in colleges and universities by investigating socio-musical interactions among selected African diasporic communities and by researching the historical musical constituents that were sources for gospel music development. Moreover, I explore the connectedness of gospel music to African American church traditions. Additionally, I provide context for how Black church traditions represent a mentality of resilience that has been adopted into the college gospel community.

Chapter three demonstrates how the college gospel choir creates and promotes social community on campuses and among students. Evidence shows that choral singing and participation (in both western and non-western traditions) foster the development of community. This chapter centers on conceptually defining *community* as active participation within gospel music, and providing understanding of community in the gospel tradition on college and university campuses.

Chapter four connects the need for cultural dialogue on college and university campuses, the use of embedded textual meanings within gospel songs, and the employment of the voice within the gospel tradition to the overarching ideals of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation. In this chapter I present three case studies from the ensembles I observed and to display the role of communal interaction within the gospel setting.

In chapter five I revisit the "field" and provide my final thoughts on the role of gospel choirs in the college setting. Through a review of Eileen Southern's article "New Needs and New Directions: Needs for Research in Black-American Music" (1973), I assess where my own research fits into the scope of continued African American music study. Finally, I share my findings in regard to college and university gospel choirs and how they do, in fact, prove to be successful means for understanding double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation.

Chapter 2

"My Soul Looks Back and Wonders How I Got Over": How Gospel Arrived in the College Setting[6]

Understanding the significance of college gospel choirs requires a clear grasp of the musical legacies and cultural traditions that produce gospel music. To acquire this information, one must venture into the history of American music and (re)discover the development of Black sacred music. Furthermore, one must acknowledge the African diasporic ideals of music and community as inclusionary and mutually beneficial, as the same concept finds place in college and university gospel ensembles. Therefore, I argue that the significance of gospel choirs in academic settings can be more clearly understood by investigating the importance of socio-musical relationships cross-culturally, exploring the history of gospel music, and examining the role of gospel in African American church traditions of today.

Cross-Cultural and Socially Significant Choral Singing throughout History

Exploring the sense of unity found in choral ensembles globally provides ample opportunity to understand the sense of community in university and college gospel choirs today. According to John Potter and Neil Sorrell (2012), choral singing has existed throughout the history of humankind because singing in a unified manner produces an environment of connectedness among participants, in turn, fostering relationships and bonds (2012, p. 19). They continue by stating that the "shared activity and means of

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[6] "How I Got Over" (Franklin, 1999) is a gospel song that has re-emerged multiple times throughout history, recorded by various artists, from R&B singer Aretha Franklin to gospel legends such as Vicki Winans. The song entails the West African ideals of the "sankofa"—reflecting on the past to understand how one achieved success.

reaching out to other human beings [through song], expresses trust and support…create[ing] empathy" for one another (Potter and Sorrell, 2012, p. 19). And it is these ideas of trust and support that foster community in musical environments around the world.

Many African cultures highlight the importance of music—especially communal music—to society. One example is found in the discussion of the Mbuti people of the Ituri Forest of the Congo by Colin Turnbull (1962). Within his discourse, Turnbull addresses communal singing in regard to the *molimo* ceremony. The *molimo* itself is the title of a pipe-like tube used as a horn for the special occasion known also as the "*molimo*," or the "time of the *molimo*" (see Turnbull, 1962, p. 144). During this time, the Mbuti people—both men and women—would sing the sacred songs of the *molimo* and youths would play the *molimo* instrument as part of the ritualistic celebration. The intent of the ritual was to restore balance to the forest (the spiritual and life leadership of the Mbuti) after negative experiences—for the wellbeing of the entire Mbuti community (see Turnbull, 1962, p. 51).

Similarly, Veit Erlmann, in his explanations of the Zulu musical style *isicathamiya* (an *a capella* song form of South Africa), demonstrates connection between performance and community. He explains that, while a popular, choral music song-form, *isicathamiya* "is deeply interwoven with the overall process of urbanization and labor migration in South Africa" (Erlmann, 1992, p. 688). The predominantly male-performed music style expresses the sentiments of Zulu migrant workers communally, but also served as entertainment when they were away from their daily labor.

Additionally, Barz (2006) discusses how the musics of the Tanzanian *kwayas* [pronounced "choirs"] exhibit a "microcosm of an idealized social system" (2006, p. 21). He explains that the East African groups are popular and numerous because the "function of a *kwaya* [is] meeting the needs not only of the greater community, but as a community in and of itself" (Barz, 2006, p.22-3). Barz goes on to argue that the groups, which perform sacred music (of a hybrid practice of Christianity and Islam), are composed of Tanzanian people who gather "on a regular basis to sing, pray, mourn, play sports, seek counsel, and advice, learn about their spirituality, and even look for potential spouses" (Barz, 2006, p. 21).

Experiencing Music as Ghanaian Culture

During 2008, I had the opportunity to experience this same notion of social significance within musical performance in Accra, Ghana. After twenty-six hours of flights, we arrived at Trinity Theological Seminary about midday Ghana time and, after a brief meal, the twenty-four of us students were ushered into a large classroom with a keyboard on a desk. The walls were filled with louvered windows that were all open, letting the breeze blow and allowing distant drumming to permeate the space. We all took seats in the hard wooden chairs and began to chatter, not knowing what was to come. The florescent lights hummed lightly—and being musical nerds, two of my friends and I began harmonizing chords based on the pitch of the lights.

After a few minutes of downtime with our peers, our host, Dr. Mante came in and pronounced to us the widely-known West African proverb that stated "If you walk, you can dance; if you talk you can sing." In a bit of confusion as to why he shared this, we all

stared at him blankly. The only sound in the room was that of distant drumming and humming lights. At that point he informed us that the Ghanaian way of life embodies music constantly. And, as such, we would be expected to perform musically. Adding to this, Dr. Mante then said that our class would be expected to make music as a group because communal singing was seen as much more effective than individual performance. At that time, while we were all gasping at how we would perform as a group (being that only my two friends with whom I had been harmonizing earlier and I were musicians), Dr. Mante asked who the musicians of the group were. We reluctantly raised our hands and put our heads down. And I distinctly recall seeing my own face reflected to me in the shiny, lacquered floor when he said, "You three will lead the choir that your class will become."

In the end we did, in fact, accomplish such a feat. That experience, which we entered into unenthusiastically, unified our class as a community. We took pride in our music and in our performances together. The experience promoted all of us getting to know one another much better during our African journey. The musical cultural practices of Ghana, as well as the examples from Zulu *isicathamiya* and the Tanzanian *kwayas* articulate the purpose of musical communities in Africa and provide entry for understanding how African practices relate to European traditions of vocal performance and connect with African American choral experiences today.

Historical Foundation of Gospel Music

Understanding gospel as a campus-music requires one to first recognize the genre as a product of African American communal life and the musical components, or

retentions, of African culture found throughout those lived experiences. The unique combination of African cultural pride, the destructive act of enslavement, and interaction among enslaved people,[7] free Blacks, and White Americans paved the way for gospel music to exist in its current form (Erlmann, 1992, p. 183). As discussed by Brunetti (2004), this "musical-acculturation" process (2004, p. 2)—the act of active and passive acquisition of musical ideas, contours, and themes—occurs both intentionally and unintentionally because of the human psyche and how it recalls these musical concepts and attaches them to other themes. In the case of enslaved people, I apply this idea of acculturation to their musical creative processes. Scholars Darden (2004), Wise (2002), Burnim (1980), and Pollard (2008), discuss musical-acculturation in their writings and all agree that Africans brought and retained cultural elements when they came to the United States.

Wise further develops this idea, ascertaining that these "African cultural [elements] have been applied to every situation and setting in which African Americans have been placed" (2002, p. 11). Tilford Brooks (1983) shares this stance and he explains that the "elements" referred to above are, more accurately, a list of what he terms "African retentions"—characteristics from African musical communities finding expression in all African-diasporic music. Gospel music results from combining these African retentions, the genres of ring shouts, spirituals, African American hymnody, and

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[7] In this text I refer to Africans brought to the United States and born in the United States before Emancipation as "enslaved people" and not "slaves" based on the principle that "slaves" historically entered into a period of enslavement to pay off a debt, whereas these people were enslaved against their free-will for the benefit of others, and not for self.

the blues. College gospel choirs, then, express this as well, but, additionally, include the component of diversity and dynamic social change.

Ring-shouts and Spirituals

During the enslavement period in the United States, one key musical event promoted the development of African diasporic musics and served foundationally for many genres to follow: the *ring-shout*. The ring-shout served as part of Black worship activity—including acts of singing, dancing, and calling—documented since the 1840s, though evidence suggests it has existed longer (see Southern, 1989). Floyd explains that this event entailed a great deal of musical and physical movement (2002, p. 50). Further, he notes, "From contemporaneous descriptions of the shout[,] we learn that the participants stood in a ring and…walk[ed] around in a shuffle, with the feet keeping in contact with close proximity to the floor, and that there were 'jerking,' 'hitching motions, particularly in the shoulders" (2002, p. 50). A solely religious event, the ring shout occurred within what Darden calls the hidden praise houses of the early Christian enslaved people (2004, p. 45).

Expressing the historical significance of the ring-shout, Robert Darden cites Sterling Stuckey's discussion, explaining that it was and is, the "most demonstrably African survivor from the [enslaved people's] earliest days in North America" (Darden, 2004, p. 45). Furthermore, Darden points out that "shout" in this terminological use does not refer to "yelling" as it does in the traditional American use of the term. Rather, linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner explains, the term "shout" "links to West African Islamic

word *saut*, meaning to move or dance around the *kaaba,"* a circular structure, thus the circular movement pattern (Darden, 2004, p. 45).

Furthermore, Stuckey explains that shouts emerged in a context where African people, regardless of ancestry or ethnicity, "recognized values common to them--the values of ancestor worship and contact, communication and teaching through storytelling and trickster expressions, and of various other symbolic devices" (Stuckey 1987, p. 16). And, as suggested earlier, Southern says that ring-shout practices emerged much earlier than the primary documents frequently indicate (which cite 1840), arguing that the act has unknown foundational dates. She states, "The exact point in time when this [ring-shout event] began to takes place cannot be pinned down. As early as 1801 Methodist clergyman William Colbert observed, after visiting a Black church, that 'the Lord was praised in the song, in the shout, and in the dance'" (1990, p. xxvi).

The spiritual, the "song" mentioned in Southern's previous quote, served as a crucial and necessary aspect of the ring-shout and as a stand-alone genre. According to Deborah Pollard (2008), spirituals are the Christianized enslaved peoples' "praise and worship [songs created] in the fields" (2008, p. 21). She states that these songs contained prayers, moans, and gospel messages. Today, we also recognize them as multilayered, vocal music entities with varying, doubly-conscious meanings. Floyd (2002) identifies the importance and the vocal physicality of the spiritual within the ring-shout. He explains:

> These movements [i.e., the ring-shout] were usually accompanied by a spiritual, sung by lead singers, "based" by others in the group (probably with some kind of

> responsorial device and by hand-clapping and knee-slapping). The "thud" of the basic rhythm was continuous, without pause or hesitation. And the singing that took place in the shout made use of interjections of various kinds, elisions, blue-notes, and call-and-response devices, with the sound of the feet against the floor serving as an accompanying device. (2002, p. 50)

As established in the above quotation, it is evident that the spirituals provided the vocal accompaniment to the percussive, dance-based, rhythmically-infused activity known as the ring-shout. But, separate from the ring-shout, spirituals were instrumental in the development of African American music and culture.

Spirituals served a variety of functions for people both outside of and within the African diasporic community. Those outside of the community recognized spirituals as a combination of enslaved people's broken English, African dialects, Biblical messages, and African musical retentions (Levine, 1993). Spirituals were sung in the fields as people worked and in their veiled places of worship for their religious practices—as a means to teach and recount Biblical stories that they could not, or at least were not supposed to, read (see Hamm, 1983, p. 114). However, to those within the community, the songs served even more functions. Primarily, the spirituals conveyed positive messages varying from escape, to hope, to basic encouragement. Lawrence-McIntyre (1987) summarizes this crucial point by reasoning that spirituals featured an intrinsic double consciousness to their existence. She explains that spirituals "operated in a mediatory manner between masters and slaves. Masters believed that Blacks who sang spirituals worked more efficiently and obediently" (Lawrence-McIntyre, 1987, p. 383).

Conversely, the slaves utilized Biblical storylines "to retain aspects of their traditional religions in the form and structure of their songs" (Lawrence-McIntyre, 1987, p. 383).

Arthur Jones continues the discussion of the intrinsic purposes of the spiritual, explaining "there is no question that spirituals, for enslaved Africans, provided a plethora of essential psychological and social functions for the enslaved community" (Jones, 2004, p. 257). Sharing the position of Lawrence-McIntyre, Jones clarifies that "perhaps the most important of these functions, from a psychological standpoint, was the use of the songs for coping with and transcending emotional and physical trauma" that people suffered during the enslavement period (Jones, 2004, p. 257). The song texts embodied the emotional frustration, loss, and tiresome nature of physical captivity.

In the post-emancipation period, African American hymnody displaced spirituals in popular performance. The spiritual song form remained central to the rural aesthetic, but, within the African American religious urban community, spirituals, which served as a link to slavery, generally fell out of favor (see Southern, 1997, p. 262). Southern explains that, with the development of independent Black Christian churches and denominations, hymnody began to overtake the genre in popular performance (1997, p. 262). She states that enslaved people were already using White hymn texts in spirituals by borrowing "lines and phrases from their favorite hymns and scriptural passages, adapt[ing] motifs, images, and themes from such sources to compose the texts of their spirituals, to which they then added verses of their own invention" (Southern, 1989, p. 155). Conversely, with the cultural shift of emancipation, emphasis within African American worship settings began to rely more heavily on hymnody.

Hymnody and Concertized Spirituals

Hymnody usage in the African American community, a practice that continues today, has its foundation within the worship settings of enslaved and free Blacks prior to emancipation. Southern notes that in 1801—the same year as the first written record of a ring-shout, well before slavery ended—the first hymnal intentionally for Black congregations was compiled and published by Richard Allen, one of the founding fathers of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination (AME) (Southern, 1987, p. 127). This hymnal was for use in his Philadelphia church for free African Americans in the north.

In addition to singing from this hymnal, many congregations also sang highly improvised versions of hymns until near emancipation. At this point, African Americans began infusing their style of hymnody into worship, with delineation made between their own music and European hymnody. In her discussion of the "antebellum church," as she terms it, Southern explains that an unnamed northerner visiting a southern plantation service in 1858 noted that slaves performed their own improvised hymns in church services. Recounting the experience of the northerner, she notes that he "observed that the slaves used the term *spiritual himes* [*sic*] for their own improvised songs to distinguish their songs from the hymns of Watts and Wesley" (Southern, 1991, p. 24). Worship containing both the European hymns and the hybrid spiritual hymns prevailed until after liberation, when musicians began regularly composing hymns and hymnals for African American worship. Southern notes that these musical developments came from the founding of various African American denominations (Baptist, Methodist, Primitive,

and the early vestiges of Black Pentecostalism) and their umbrella organizations, like the National Baptist Convention (Southern, 1997, p. 262).

Additionally, African American composers, some of whom were educated in the newly formed Black schools and colleges, began harnessing and applying the ideas of European hymnody. And, as Boyer (1995) explains, they combined the ideas and characteristics of European hymnody with spiritual elements and "African American musical aesthetics, such as flattened notes, altered rhythmical pulses, and pentatonic scales" to create the category of Black hymnody. Following the compositional practices of Richard Allen, African American composers, such as William Sherwood, Charles Price Jones, Charles Tindley, and Lucie Campbell, flourished (see Wise, 2002, p. 31). Their style of writing hymns contained chorus lines placed variably within the song context (i.e., between every verse, or after all the verses have been sung continuously), a common practice in today's gospel compositions.

Though hymnody was most significant in African American sacred life, the concert versions of spirituals emerge as most important within the context of school choirs and educational institutions. The concert spiritual entails western classical arrangement of African American spiritual melodies and texts for western concert performances. This genre of African American diasporic music served as the "other side of the divide" when traditional spirituals gave way, popularly, to hymnody.

The first group to notably capture, compose, and capitalize upon this genre was the Fisk Jubilee Singers. As Darden points out, "The story of the Jubilee Singers is one of the few bright spots on the otherwise grim history of post-reconstruction African

American history" (2004, p. 115). Fisk University opened in 1866. Shortly afterwards, the Jubilee Singers developed as the African American university's concert choir. Unfortunately, as with many African American institutions of the time, due to lack of federal funding and financial support from its community, Fisk's finances soon became dire (Darden, 2004, p. 116). Therefore, in 1871, a fundraising endeavor wherein the choir would tour to raise money was undertaken. Both Darden's text (2004) and the Fisk choir official history website (2011, May 10) recount how, due to the popularity of minstrelsy at the time, the Fisk choir met with a great deal of adversity. Despite these challenges, the students continued to tour and perform in hopes of raising the funds needed to save the troubled institution. As their tour seemed to be failing, the ensemble sang classical arrangements of spirituals. The audience responded positively to this performance and philanthropically donated to support Fisk University (Darden, 2004, p. 117).

Following this successful performance, the Jubilee Singers eventually undertook singing primarily concertized, or concert, spirituals and raised enough money to save the financially destitute university (Jubilee History, 2011, May 10). Other choirs, like the ensemble at Hampton University and other historically Black colleges and universities, followed suit, setting and performing spirituals in a western traditional style. And, while not a direct predecessor to the gospel genre, these concert-spiritual ensembles did introduce components of African American sacred music into the popular and academic arena.

Gospel Music and the Blues

In keeping with the text found in traditional versions and concert arrangements of spirituals and the hymn tunes, the African American blues form also discussed and expressed concern for the state of humanity in the Black community. The blues recounted emotional situations of depression, heartache, general loss, and financial woe. But, as Stuckey states, the songs were even more than "a statement of personal misery. At its base, the blues song is a sort of exalted or transmuted expression of criticism or complaint, the very creation or singing of which serves as a balm or antidote" (1987, p. 124). The improvisational, strophic form of the blues relayed the difficulties of life and served as a "healing salve" for recovering from those challenges via emotional expression (Stuckey, 1987).

But, as Southern argues, the key difference between spirituals and the blues is the lack of a religious basis in the blues. She explains that religious singers emphasized positivity and focused on having the support of God in all endeavors (Southern, 1973, p. 27). Conversely, Southern notes the blues singer is "down and out, he knows things are going to get worse, and he doesn't bother to pray because he doubts whether God cares what happens to him—in fact, he is not even sure that there is a God" (Southern, 1973, p. 27). Southern goes on to explain that while spirituals were considered antiquated at the time (as explained earlier), they could be performed by most people. The blues, however, were seen as "unrespectable" and were shunned by many African Americans, especially religious devotees (Southern, 1973, p.27). Despite this unfavorable view, many African Americans who performed the blues became quite versatile and popular musicians.

Though the genre can be (and often is) improvisatory, performers have to successfully implement characteristics readily-identified as "blues" in order to be seen as skillful blues personas. According to Stuckey (1987), these identifiable features exist within the formulaic musical structure of the blues. He explains that the songs consist of an "original statement which is repeated, possibly with a slight word change or an added expletive, followed by another statement that supplements or rounds out the first" (Stuckey, 1987, p. 126). Also, the songs may have additional stanzas that share the rhyming pattern found in the original verse (Stuckey, 1987, p. 127). Once a musician understands how to employ this formula, they can potentially become a proficient blues person and gain notoriety. One such musician who skillfully melded the formula with improvisatory skill was Thomas Dorsey, the blues pianist who later became known as the father of gospel music.

Thomas Dorsey, the "Father of Gospel Music"

Dorsey, the musician who successfully combined components of hymnody, spirituals, and the blues to create gospel, began his musical career early in life. Born in 1899, he grew up during the developmental era of Black denominations, revivals, and hymn-writers (Darden, 2004, p. 165). During his childhood, while Sherwood, Tindley, Campbell, and the National Baptist Convention were producing African American hymnals and sacred songbooks (see Wise, 2002, p. 44), Dorsey was discovering his natural musical talent and his passion for what Darden refers to as "barrelhouse piano" (2004, p. 166).

Having grown up in the post-emancipation musical scene of Atlanta and later settling as a young adult in Chicago, Dorsey discovered blues piano playing and composition as his primary musical outlet. He honed his abilities and became the accompanist for blues singer Ma Rainey's "Wild Cats Jazz Band," where he performed under the name Georgia Tom (Fifer, 2003). Moreover, by performing with and for Ma Rainey, Dorsey became both well-known as a blues man and a skillful blues piano improviser (see Brooks, 1983). That name and experience, however, were short-lived. Samuel Floyd states, "It was in Chicago that one of the most notable syntheses occurred: Thomas A. Dorsey's melding of blues elements with those of the religious hymns to make the gospel blues, spawning both what became known as the 'Dorsey song' and the choral gospel blues style" (1995, p. 126). After his spiritual conversion in 1921, Dorsey performed as a church musician but continued to play for Ma Rainey as their friendship provided his first platform for performing gospel music.

The term *gospel* became the title of the sacred-blues hybrid after Dorsey recognized the need to delineate his musical style as distinctive. After his spiritual conversion, Dorsey began composing his own hymns. But Wise (2002) explains that, sometimes in performing his own hymns, Dorsey would revert to his secular music past, adding "jazz rhythms and blues flavor to his music which resulted in the new type of song" (Wise, 2002, p. 45). Dorsey called these selections "gospel songs…to make a distinction between the various types of sacred music being performed within the Black church at that time" (Wise, 2002, p. 45).

Gospel music, as coined by Dorsey, quickly developed a popular following. It is important to note, however, that gospel was not readily accepted by churches. Rather, it was considered sacrilegious and inappropriate in the church setting (see Southern, 1997). Southern says this was due to gospel songs sounding like the secular blues, which, as stated earlier, were considered unrespectable. She explains, "Gospel songs are sung in the same style as the blues with accompaniment, and the singer takes the same liberties with the melody and rhythms as do blues singers—or any singers of traditional African American music" (Southern, 1973, p. 29). Rather, the music became most recognizable through performances of gospel quartets and choruses (Southern, 1997, p. 464), by Dorsey playing his gospel music on select occasions when churches permitted, and when Ma Rainey allowed him to use her venues. But, by 1930, according to Peretti, "[African American] churches had especially welcomed the sounds of the blues into their services" (2009, p. 129). And by 1931, Dorsey had created the "world's first [church] gospel chorus" at Ebenezer Baptist Church of Chicago (Southern, 1997, p. 461).

Gospel Music and the African American Church[8]

The intrinsic social significance and communal value of the African American church increased as gospel music became a standard and accepted component of worship practices. As noted by Herwood McClerking and Eric McDaniels, the "Black church is a storied institution" (2005, p. 722). And, as a storied institution, the African American

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[8] "The African American church" as stated in this section refers to the various factions of African American churches and denominations being viewed as a corporate, unified body of religious believers. While this, arguably, can be considered an over-generalization in some contexts, the term as it is used here discusses specific components of the African American worship aesthetic that permeate through most, if not all, African American Christian religious practices.

church has continually had to prove its malleability and resilience when facing hardships. During slavery, as previously mentioned in this chapter, the early vestiges of the African American church allowed for African concepts of worship to continue. Additionally, the church environment provided space for enslaved people to learn—though the learning was limited to Biblical stories. Within the confines of enslavement, where families were regularly separated, the church (as a body of believers) became a familial entity and a source of stability in what could arguably be considered an unstable world. Due to these kinds of experiences, McClerking and McDaniel (2005) note, the African American church became considered the "backbone of African American society" (p. 722). Approaching this sense of irrepressible motivation, African American church-goers attribute this resilience to the Christian faith in God supporting the African American community through their hardships and with hope that situations will improve (see Southern, 1973).

Beyond slavery, the church became the center of African American social life. With the challenges of poverty, segregation, racism, and systematic exclusion, the church setting existed as one of the few spaces African Americans could attend and not be oppressed. Robert Taylor, Karen Lincoln, and Linda Chatters (2005) explain this point, stating that "ethnographic and historical research indicate that because of exclusion and disenfranchisement of African Americans from mainstream societal establishments, religious institutions play a pivotal supportive role in Black communities" (p. 502). This concept, in many ways, mirrors the earlier discussion of *kwayas, molimo,* and *isicathamiya,* as well as my own experience with Ghanaian music and culture, in

displaying how community and music are intertwined. As such, the church, and the Christian religious beliefs attached to it, became instrumental in the development of African America.

Dorsey's gospel music became the most recognizable soundtrack of African American Christianity and church practices. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) explain that, within the African American tradition, singing "shapes and defines Black being and creates cultural structures for Black expression" (chapter 12, section 1, para. 4). While hymnody and spirituals are still integral to African American worship today (as discussed later in this chapter), the popularity of gospel music—inspired by the choir's unique appearance, the jazz and blues infused sound, and the Christian message within the text—allowed the genre to become the most prevalent in the sacred setting. Moreover, the establishment of the church choir became an example of community within community—another source of support within African American church traditions (see Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990). And, as I argue in chapters three and four, college gospel choirs utilize the popularity of gospel music and this idea of musical community to sustain and support choir members on campuses.

Civil Rights Ensembles and the College Choir

By 1961, thirty years had passed since Dorsey founded the gospel choir at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Chicago. Gospel music had since developed a certain level of legitimacy and was becoming prevalent throughout America's musical community. This point is iterated by Southern who notes that, in this year, Mahalia Jackson was invited to sing gospel music at the inaugural party for President John F. Kennedy (1997,

p. 486). Gospel choirs had become common in the African American church setting as well, and the major denominational organizations had taken notice and responded accordingly (see Boyer, 1995, p.181-4). The National Baptist Convention had developed its own musical component for its annual gatherings and in 1969, according to Southern, James Cleveland organized the Gospel Music Workshop of America, referred to as GMWA (1997, p. 486). This organization, which focuses solely on music, brought people from the gospel tradition together annually to introduce newly composed music and to create mass choirs (on regional and national levels) to sing praises as a group.

Similarly, ensembles created during the Civil Rights Movement (arguably from 1955 until 1969) united various groups of people to sing. The primary difference between the two sets of ensembles, however, was found in their musical purpose. Instead of singing praise, the Civil Rights groups were singing for equality. Peretti (2009) states:

> The grassroots Civil Rights Movement used music to foster community, solidarity, and fortitude. In 1955, during the bus boycott in Alabama…Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. organized a chorus to spread the message and instill morality throughout the city's large Black community. Their songs were recorded by journalists, as were the hymns and gospel songs sung at the church meetings where King mobilized the boycotters. (p. 143)

Darden explains that the music accompanying the movement found its primary theme in the Labor Rights tune, "'We Shall Overcome,' which combined the [slave song] 'I'll Be Alright' with the text of C.A. Tindley's 'I'll Overcome Someday'" (2004, p. 251). And, according to Peretti, the spirituals and gospel, most of which already contained liberation

texts (from the days of enslavement) "more directly influenced the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Movement and the energetic soul music of the inner city" more so than any other genre (2009, p. 146). These ensembles—Civil Rights and denominationally based—became a place for the common themes of faith and freedom. And these concepts of faith and freedom, coupled with the idea of "fostering community" spilled over into the desires of college-age students within their academic settings (Peretti, 2009, p. 146).

During the 1960s, college gospel choirs began appearing, wherein, according to Jackson-Brown (1997), "Howard University led the way, [followed by] White campuses with Black student populations" (1997, p. 37). And according to Dr. Horace Boyer, the gospel choirs on campuses fulfilled a variety of purposes. He explains that "gospel choirs began on college campuses to provide some continuity between the Black church and the academic life, but students found that they liked it and wanted to perpetuate its existence" (Boyer in Jackson, 2004, p. 134). He goes on to say that, in many circumstances, gospel choirs provide "the one visible evidence of the presence of Black students. They're not in the theater group; they're not in the symphony orchestra; they're not in the ballet troupe. They are in the gospel choir because they find, through it, some means of expression" (Boyer in Jackson, 2004, p. 134). As will be discussed in the upcoming chapter, gospel choirs served, and continue to serve, all the purposes Boyer listed within campus life. More so, they serve these purposes not only for African Americans, but for students of a variety of backgrounds.

All of the events discussed here, from the first gospel songs through the Civil Rights Movement, helped establish gospel music as a valid genre for performance and study. And, as Southern (1989) explains, the history of gospel music secured the genre's place as a popular American music. She explains that throughout the 1970s, gospel "firmly established itself…was heard in churches of all denominations; on college campuses wherever there was a sizable Black-student population; in concert halls, theaters, and movie houses; and on radio and television" (Southern, 1997, p. 487). Moreover, gospel music literature, as explained by Southern, "no longer confined itself to the anecdotal but included solidly researched articles and books, bibliographies and discographies, and doctoral dissertations of quality" (1997, p. 487).

Indeed the music developed a following, and gospel choirs became the primary vehicle for dissemination of the genre. Within the college choir context, students' passion for performing African diasporic sacred music facilitated an appreciation of ensemble-style gospel performance. And, as Southern argues, as gospel choirs at colleges and universities developed this appreciation, "gospel repertoires in the 1980's often were enlarged by the addition of non-gospel music performed in the gospel style, particularly spirituals but also other musical types" (Southern, 1997, p. 477). It is this repertory shift that allowed for the performance practices and functions of gospel choirs today.

African American Church Music in the Present

Today, as a participant in a predominantly African American denomination, I still see the effects of these earlier periods. During the October 11, 2011 service at our

church, Bethel Baptist Church of Morristown, Tennessee, I witnessed this same musical phenomenon of combined European hymn practice, Black hymnody, and gospel working together in the worship setting. During this specific service, we sang three hymns, aptly at the start, middle, and end of the service, in the European tradition: "Doxology/Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow," "All Things Come of Thee," and "Bless Be the Tie That Binds." These hymns were all sung congregationally, the latter two led by the pastor from the pulpit. "All Things Come of Thee" comes from the Baptist tradition, but is sung from the arrangement found in the African Methodist hymnal discussed earlier—I assume this practice grew out of the historical role of Richard Allen, the AME church, and hymnody in the development of African American church practices.

Interspersed between these hymn tunes, however, we sang songs that have become adopted as standards in Black hymnody. These songs included "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand," and "The Storm is Almost Gone," which would more properly be labeled, by today's standards as "gospel" but serves the role of Black hymnody in the African American Baptist tradition. Both of these songs use the entire church band (comprising two electronic synthesizers, a pianist, bass guitars, lead guitars, and a drum kit) for accompaniment. Reflecting common practice of today, we also sang a medley, "So Glad I'm Here in Jesus Name/Get Right Church and Let's Go Home/I'm Going Home on the Morning Train," a combination of Dorsey-style gospel and the traditional spiritual.

This experience of gospel music in my own church reiterated how gospel-style accompaniment and gospel music have become integral to the African American church.

Moreover, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) reiterate how congregational singing in African American worship traditions has become "a well-known device for the temporary reduction of social alienation and for the accomplishment of an ad interim sense of community" (1990, Chapter 12, Section 1, para. 3).

Participants in my study also echo this positioning of gospel music, but in the college gospel setting instead of church, thereby supporting my argument (discussed further in upcoming chapters) that university and college gospel choirs are modeled after African American church choirs. One student, B.B., discussed how the Berea College BME experience was communal and inclusive of a variety of African American sacred musics. She stated:

> BME was a unique situation for me. I moved to Kentucky from Texas and the only thing about the school that made me feel at home was the gospel choir. It was a lot like church back home but without the preaching—we sang hymns sometimes, gospel songs, and usually one or two spirituals per term. I miss that choir. I was part of something there, you know? We sang, but we were a family in a lot of ways. (personal communication June, 26, 2011)

B.B. highlighted the idea of community both found in the African American church settings and the various cultural groups discussed in the opening of this chapter, and also the positioning of additional sacred music genres in the musically inclusive, academic, gospel choir setting. Moreover she recognized what I sought to document in this thesis, that college and university gospel choirs create and sustain musical community on college campuses.

Chapter 3

"I Pray for You, You Pray for Me; Watch God Change Things": Understanding the Social Community of the College Gospel Choir[9]

College and university gospel choirs produce an environment conducive to developing community. As evidenced in the previous chapter, the history of choral singing—both western and African—articulates the circular idea of singing as an expression of community and, conversely, community being displayed through unified singing. To better understand the social aspects of gospel choirs in academia, I define community, examine the employment of voice, discuss active participation, and investigate examples of gospel choir-centered social community.

Defining "Community"

The importance to college gospel choir participants of creating and being part of musical community quickly became evident in my ethnographic research. Communities are generally understood as a setting where people are brought together due to some sort of commonality—be it ethnicity, interests, or some other unifying concept. According to ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufmann Shelemay (2011), a community is "a body of people or things viewed collectively" (p. 356). Additionally, she explains that "collective" must contain some semblance of commonality making the objects within the group relate to one another (p. 356). The commonality expressed within the college gospel choir setting is, in part, the musical construct—gospel music itself. But, beyond the shared cultural

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[9] The text "I pray for you, you pray for me, and watch God change things," is extracted from the song "Be Blessed" by gospel composer Kurt Carr (2007). The song text focuses on the communicative property of praying for one another in the gospel tradition.

interest (the music), college gospel choirs also fulfill a social need for students by fostering community. According to anthropologist Anthony Cohen (1985), a community is "a matter of feeling, a matter which resides in the minds of the members themselves" (p. 21). Furthermore, in keeping with Cohen's explanation, Shelemay further defines community as being a mental construct, explaining that it is a social entity "based on sharing […] particular symbols, such as ritual orders or, for our purposes, musical performance" (2011, p. 358).

Community, in terms of gospel choirs, entails group unification based upon successful social interaction combined with musical performance. In college gospel choirs, comprehending oneself as part of the social community is just as important as physically being included—an idea that harkens back to the African aesthetic of musical inclusion. One can join gospel choirs and elect to not feel included, thus remaining an "outsider" who participates. But those who choose to socially integrate and participate help shape the gospel choral experience. In her discussion of punk-rock music, Paula Propst (2012) explains community in a way remarkably similar to that found among college gospel choirs. She states, "A community's common interests incorporate individual identities, local practices, and similar interests from other regions and generations" (p. 21). Those participants who invest in becoming gospel choir insiders are no exception to this. Members bring their own experiences with gospel to the group involvement, helping shape the choir community. Moreover, they work to perpetuate the ensemble in which they feel a part. Shelemay (2011) explains:

> By acknowledging music's integral role in social processes, one can move toward a framework [of understanding] that seeks both to define the attachments evoked through musical performance, and to frame dimensions of collective affiliation that are its outcomes. (p. 364)

Grasping the idea that music and social inclusion go "hand-in-hand" in musical communities, one can understand the significance of the social aspect and the bonds that develop when students perform together. When the community functions successfully, members perform music and recruit new members who then, in turn, bring new music and go out and recruit as well. This was not a foreign concept to the African American students who began these ensembles in the late 1960s. Rather, as explained in chapter two, it was an idea taken from their church experiences back home and transposed to their collegiate experience.

Church participation as an aspect of African American social life (both in the past and now) actively informs the role of college gospel choirs today. As anthropologist and sociologist St. Clair Drake (1965) argues, in the 1950s and 60s, African American social life centered on church participation (see 1965, p. 779). And, as stated in chapter two, that trend is still quite prevalent today. Furthermore, researchers Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) explain that "the social benefits of congregation participation are well known. The more people are involved in congregations, the more likely they are to develop friendships, to feel a sense of belonging, and to have a surplus of social support at their disposal" (p. 97). I argue that the same ideas apply to college gospel choirs, which grew out of the African American church aesthetic.

As explained in chapter two, the value of singing for the African American church is similar to early Christian worship practices. This is partly because the music plays an active role within the worship setting, but also because the choir itself becomes a community of support within the church. Being supportive of one another within the choir community allows, and even promotes, individuals to become supportive to one another in non-choir contexts as well. According to Horace Boyer (1979), supporting one another is in the nature of the music; African American sacred music is communicative (p. 6). Community interaction that produces gospel music allows space for gospel music performance; the performance experience then creates a community that produces gospel music; and so the cycle continues. Similarly, this same circular pattern provides for the continuance of college and university gospel choirs. College gospel choirs mimic the communal support created in church choirs for their own members on academic campuses and for expression within performance.

Employment of the Voice

In the gospel tradition, the voice is utilized to inspire, promote, and create social interaction. Furthermore, how the voice is used often delineates the roles of various community members. The use of voice for expressive purposes in the African American gospel setting is, arguably, similar to that explained by Fox (2004) in his discussions on country music. As stated in chapter one, Fox identifies "the sound of the voice [as] the sound of life in working-class Texas culture" (p. 317). He discusses how "feelings" (emotive perceptions of and from performance) within the spoken and sung domains of the voice are shared between both performers and participants within the Lockhart

community in terms of vocalization, style, and expression (2004, p. 155). Likewise, the interplay of speech/sung communications in gospel traditions functions in a similar manner, serving as a means of emotive conveyance in the gospel community for expressing faith, solidarity, and hope.

In the African American church and gospel environments, the role of the voice varies depending on whether it belongs to preachers, singers, or congregants. As stated earlier, according to Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), "good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions of a successful ministry. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise" (Chapter 12, section 1, para. 2). African American worship has always employed music, or the sung voice, as part of its core; from spirituals to revivals, and praise camps to choir rehearsals, singing has been part of African American religious traditions. Both singers and preachers in the gospel setting utilize the various components of speaking and singing to express faith as an aspect of worship service continuation—inspiring worship, promoting forward momentum within the service, and driving participation and engagement among congregants. Here I investigate a specific performance by Pastor Shirley Caesar of "Hold My Mule" to draw parallels between Fox's ideas and Caesar's utilization of voice in African American church traditions, to understand the implications of speech/sung sonorities as part of social community in gospel.

Pastor Shirley Caesar, a famous African American preacher and singer, employs the speech/sung sonorities of verbal art, recitation, and dramatic speech, providing one

example of voice being employed in gospel settings. In the specific performance discussed here, Caesar is addressing an outdoor worship event. The contents of the performance are diagrammed in Figure 1 below. Caesar begins with a sermon-like delivery about Campbell's Soup advertisements of her childhood (containing the phrases "that's what Campbell's soup tastes like" and "mmm-mmm-good"), which she compares to Psalms 34:8 (tbear3846, 2009). Within the presentation she inserts the musical phrasing of the soup commercial into her recitation. She then moves into a dramatic speech about a character named "Shouting John" and his mule. She tells the story, from first person point-of-view, of John being dismissed from a church because of his worship style (John "shouts," a practice frowned upon by his fellow parishioners). At the high point of her narrative, Caesar briskly transitions from speaking into dance and song (tbear3846, 2009). All of this activity occurs within ten minutes of footage.

Mapping of Artistic Mastery as Competent/Successful Singers (Fox, 2004, p. 275)		
Speech/sung sonorities as presented by Fox	Employment of vocal sonorities in "Hold My Mule" by Shirley Caesar	
Characteristics	"Campbell's Soup story"	"Shouting John/Hold My Mule"
Dramatic and poetic speech	0:00 – 0:39	3:17 – 4:16 5:30 – 5:33 6:43 – 6:58
Intertwined speech and song performance (Recitation and verbal art)	0:40 – 1:10 1:23 – 2:10 2:35 – 3:16	4:17 – 5:29 5:34 – 6:42 6:59 – 9:54
Singing as a conveyance of "feeling"	1:11 – 1:22 2:11 – 2:34	9:55 -10:57 (end)

Figure 1. Mapping of Artistic Mastery as Competent/Successful Singing
This chart lists the characteristics Fox (2004) identifies as necessary to successful master the speaking/singing sonorities as applies to this gospel music performance. The times, provided in minutes, note where each characteristic is prominent in the recording cited.

Harkening to earlier statements about preachers and orators, Caesar, as both a noted and accomplished singer and pastor, is aware of the contextual expectations of

voice within gospel performance and acts accordingly within the worship and performance settings. Moreover, Caesar is aware that her role as minister requires her to dynamically meld speech/sung sonorities to invigorate the audience who then, in turn, provide her with feedback to motivate her continued dynamic speaking and singing. Her active musical engagement spurs the congregants to participate emotively through crying, shouting, cheering, and ululating—becoming a worshipping musical community. Pastor Caesar and the congregants' involvement, wherein all participants have a specified role, mirror the act of participation and engagement that is also found within members of college gospel music community. I argue that, in college gospel choirs, members have to fulfill their roles, both as individual voices and as a collective voice, utilizing a variety of sonorities to convey the Biblical messages within song performance, and to be actively part of the musical community when the choir performs in gospel settings.

Active Musical Community Engagement

Active musical engagement in the college gospel community encompasses various principles of church gospel participation combined with the idea of *community* as an interchangeable term with *family*. Viewing fellow choir members as a personal community and/or a family, as these terms have proven interchangeable (in my observations) in relation to college gospel choirs, one gains a clearer understanding of how important social engagement is to the life of the ensemble. The "family" based terminology, according to discussions with Dr. Bullock, seems to have been adopted by gospel choirs based on the familial usage of the terms *brother, sister, mother,* and *father* in many traditional African American churches (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

Within African American churches, these titles are understood to refer to the Holy Bible wherein Jesus refers to friends and his followers as "brothers and brethren" (see Matthew 25:31-46 KJV), endearment terms of universal familiarity. Additionally, in the African-diasporic church setting, Toulis (1997) explains this practice as follows:

> In the sphere of sacred fictive [created] kinship, the terms "brother" and "sister" are regularly used to denote members of any age; since God is considered the Father of all saints and all saints are equal, then all saints must be siblings. "Brother and sister" are terms of neutral hierarchical value [with "mother" and "father" being the appropriate terms for respected elders in the setting] signifying a wide category of people who can be relied upon for support. (1997, p. 56)

While this familial categorizing occurs still today in African American churches, it has now become normative and often expected from college gospel choir directors and among members. For example, in her communications to The Ebony Heritage Singers at The University of Dayton, Dr. Donna Cox sometimes refers to her choir students as her "kids" (personal communication, December 18, 2011). Similarly, the Love United Gospel Choir members often refer to each other as "fam" (an abbreviated form of "family").

And as explained by Lawrence Levine (1977), and clarified later in this chapter, the idea of familial community is not limited to those who share the faith expressed in gospel music, but is rather inclusive to all who identify with gospel music performance because of the boundary-crossing nature of the genre. All participants who actively engage and become part of the community access the benefits of being a member of the

musical family. This idea of family and united community of support was explicitly expressed in one experience I had writing this thesis—the passing and memorializing of a member of the Berea College gospel choir community.

Experiencing and Observing College Gospel Family

The passing of one Berea College alumna—a former member and director of the BME—exhibited the social importance of participation in the familial community. K. Wilson had served as the student director, assistant director, director, and a guest clinician for the Black Music Ensemble. And, having been one of my own directors in undergraduate choral participation, she was scheduled to serve as an active informant in this research. Unfortunately, and unexpectedly, as I was editing chapter one, I received a phone call informing me of her untimely passing. As the coordinator for the Berea College BME alumni group, I was asked to help organize a mass choir comprised of alumni she had directed, along with current BME members, to sing at her funeral services. The memorial, entitled "A Celebration of Life" would be held at the Family Life Center at the House of God, in Lexington, Kentucky. A forty-member ensemble, comprising some people with longstanding friendships and others who hardly knew one another, united to sing for the memorial service.

On the Sunday afternoon of the funeral, we made the forty-five minute journey to the Family Life Center from Berea. As I looked around the gymnasium, I saw an array of flowers and chairs and a mass of people milling about in preparation for the start of the service. At the center were Wilson's casket and a photo of her in a simple frame, marked "In Remembrance." Although many of the people in attendance were dressed in

traditional black attire, a few people wore colorful clothing and others clerical robes. In the back, lofted high above the chairs filling the space were cameras for the digitizing of the memorial so that people who were unable to attend could watch it streaming online and those turned away from the already filled gymnasium could view the ceremony from an overflow room. People were venturing about, greeting one another, some quite emotional with an extraordinarily sad demeanor, others reconnecting jovially after a long separation. All these people had known Wilson or been touched by her work, and as such, gathered to honor her memory.

While waiting for the service to start, Dr. Bullock, the director of the BME, gathered the ensemble together to give a few final words of instruction. Even then, some choir members were crying at the loss and the solemn spirit of the occasion, myself included. While preparing for the choir's portion of the memorial service, we reviewed music, discussed a few points of performance, and reminded one another of our purpose at the funeral that day—to honor the memory of our dear loved one through song. It was during this preparation that I received a phone call from a fellow Berea College and BME alumnus, R. Wiggins. She was watching the service live-streamed from her home in Indiana and called to offer her condolences to be shared with the family and to thank me and encourage me in my work helping coordinate the combined ensemble for the services. She then asked about the ensemble's preparation and readiness for the large undertaking of eulogizing someone through song. The thoughts and concerns she voiced included questioning how emotional the choir members were and if their emotions would hinder their performance. I must admit, I myself was becoming concerned about the

same thing. I started questioning things like the preparation of the ensemble and everything that could potentially go wrong. I worried whether or not lyrics would be recalled correctly or if the emotionally charged nature of the performance would cause us to forget the text or lose the melodic lines. From there, concern set in about the repertoire for the occasion. Musicianship had been a source of apprehension for my peer on the phone and now it was a concern for me. One of the primary songs for the ensemble, as had been requested by Wilson's family, was "Broken, But Healed" and the soloist—another Berea and BME alumnus—E.W. had been mentored by Wilson and was overtaken with emotion already. My mind wandered throughout the rest of the phone conversation to the preparedness of the ensemble. Yes, there had been rehearsals, but within the emotionally charged venue, I did question if we could pull off a successful performance as a unit. Someone then announced that the ensemble needed to take seats as the service was about to start. I ended my phone call and wiped away tears of sadness. After all, it was now show-time and, though I wasn't directing the ensemble, my focus was on the idea of memorializing appropriately. We had to do well.

Once the choir was seated, a minister of the House of God began the funeral with declamatory statements of worship, setting a tone for the service. While whooping is usually reserved for the high-point at the end of a traditional African American sermon, the minister began by speaking in a "whooping" manner, calling out "Praise God, Saints" and "Can I get an Amen" with interjections of the vocable "hah" embedded between the phrases. This speech action immediately exclaimed that this memorial was undeniably "church." The "hah" vocable was soon accompanied by downbeats played on the drums

and block chords on the keyboards, sharing his established, repetitive rhythm. This heightened the emotional drive of his cadenced speech. The congregation, identifying these as characteristics of African American worship, then responded accordingly. Some individuals were listening intently, others calling out phrases of "amen," "preach preacher," and "hallelujah!" A few people in attendance sprang to their feet with up-lifted hands. Many individuals applauded at various times in agreement with the statements from the minister, and a few had begun to rejoice in his words through glossolalia. Some choir members were also participating in the expressive practices, while others who were not from the African American church tradition sat quietly observing the activity around them. As the minister continued in his decisively rhythmic speech and aspirative tone, the musicians became more involved, gradually building to providing full accompaniment to his words.

Some people then, caught up in the fervor of the worship activity, began to leap, jump, and stomp, leading to a praise break—an act of individualized praise expression occurring simultaneously and accompanied by upbeat, quick praise music. There were people calling out words of praise, shouting (as defined in previous chapters), and people slain in the spirit. Being "slain" is a physical catatonic state where it is understood that the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit is communicating with the temporarily transcended soul of an individual; so the body rests. In the midst of all of this, the minister declared that Wilson was "Resting in the bosom of Abraham, at home with the Lord; no longer suffering, no longer sick." This inspired even more people to celebrate, until they were

"shouted out" as would be colloquially stated, or until the fervor eventually calmed enough that the program could move forward.

As the service continued there were various scriptures offered, prayers prayed, and words of encouragement provided, but—beyond enjoying the praise break—my own concern remained focused on the choir's performance. The thoughts of individual emotions pervading our performance and preventing us, as a unit, from memorializing Wilson worried me. As I looked around, some ensemble participants were still teary while others appeared bright eyed and awaiting performance. Finally our time to take the stage came. The choir fell into place and processed into the make-shift pulpit in the gymnasium while our musicians positioned themselves accordingly.

The first selection was "Broken but Healed" by gospel artist Byron Cage (2005). E.W., in the midst of wiping tears from her face, took to the microphone. The music began and the choir members—many of whom, less than five minutes ago, seemed to have been an emotional wreck—began pitch perfect. E.W. sang, "So you enter into this building, you've brought your burdens, brought your pain. I have a message, for you today that when you leave here, you won't be the same" (Cage, 2005). The choir then followed, singing "God can heal; He can deliver. He can mend your brokenness. He has a miracle to fit your need—once you trust HIM you will receive" (Cage, 2005). As the song continued, some congregants lifted their hands in worship and prayer while others sang along. Many members of the choir engaged in these worship practices as well, signifying their emotive presence within the song and their identification with their own faith practices within the context of the song. While attempting to focus on the

performance, I, too, found myself swept up in the worship aesthetic of the selection. As the text shifted and we reached the high point of the song "Praise the Lord, I have received," the reverential nature of African American church and the idea of memorializing came together and E.W. burst into tears. The selection then quietly concluded and the congregation responded with "church-based" statements of approval like "bless ya" and "thank ya" signifying that that they were touched by the song and that our performance was well received.

After this song, the ensemble sang two others and Wilson's husband delivered an inspired and emotively charged eulogy. The service then concluded and people greeted various choir members. They thanked folks for their involvement and encouraged them to continue "singing for the Lord." We then loaded into our vehicles and returned to the college for a short debriefing for students unfamiliar with the African American church funeral practices, for alumni to say goodbye, and for students to prepare for classes the following day.

Framework as Found in Experience

The memorial service provided ample opportunity to investigate the community component of gospel choirs, specifically in settings where the focus of the gathering is not primarily about the choir's music, but rather, about the choir members themselves uniting to support one another. Moreover, I became interested in how this event would affect the choir as a whole, because the funeral brought together multiple "generations" (loosely speaking), of BME participants—including many who benefited from Wilson's legacy without having known her personally.

The people performing at the memorial were of varying ethnicities and relationships with Wilson. They respected her work and saw the importance in taking part in this community celebration—harkening back to the point made earlier in this chapter that one does, in fact, have to work actively to be part of the gospel community. Intentionally participating in community often entails a level of double consciousness. As explained in chapter one, DuBois identifies double consciousness as having to function in an awareness of being Black while existing in a predominantly non-Black world. I argue that this idea can be expanded, asserting that double consciousness can also be applied to having an awareness of being "Black tradition-identified" while functioning in a "non-Black tradition-identified" world.[10]

In the same way that an African American has to be conscious of the duality of being both Black and American, those who participate in African American-identified traditions (whether they are African American or not) have to be aware of how participating in that Black tradition affects their positioning in the non-African American-identified world. I approach double consciousness in this manner because of the number of people who participate in gospel music (an African American-identified cultural tradition) who are not African American. Moreover, this application is possible because of the component of self-reflexiveness and self-identification W.E.B. DuBois attaches to double consciousness, and due to Gilroy's explanation of double consciousness existing as an "unhappy symbiosis."

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[10] In keeping with DuBois' discussion of "Black" and "Non-Black," I will use the terms Black (with a capital "B") and African American interchangeably in the phrases "Black tradition identified" and "Non-Black tradition identified."

Gilroy explains that the unhappy symbiosis is "between three modes of thinking, seeing, and being. The first is racially particularistic, the second nationalistic…the third is diasporic or hemispheric, sometimes global and occasionally Universalist" (Gilroy, 2004, p. 127). My approach focuses more on the first two components (racial particularism and nationalism) as my research is focused within one hemisphere. Being in and of the Black-tradition requires individual identification with African American culture. This often competes with the nationalistic component of being "American"—a term often assumed to delineate White American culture, as no leading adjective (such as African) is used. For example, one student, who will be discussed further in chapter four, identifies as Caucasian, but having grown up in African American worship settings, felt comfortable attending African American homegoing services. It is with this understanding that I approach the dichotomy of being "of the Black music tradition" and "not of the Black music tradition," as opposed to being just "Black" and "not Black."

Personal experience in the memorial service highlighted my own positioning in double consciousness. Having been an "insider" in terms of gospel music my entire life, I am accustomed to the funeral practices of praise, worship, mourning, and singing within the context of choral performance. However, this experience was unique because we were memorializing one of my collegiate music instructors; my thinking in preparing for the services was much more concentrated on musicality and performance than on spiritual experience. Conversely, when I speak about both being emotive and "caught up" in the "praise break," I was clearly experiencing the homegoing from within the African American music tradition. Moreover, my concern regarding *performance* and

showtime—terms almost never used in descriptions of gospel music, but rather in artistic presentational music—frequently entered my thoughts, to the credit of half of my double consciousness. Being "of the Black music tradition" reminded me that when participating in an African American praise situation, one removes all other thoughts and concerns, otherwise they limit one's receptiveness to worship. An "unhappy symbiosis," in Gilroy's terms, did exist within my thinking and interacting. I was working within the context of western music performance, a mindset fostered in my gospel music education, while operating within the confines of my culturally-identified African American worship practices. I was at odds, ironically, with myself throughout the entire service as to whether or not to function within one set of musical and cultural expectations or the other.

The dichotomy between people "of the Black music tradition" and not of the tradition made itself apparent within the context of the service. As stated early in the narrative, in regard to the praise break, BME members familiar with the traditional practices quickly and actively joined the worship activity; those who were unfamiliar mostly sat and observed. The students familiar with African American music traditions were afforded the opportunity to perform freely and comfortably without having to maintain an awareness of double consciousness, as they were at an African American funeral, a setting immersed in the African American music tradition. Conversely, those who were not of the tradition found themselves awkwardly removed from how they had normally experienced gospel music. Instead of their rehearsal hall, which often provided an academic environment for gospel music, they had been placed into the throws of

African American worship and expected to function appropriately. While potentially uncomfortable for a short period, the debriefing session upon our return to Berea restored the usual expectations of many students.

Moreover, the music itself played a role in double consciousness within the funeral setting. The performed practice of gospel music in this setting highlights the fact that the genre (and many of the characteristics identified with it) had been removed from the African American church setting and brought into the college setting—via students and facilitating faculty—but then carried out of academia and back into the church setting. As the memorial service example displayed, there was concern for being musically accurate on behalf of the leadership, but with returning to the worship environment, the musical performance was given the opportunity to be religiously emotive. As noted in the case of E.W. singing the solo, she, many choir members, and many congregants were overtaken by emotion.

The concept of cultural memory, as defined by Floyd (1982) and Ramsey (2003), resonated within this specific performance. As an organizer for this occasion, I spoke frequently with Bullock (the director of the BME) about the "appropriateness" of what was to be done, worn, and sung. My concerns, specifically, lay within the context of performing the song discussed in the narrative "Broken but Healed" (Cage, 2005). I realized that my concerns about appropriateness were rooted in my own cultural memory of both gospel music and performance within the context of funerals and memorials. As Floyd (1982) explains, "Cultural memory [is] obviously subjective" (p. 9), and the accuracy of this statement became evident to me in negotiating repertoire for the funeral

service. Concerns and objections I had over the specific song, even after the performance, were resolved after I interviewed a relative of Wilson, L.A. Logwood. In our discussion, I questioned the suitability of the selection "Broken but Healed" (Cage, 2005) because the text refers to God healing and delivering someone from "brokenness," or the Christian idea of any dis-ease of health and wellbeing. In my thinking, Wilson had passed away; thus the healing that the song spoke of had not occurred; I worried that the sentiment might, therefore, be offensive to the family. Logwood then explained:

> The family requested the song as it was a favorite, and [Wilson] had taught it to the choir. Additionally, the message, for them, applies not only to [Wilson] but, rather, to the family because they are seeing the lyrics as relevant to them—God will heal their brokenness from the loss. Also, it applies to [Wilson] because, in the church (Christianity in general), going on to glory to be with the Lord is also considered a form of being healed. (personal communication, November 25, 2011)

This idea, and the song that brought so many hope, echoed the statements of Guthrie Ramsey (2003) about cultural memory when he explained the use of "the personal" (p. 30) in regard to music making. He explains that people (writers, scholars, performers) use their personal sentiments and connections as an aspect of their work. And it is this utilization of "the personal" that must be considered when evaluating "perception[s] and [employing] criticism[s] of …Black music" (Ramsey, 2003, p. 33). As an insider to teaching and performing gospel music, I had step out of my experience and view the

performance as an outsider in order to comprehend the positioning and concept of subjective "appropriateness" in cultural memory.

The use of voice by the minister in the narrative also spoke to the idea of cultural memory. A common practice in the African American church tradition, his sermonizing and whooping calls seemed a normative component to those familiar to the culture. The necessity for the minister to negotiate successfully the various speaking/singing sonorities harkens back to what congregants identify (via cultural memory) as appropriate—and almost required—within the gospel context. Poet James Weldon Johnson (1927) explains this expectation:

> The preacher of parts was above all an orator, and in good measure an actor. He knew the secret of oratory, that at bottom it is a progression of rhythmic words more than it is anything else […] He was a master of all the modes of eloquence. He often possessed a voice that was a marvelous instrument, a voice he could modulate from sepulchral whisper to a crashing thunder clap. (Johnson, 1927, p. 5)

As evidenced in the Shirley Caesar example earlier in this chapter, preachers who cannot successfully meld their preaching into a singing/speaking voice that inspires a "feeling" response, to borrow terminology from Fox (2004), are identified as unsuccessful in achieving a mastery of the musical art. In many ways, those unsuccessful preachers are similar to the performers Fox spoke of who failed to master the musical speech traditions of country music. The minister discussed in narrative above, mastered these skills and acted upon them to continue the service. Additionally, the vocal manipulations and

crying of E.W. during her solo, both in the vocalized gospel "cries" in her singing, as well as the congregational responses to it, identify how cultural memory places expectation on both the ministers in the gospel setting and the choral performances.

The group's performance for this occasion spoke to the idea of cultural representation presented by Eric Lott. While Lott (1995) researched minstrelsy as a factor in the popular definition of "black culture" (see p. 98), his theory on cultural representation provides insight into how gospel choirs help define the community that develops around the style within the college gospel setting. The aforementioned funeral made specific points: (1) that African American students are not the only students actively committed to the college gospel communities; (2) that the groups mimic the appearance and sound of church gospel choirs though they are representative of secular academic institutions; and (3) that while identified as academic ensembles, because of the music they perform, there is a perceived expectation that the people within the ensemble represent Christianity-in-practice.

Gospel Music at the Nexus of Sacredness and Secularity

While the group does, in-fact, sing sacred music, individuals within the group do not necessarily identify with the African American religious practices often ascribed to such an ensemble. As one student at Berea College, referred to here as "M.K.," explained (in regard to an off-campus performance), "It was crazy…We sang our songs and then some lady came and said 'you really blessed me. The joy on your face and in your song felt like the angels.' I wanted to tell her that I didn't believe in angels or any of that, but I didn't want to hurt her feelings. I just love singing the music" (M.K., personal

communication, February, 17, 2011). This example witnesses how gospel music bridges the nexus of sacredness and secularity in such a mutable way that it finds audience both within (for the woman attending the off-campus performance) and beyond (for M.K.) the scope of African American church.

As Levine (1977) explains, gospel music developed within the intertwining area between African American sacred music and popular music. And as Levine also argued, discussed in chapter two, gospel music developed as a syncretic form "within the sharpening dichotomy between sacred and secular" culture (1977, p. 179). He continues:

> No matter how seriously many church folks took the distinctions between these two large genres of African American song, the barriers were never complete. One only has to examine the recorded music of the 1920s and 1930s to see how permeable they were in terms of style. (1977, p. 179)

And, as witnessed by the short story above about M.K., college gospel music participation also traverses through the varying factions with ease.

The gospel music community consists of people from varying backgrounds and musical interests. The style of music's accessibility, as it bridges the nexus of sacred and secular, draws people from various vantage points to participate and become a musical community. As the next chapter demonstrates, gospel music often conveys messages of hope and inspiration for an extended musical community on college and university campuses.

Chapter 4

"When All God's Children Get Together, What a Time": Embedded Meaning in Gospel Performance and Sociability[11]

Throughout the last six decades, the gospel community has aimed to share "the gospel" (good news) through performance and the overarching value of gospel music participation. College and university gospel choirs have been no exception to this practice. Campus gospel workshops, concerts, festivals, and retreats contain activities for teaching and learning gospel songs, becoming part of community, and obtaining fundamental gospel music education. More recently, though, college and university gospel choirs have utilized these occasions to incorporate other areas and styles of music, in the hope of affirming the legitimacy of gospel music with their musical peers, and sharing the music itself.

College Case Studies

Examining The University of Dayton Gospel Music Workshop, the Berea College Festival of Spirituals, and the Love United Gospel Choir annual Lock-In, I investigate issues of community in terms of cultural dialogue, embedded textual meanings, and the use of voice with regard to cultural memory, representation, and double consciousness. The first case study occurred at The University of Dayton's Gospel Music Workshop, hosted by their gospel choir, the Ebony Heritage Singers (EHS). During that trip, Dr.

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[11] The song "When All God's Children Get Together," as recorded by Minister Keith Pringle has become a mainstay in college and university gospel choirs (1991). The song's sentiment of God's children (i.e., all people) getting together and having a good time was appropriate for this chapter's discussion of gospel groups gathering together for workshops, festivals, and concerts.

Horace Boyer (previously mentioned in this text) introduced numerous college gospel participants to the value of embedded textual meaning and cultural memory in terms of gospel performance. The second case transpired in February 2012 at Berea College at the Festival of Spirituals. At that BME-hosted event, various musical groups united to create musical community celebrating African American spirituals, concluding with a collective gospel performance. The last case study occurred during University of Tennessee's Love United Gospel Choir's (LUGC) Lock-In. During this all-night engagement, the group displayed the role of community building as part of the choir experience. These examples display the role of community within college gospel settings and highlight how quickly that sense of community develops among participants.

The University of Dayton Gospel Music Workshop

The University of Dayton 2005 Gospel Music Workshop provided me an opportunity to approach the concepts of cultural dialogue, embedded textual meaning, and the utilization of voice in college gospel choirs. In April of 2005, while I was an undergraduate in Berea's BME, my school gospel choir was invited to participate in The University of Dayton's Gospel Music Workshop. This event, founded by Dr. Donna Cox and hosted by The University of Dayton's Ebony Heritage Singers (EHS) was held every few years as an opportunity for various gospel singers, choirs, instructors, researchers, and instrumentalists to gather together and share gospel knowledge, inspiration, and performance skills. The event was held during the spring semester and consisted of various workshops, such as "Interpreting the gospel score" and "Introduction to [gospel] vocal improvisation" (Cox, 2008). There was also a workshop mass choir, comprising all

event participants. Various presenters (who were gospel choir directors) each brought a song and taught the mass choir for the closing workshop concert. It was during the rehearsal of the 2005 event that I had the opportunity to study choral gospel music from Dr. Horace Boyer. During his section of the rehearsal, he imparted to us the importance of presentation within the gospel music setting.

After attending various workshops at the festival, and then breaking for lunch and making a few phone calls to friends back on campus in Berea, I ran to reconvene with the rest of the workshop participants in the Sears Recital Hall on The University of Dayton campus. As I found my friends and sat down, Dr. Cox was introducing our first choral clinician, Dr. Horace Boyer. She explained that he was one of her mentors in academia and in gospel music research. She stated that his work had "paved the way" in academia for gospel workshops to happen—and we soaked up her words like sponges.

Dr. Boyer is an important participant both in that workshop experience and in his posthumous inclusion in this text. Dr. Boyer was a music educator, gospel performer, and an author. He published over forty articles on music (Fifer, 2003), was included in numerous gospel documentaries, including the PBS special *This Far by Faith* (Fifer, 2003), and was considered a *griot* of gospel music in the African American academic gospel community. After his passing in 2009, the University of Amherst, where he had retired as faculty, established the Horace Clarence Boyer Gospel Music Fund. After Dr. Cox shared many of these accolades with us, she invited us to welcome him with applause.

A palpable anticipation developed in the room as Dr. Boyer took his seat at the keyboard, facing the eagerly-awaiting ensemble. As we quieted ourselves, Dr. Boyer hesitated a moment before saying, "I want to teach you all an old, traditional gospel song infused with meaning." He, then, unhurriedly presented the song "God is still on the Throne" as recorded by the Roberta Martin Singers (Martin, 1978), taking time to introduce us to the importance of poetics within the speech/sung sonorities in the context of performance (see Fox, 2004). Much like the approach of ethnomusicologist Aaron Fox (2004) to musical performance, Dr. Boyer expressed how the text had multiple layers of meaning. He demonstrated one meaning in the literal text, another in what the lyrics meant metaphorically and symbolically, and then another source of meaning in terms of how the selection would be received and perceived when performed. Dr. Boyer then taught us the song lyrics:

> God is still on the throne. Within your bosom, you have the phone. Wherever you walk, you're not walking alone. Remember, God is still on the throne. (Martin, 1978)

Dr. Boyer explained what the text meant in terms of African American Christianity and how performative characteristics would embody the texts meaning. He reminded us of the importance of the Holy Trinity in African American church traditions. He then told us that we would sing the song in 9/8 meter so that it could be subdivided into three-sets-of-three beats to represent the Holy Trinity in performance to emphasize the symbolism.

The song "God is still on the Throne," became a favorite workshop song for many participants because of their newfound knowledge of expressed meaning within

performance. Once we had received all of Dr. Boyer's instructions in rehearsal, we attempted to perform the song. However, when we did, the 9/8 time seemed to drag on and we kept rushing the text. Dr. Boyer stopped us, encouraging us to imagine we were singing the song to petition the Lord and let others know that God was in our hearts through prayer. He suggested that we slow down to think contemplatively about the text we were singing and why he'd asked us to sing it in this manner. With this guidance, we began the selection over again. The difference was remarkable. The sound was rich, dark, and most importantly, accurately metered. As we intentionally attempted to embody the song as Dr. Boyer envisioned, the emotive power of the voice (Fox, 2004) became apparent.

In the same way some of Fox's characters became the celebrities they mimicked, we became the Roberta Martin Singers—that is, we sang "God is still on the Throne" in 9/8 meter, rhythmically, and emotively as Dr. Boyer wanted. The next day at the workshop performance, we successfully recreated the performance from the rehearsal. As gospel performers, we had learned how to embody effectively the meaning of our songs literally and symbolically within performance.

Similarly, The University of Dayton Gospel Music Workshop displays double consciousness and reiterates how college gospel music performance exists as an African American musical tradition in a non-African American musical setting. While presenting gospel music as a component of sacred music culture, the event hosted students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and religious practices and encouraged them to embody the sacred music sensibilities in performance. Moreover, the workshop activities were

conducted in a secular, academic recital hall as opposed to a sacred venue such as a chapel or church. The departure from traditional gospel settings addresses not only double consciousness, but also the discussion of gospel music within the nexus between sacred and secular environments presented by Lawrence Levine (1977).

Additionally, the theoretical concepts of cultural memory and representation found fulfillment within the activities of The University of Dayton Gospel Music Workshop. The idea that "God is still on the Throne" contains not only literal meaning based in Biblical ideas (via lyrical content) but also performative meaning (by musical means of meter) that exemplifies the idea of collective cultural memory (Ramsey, 2003). This experience also addressed the idea of "emergent subjectivity" by Jane Sugarman (1997) in the context of cultural memory. In her text on Prespa Albanian weddings, she discusses how individual constituents' memories interact to create the collective memory and, more specifically, how the subjective cultural memories of the elders in Prespa Albanian traditions take precedence over that of younger generations (although occasionally interactions result in compromise) (see Sugarman, 1997, p. 343). Here, Dr. Boyer's memory of how the music should be symbolic became the collective memory for the entire group, becoming a defining faction for all workshop participants.

Moreover, the role of the Holy Trinity within African American church traditions, as discussed by Boyer, displayed the importance of God and how God is understood in the collective memory of African American sacred communities. His employment of the long 9/8 meter to represent the Holy Trinity in performance harkens back to the idea of the voice (Fox, 2004). While it differs from the comparative spoken/sung sonorities in

Fox's work, this performance demonstrates the positioning of the voice as the primary conveyance of "feeling." Dr. Boyer's commitment to embodying meaning in various levels of performance was similar to Fox's (2004) country singers' embodiment of musical characters in performance. Additionally, the reasoning Dr. Boyer provided for performing the selection in the musically elongated (9/8 meter) manner speaks to the idea of cultural representation. When performed, vowel sounds within the text stretch across entire metric bars (a full nine counts). This allowed individuals to hear the divisions of three in three parts, representing the Trinity. All the while, the units could be heard as one uninterrupted vowel, signifying the Trinity's unity (see Figure 2 below).

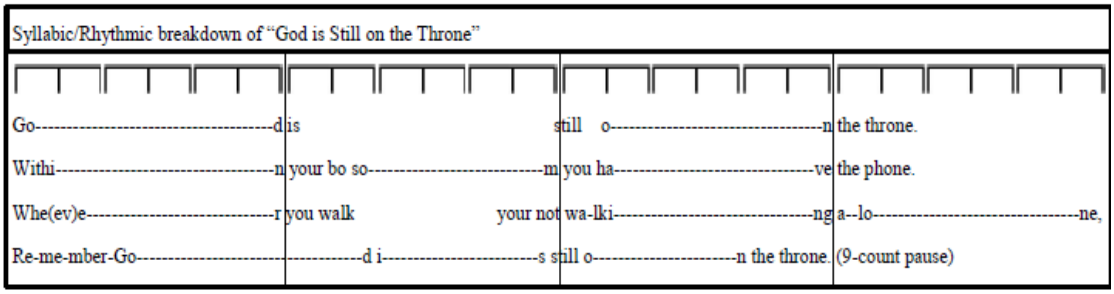

Figure 2. The Syllabic/Rhythmic Breakdown of "God is Still on the Throne"
This figure displays the breakdown of the syllables and articulations in our performance of "God is Still on the Throne" as conducted by Dr. Boyer during the Dayton Workshop. The dashes represent sustained pitches.

While Lott's (1995) discussion of cultural representation centers on minstrelsy and misleading presentations of "Blackness," it is my argument that Boyer intended to help the workshop participants effectively perform this gospel song. I believe Boyer taught the song this way so that, when the song and performance were connected to perceptions of African American sacred music culture, it would create an accurate representation of this musical tradition.

The Berea College Festival of Spirituals

The Berea College Festival of Spirituals expressed the need for students to respectfully approach and perform African American sacred songs in academic settings. The festival, hosted by the Black Music Ensemble (BME) and the Berea College Music Department in February 2012, sought to bring together various ensembles to perform spiritual texts in jazz, old-time Appalachian, bluegrass, classical, and gospel styles. After a morning of workshops, there was an afternoon choir rehearsal wherein all the visiting ensembles, town members in attendance, and musicians learned concert spirituals and concluded with a gospel arrangement of the spiritual "I've Got a Robe." The Festival of Spirituals concert, moderated by Dr. Bullock, was held in Union Church of Berea, Kentucky, at 7 p.m. Throughout the program, there were a variety of interpretations of spirituals, concluding with the gospel rendition of "I've Got a Robe" as a mass community ensemble.

The historic Union Church creaked and cracked as students, locals, and various musicians began to fill the 1853 sanctuary. After attendees and participants filed in, Dr. Bullock explained that the goal of the Festival of Spirituals was to promote the awareness of the spiritual as a performed genre. She further explained that the evening would be filled with various performances, ranging from bluegrass traditions to concert and gospel arrangements of spirituals.

The Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble performed first, singing "Ain't No Grave." With three fiddles, a banjo, upright bass, and a guitar, the spirited bluegrass rendition inspired the audience to their feet for a rousing applause. Following this

selection, two professors shared their own old-time Appalachian arrangement of "His Bones Shall Rise Again." With one playing guitar and the other playing piano, they gave a stirring performance, displaying the fevered pitch of excitement associated with many spirituals in the Appalachian region. Next, an impromptu jazz sextet gave a New Orleans style performance of "Down by the Riverside." A four-hand piano arrangement of "Deep River" (the exact arrangement is unknown) followed, executed by a husband and wife faculty duo. The concert choir and chamber singers then provided examples of concert spirituals, including "Ring a dem bells."

The evening concluded with a mass combined choir singing a gospel arrangement of "I've Got a Robe." The lively and spirited performance went as rehearsed. The song stated,

> I've got a Robe, you've got a Robe. All of God's Children got a robe. When I get to Heaven gonna put on my robe and I'm gonna walk around heaven all day. When I get there how happy I will be! When I get there, my Savior's face I'll see. (R. Wise, personal communication, February 2012)

The choir delivered these lines exactingly and melodiously while being accompanied by piano and drums. The group sang each syllable relatively staccato, as to be clearly understood. The "pay off" for such physicality in singing was evident in the clear, completely understandable lyrics ringing throughout the sanctuary. As the choir completed the opening of the song and transitioned into the polyphonic vamp, each vocal part had both a specific riff and a defined, synchronous movement to accompany their vocal part (see Turino, 2008, p. 37). The sopranos sang, "Heaven all day" with a side-to-

side sway. The tenors and basses then delivered, "Walk and tell the story, shout on how it made it over" while marching in place. The alto's line was "Walk around Heaven all day" with a three-step motion, similar to the side-to-side movement in the dance called the "electric slide." This vamp excitedly continued until finally the director ended the song by directing the group to all conclude together on the downbeat of the word "Walk!" That moment, the rehearsed closing of the song, proved to be both the end of the performative concert of spirituals and the beginning of an awe-inspiring, improvisatory performance of gospel music.

The communicative fervor of jubilant singing inspired a reprise of the vamp with both ensemble participants and congregants taking part. As opposed to ending the song as they exited the choir loft on the word "Walk!" as rehearsed, choir members traveled down to the main floor level still singing. Once on the main level, the performers circled one another, in a fashion similar to a ring shout, and proceeded to continue singing for another twenty minutes just for the joy of singing! Members of the congregation who were simply observing prior to the reprise then joined in the singing and celebrating. Many came and joined the circle of singers. The observers had become, at least in this moment, active musical community members within the gospel song. When the song finally concluded, people cheered and yelled as though they were at a ballgame. One student even referred to the event as a "Jesus mosh pit" because people were singing Christian-based music and jumping up and down, an experience new to many of us, but apparently common in the Christian rock community.

Many participants expressed feeling connected to everyone singing within the circle, on the basis that everyone was having so much fun together. Additionally, some students stated this was the first time they had felt part of a musical community because they did not frequently sing. When I mentioned this momentary connection that many participants communicated feeling, Dr. Raymond Wise (the festival clinician) stated that, "It's the nature of gospel music" (personal communication, February 17, 2012). His response was reminiscent of the words cited earlier from Dr. Boyer about gospel being fundamentally communicative. The transition of the concert from performative to participatory embodied ideas of how musical performance produces shared sentiments of "feeling" that can literally inspire people to action and movement (Fox, 2004, p. 155).

The Festival of Spirituals, in a manner similar to the Dayton workshop, exhibited ideas of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation in terms of the people performing and the music performed. While sponsored by the gospel choir, and containing a gospel arrangement of a spiritual, the event provided an opportunity to grasp African American sacred music performance in an entirely unique manner. Instead of thinking of gospel as an African American church music, the festival approached gospel as an American music informing other genres and embedded in unified musical history. This idea promoted the need to understand this event in terms of double consciousness. Moreover, all of the various groups involved (soloists, jazz bands, church choirs, the college gospel choir, the university concert choir, and an opera chorus) interrogates the representation of African American song forms.

Double consciousness here reflects the position of African American sacred music, normative to religious settings, placed in a western university setting, and dissected in a non-race specific, secular context. While gospel music developed within the African American experience, it, in and of itself, has no ethnicity. Therefore, this event challenged me to understand what this multi-cultural performance at the spirituals festival meant in terms of cultural representation. Harkening back to the idea of being simultaneously African American and in a non-Black world (DuBois, 1994, p. 3), the festival expressed this duality, paying homage to the genre in a traditional, sacred manner while approaching performance from an academic standpoint. This understanding of the music was reflected in the students' responses to the music and their positions in performing it. In survey responses, while students from a gospel background experience used primarily sacred terminology to discuss musical elements (such as "blessed"), students not of the gospel tradition used typically secular remarks (such as "fun," "phenomenal," and "exciting"). Both sets of terms—sacred and secular—hold meaning in describing the performance of a sacred genre performed in a venue of musical awareness, not necessarily intentional worship.

The Festival of Spirituals also speaks to the theoretical concept of cultural representation. Paralleling the research of Eric Lott (1995) dealing with "'Blackness' and African American cultural practices [brought] into American life" (1995, p. 98), this event addressed the representation of African American song-form within the academic setting. While escaping the farcical public attributes of minstrelsy and the religiosity of contemporary gospel, this event presented African American sacred music as an

academic song-form, similar to work of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in presenting spirituals to their early audiences (discussed in chapter two). Though the spirituals were performed in various styles at the festival, the performances intentionally reflected professionalism, artistic creativity, and a studied attention to early African American recordings of spirituals and written arrangements. Moreover, the event witnessed the music performed by varying ethnicities, displaying how, while of the diaspora, the music is also genuinely American music. Within the campus context, the event also displayed how gospel music promotes community through inclusion.

Moreover, the event demonstrated the ideas of Turino (2008, p. 42) on the components of participatory music, specifically musical repetition and synchrony. Turino (2008) states that rhythmic repetition and social synchrony are necessary in the participatory environment "because the music and dance of participatory performance are not scripted in advance; participants have to pay special attention to the sounds and motions of others on a moment-to-moment basis" (p. 43). In the case of the festival, the previously rehearsed, choreographed movement of the combined choir during the vamp of the song became improvisatory and unscripted for the audience-participants who joined in during the reprise. The audience engaged actively and intentionally to participate in both the singing and the synchronous movement. Additionally the action of the singers moving from the choir loft to the congregational floor space and the congregation moving from their seats to standing and joining the choir exhibited the transition from a presentational gospel performance to an entirely participatory, community event.

The University of Tennessee LUGC Lock-In

The concept of gospel as a participatory, community event also found embodied expression in the Lock-In rehearsal for The University of Tennessee Love United Gospel Choir. This activity consisted of the LUGC members gathering for an all-night celebration consisting of a choir dinner, an extended night rehearsal, publicity photos, and general socializing to get to know one another and prepare for semester performances. On March, 9, 2012, I had the opportunity to attend the LUGC Lock-In in the Minority Student Affairs building on the Knoxville campus. An annual event for the ensemble, they use their Lock-In as a recruitment tool, an opportunity to build community, and a chance to improve their overall musicality and extend their repertoire.

I arrived at the Lock-In about 9:15 p.m. and found my way to the multipurpose room where the Lock-In activities were taking place. As I entered, I was greeted by a young woman who identified herself as the secretary of the ensemble and asked if I was a new member. Once I explained my attendance, and expecting to be rebuked for my reason (observation), she responded by telling me how glad she was to know someone was studying gospel music and told me to make myself at home and feel free to participate. I seated myself near the back-center so I could see the entire room. Just as I got settled, the group stood. I hopped up as well and they began their praise and worship period.

They sang "I Just Want to Praise You" (as recorded by Maurette Brown-Clark) in four-part harmony, followed by "How Great is Our God" (as recorded by VaShawn Mitchell) in three-part harmony. After this, they asked new members to sign up on a

form in the back of the room. This group (unlike the others I observed) consisted of an unknown number of members due to rolling membership (people could join and leave throughout the term) and so attendance logs had to be kept. After this, they announced when they were going to take the group's annual photo, used for press and publication.

Once the photo was taken, the director announced that they would start on a selection entitled "Glory, Glory" (as performed by Darryl Petties). The director played a recording of the song, asking each section to listen to the words and memorize them as quickly as possible. After the recording finished, he stated that the instrumentalists (the keyboardist, drummer, and bass guitarist) would stay and rehearse in the space we were already in; altos would rehearse in the library, sopranos in the upstairs, and tenors and basses in the conference room. The astonishing moment came when the director then met with leaders from each section and sang their vocal line into different recording cellphones. They then went away with the recording of their part to teach it to their group while the director circulated among the groups "cleaning up" details and pitches.

After about fifteen minutes the entire group reconvened, and what ensued was shocking. The ensemble took a song that they were only remotely familiar with before the sectionals and now performed it with such clarity and inspired fervor that I was left in disbelief. I sat in amazement as the music engulfed me. At the end of the song, everyone cheered at how well they had done and took instruction for corrections that were so minute, I had hardly noticed they were needed.

After this performance, the ensemble took a short break and I noticed a small group head off through a door labeled "kitchen." Following them, I learned that a big

part of the Lock-In was the end-of-rehearsal meal, wherein everyone ate and—as said in the African American church tradition—fellowshipped; a practice of pre-, during-, and post-dining socializing within the worship context. They were cooking ribs, spaghetti, burgers, and a variety of other delicious items. The aroma was intoxicating and the amount of food was plentiful. They explained to me that the meal was when the members got to know one another because rehearsal schedules were packed with details, information, and singing. After this, I returned to the rehearsal hall to find the group conducting another portion of the gospel-tradition—the business meeting. In church, the business meeting often entails the president or leader of the ensemble dealing with questions of repertoire, apparel, and music. This university choir functioned the same way. The director and president were sharing the platform and working as a team to convey information to the ensemble. As I was only permitted to observe the rehearsal until the business meeting began, I then excused myself from the Lock-In space and headed home, concluding my observation.

While it involved a different kind of interaction compared with my other two case studies (as I was a participant in those and here an observer only), this instance exemplifies how cultural dialogue can be inspired by gospel ensembles. Moreover, this experience demonstrated how song texts can effectively embed meaning, and how the voice plays into the gospel tradition—all within the framework of cultural memory, representation, and double consciousness.

Of the groups I studied, the LUGC ensemble proved to function within the confines of cultural memory the most. I believe that this is because the membership

comprised African Americans almost exclusively and was the only choir not affiliated with a music program. Functioning outside of the music program meant the group was free of institutional expectations for performance and participation. Rather, the choir-elected officers function within their knowledge and memories of the gospel choirs at their home churches and own experiences (similar to the work of founding the original college gospel choirs in the 1960s and 1970s, discussed in chapter two). This meant that sometimes disagreements arose about how matters were handled. During my visit, at the point when I excused myself from the space—as I was not permitted to attend their business meeting—a discussion about repertoire was beginning. Later, when I interviewed the choir's then president, D. Barnes, he explained some disagreements regarding repertory that members did and did not want to sing. All participants were more than happy with the "Glory, Glory," discussed in the narrative above, but beyond that, there were musical concerns, discussions, and negotiations. I explained to him my lack of familiarity with such situations, as the BME and EHS had all of their songs selected by their advisor or directing team. Barnes explained that LUGC, as a club without such positions of an academic or compensated director, worked according to a checks-and-balances system, similar to that found in the African American church. In this setting, the pastor (as head of the church) makes the final decision about what the choir will perform, though he is not always involved in the musical production. In the gospel choir, as the leader of the group, the president functions in this pastoral leadership capacity. Barnes explained:

> The director [of the choir] chooses repertoire they think would be appropriate based on choir members' interest and what they think will sound best, but then final approval has to come from [the choir president] in order to make sure that everyone is being fairly represented in terms of song choice. And our director even told us that we aren't necessarily gonna like every song he chooses, just like he doesn't like every song we choose…for example when we did Kirk Franklin's "Brighter Day," the choir loves singing it, but it isn't necessarily the director's favorite…but he reminds us that it's not always about what we like, but rather the music that we perform well and that provides the gospel message that we want to present. (personal communication, January 2012)

Cultural memory includes collective memory used to create and handle new situations (see Ramsey, 2003, p. 33). LUGC utilizes this idea of collective memory to approach and resolve group conflicts. Additionally, the employment of voice here mirrors the discussion of country singers who perform not just any country music but, rather, the music that spoke to themselves and their audience (see Fox, 2004, p. 156). Similarly, the gospel choir selectively finds repertoire that conveys "feeling" for both themselves and their listeners.

The dinner following the rehearsal of the LUGC Lock-In also exhibited components of cultural memory and cultural representation. The dinner, described above, was referred to as a "fellowship dinner," terminology often used only in conjunction with religious settings, especially in the African American community—again reflecting the choir's reliance on African American church models. As this event

was geared toward recruitment as well, one of its requirements, as explained by the secretary, was to appeal to the masses and to make them want to be part of the group. The members found that one of the best ways to do this was to appeal to the social experience that they recalled from their home churches and gospel music settings. This again reiterates the idea of community (as discussed in chapter three) and its importance within college and university gospel settings. The event aimed to promote LUGC and community dialogue about the gospel choir as sources of sociability and interaction.

Upon first review, this setting did not seem to be as doubly-minded as the others that I observed, especially since is the only group that is not a class and the only group that is almost all African American. However, there were some components that reflected my idea of moving beyond DuBois's theory of "Black" and "non-Black" to my concept of being "Black tradition identified" and "non-Black tradition identified." After the Lock-In, the director, the secretary, and the president reiterated to me their concerns about the ensemble's position within the university. They explained that, as the ensemble is not part of the academic music program they face challenges in reserving spaces for rehearsals, as they do not have access to the music hall for practicing. Additionally they had issues finding spaces for performances because they consider their concerts to be "worship services" and are considered to be a religious group by administration on a secular campus—therefore they face the challenge of often having to articulate what it means to be a worship service. The LUGC is a "Black tradition identified," sacred music ensemble, and simultaneously a student-run organization on a "non-Black tradition identified," state-funded, university campus. As such, they attempt to mediate the

expectations of being a sacred music performing group while, simultaneously, fulfilling the requirements of being a university club at a secular university.

Case Study Summation

These three ensemble events: The University of Dayton Gospel Workshop, the Berea College Festival of Spirituals, and Love United Gospel Choir's Annual Lock-In, provided a window into double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation. Within the contexts of the use of voice, promoting cultural dialogue, and understanding the meanings embedded within performance, these ensemble events allow both gospel music insiders and outsiders to understand these non-traditional ensembles as more than just being a "Christian-ized show choir," as I once heard an observer remark. College and university gospel choirs promote the development of support systems among students, fostering the creation of community. They also attempt to accurately depict "Blackness" or African American culture with an understanding that there is an expectation upon them to do so. Additionally the ensembles create space for discussing cultural differences brought on by ethnic and religious variances in a musical environment and the academic setting.

Chapter 5

"We've Come this Far by Faith": The College and University Gospel Choir, Musical Positioning, and the Need for Continued Study[12]

In 1973, Eileen Southern, noted musicologist and African American music specialist, penned a document entitled "New needs and new directions: Needs for research in Black-American music." In this article, she reviews various areas of African American music research that still require examination. Now, forty years after the initial writing, I have revisited this article and discovered that much of her "clarion call" remains unfulfilled. However, the research I have completed here does extend the scope of scholarship on African American music and culture, providing a small portion of what Southern declared was needed.

Responding to the Call for Continued Research

In her article, Southern (1973) challenges us to continue African American music study. She says, "With regard to the present state of Afro-American music research, there are so many needs that to draw up a list in the order of their priorities becomes a formidable task" (p. 45). She declares that, of this most formidable task, the primary need is for "research into Afro-America [to become] the concern of musicologists if the definitive history of American Music is to ever be written" (p. 44). To support her stance, Southern provides a detailed, varied list of duties to be undertaken by musicologists in order to grasp fully African America's role in America's musical

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[12] "We've Come this far by Faith" is taken from the title of a gospel song that is inspired by a self-reflexive view of where the singer has been but has now moved beyond (pannellctp, 2012). Similarly, the purpose of this chapter is to be self-reflexive in terms of this document, including both the work of musicologist Eileen Southern and other research that I completed in producing this thesis.

heritage. She states that researchers must study the roots of African American musical traditions. In her final summation on the state of African American research, Southern admonishes scholars to bear in mind the performative aspects of these traditions arguing for the importance of observing and hearing African American music performance in context (p. 48). Southern argues:

> While the musical document is of great importance, of equal significance is its cultural and historical function. The musical score can provide only a limited amount of information about the musical sound of a piece of music, as is well-known and particularly true with regard to music in the Black tradition. (p. 51)

My study responds to the call for continued research and, through ethnography, moves beyond the scope of frameworks previously utilized to approach African American sacred music. Likewise, I look beyond the musical score and approach gospel music from a participant-observation standpoint. This ethnographic examination explores historical documents, traditions, and practices within African American gospel. Additionally, this study has provided space for me to investigate college and university gospel music performances on the campuses of Berea College, The University of Tennessee, and The University of Dayton. Observing the choirs at the above institutions through the lenses of W.E.B DuBois and Paul Gilroy's notions of double consciousness, Samuel Floyd and Guthrie Ramsey's ideas of cultural memory, and Eric Lott's theory of cultural representation, provided a contemporary, musicological approach to gospel performance within college settings.

Reflections on my Research

In studying college and university gospel music participation, though theoretical ideas of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation, I have ventured into new territory for understanding both academic African American music performance and existing gospel music research. To comprehend these concepts, as well as the role of the voice within these contexts, I actively engaged in gospel music in ways I never had as a life-long participant. I experienced scholar Gilroy's "unhappy symbiosis" (1995, p. 127) for myself. In terms of double consciousness, this work challenged me to embrace gospel music as an insider, but also to approach university gospel performance from an observational stance. In the end, I discovered that utilizing gospel music to study double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation allowed these concepts to emerge not only as ideological theories, but also as tangible, observable experiences that could be both recognized and documented.

This study provided space for understanding the duality of participants in gospel choirs who function inside and outside of the African American music tradition. Building on DuBois (1994) and Gilroy's (1993) ideas of the "unhappy symbiosis" of being "Black" in a "non-Black world," I extended this argument to encompass individual positioning and familiarity with African American sacred music traditions. Doing so has allowed me to conclude that college gospel participants must be doubly-conscious in terms of the music they perform, the location of the performance, and the audience's reception of the music as both performative and participatory. Moreover, I discovered that the music itself, and its performances practices, resonate with notions of double

consciousness, particularly as it mediates a variety of spaces. As demonstrated in chapters three and four, college gospel music performance functions as an African American culture-based genre and also a part of the greater American music heritage. The genre exists as both a participatory and performative style of music, sharing history in both the sacred and secular traditions (see Levine, 1977). Furthermore, college gospel choirs embody individualized participatory experience while being a heavily community-oriented genre.

This research opened a window on musical practices clearly shaped by cultural memory. As discussed earlier, researcher Samuel Floyd explains that cultural memory is a subjective concept (Floyd, 1982, p. 8). I demonstrate how, in the gospel tradition, memory positions how gospel is approached, understood, performed, and then received on college and university campuses. I discovered that gospel choirs on college campuses (both as academic course and extra-curricular activities) are founded on the collective memory of long-term gospel participants. As witnessed in my case study of The University of Tennessee's Love United Gospel Choir (LUGC), group members create their idea of how the gospel choir should look, sound, feel, and function based on their prior experiences with community and church gospel choirs. Moreover, the discussion of Dr. Boyer and the song "God is still on the Throne," demonstrates the emphasis on performance choices by college and university gospel choirs.

This thesis argues that gospel choirs, both intentionally and unintentionally, undertake the role of displaying African American sacred music culture in academic contexts. Employing Eric Lott's research (1995), I have found that college and university

gospel choirs face a variety of representational conflicts—a matter taken quite seriously by the choir participants. College and university gospel choirs must mediate existing as representations of African America while not being wholly African American. They must balance the ensembles' performance of sacred music while existing in secular, academic environments. The groups' performances must reconcile the expression of African American Christian ideals (embodied in the song texts) while, embracing members whose identities do not align with Christianity or any other specific religious practices and beliefs.

As a vehicle for understanding cultural memory, cultural representation, and double consciousness, gospel choirs on college campuses actively inform ideas of cultural relevance, diversity, and inclusivity. College and university gospel choirs have overcome numerous challenges to continue their presence on campuses. This study reveals how, as both a class and as an extracurricular activity, gospel choirs promote community and inclusivity, but also endure adversity. Using the African American church—a symbol of resilience in the African American community—as a functioning model, these choirs have persevered and provide ample space for understanding and promoting cultural dialogue and embracing differences on college campuses. Even while many songs are faith based, the cross-cultural appeal of gospel music performance inspires student-participants from various backgrounds and encourages them to continue onward in performing and researching gospel. Moreover, the experience fosters communities of support that can potentially last long after students have graduated. This sense of community inspired me, as a college gospel choir performer, director, and

teacher, to conduct this research. Based on my own experiences, I have endeavored to challenge the limitations typically placed on gospel music in academic settings.

Finally, to summarize my key arguments, college and university gospel choirs embody the theoretical concepts studied here and provide opportunities to understand the challenges of gospel music as it exists in the academic setting. At The University of Tennessee, Berea College, and The University of Dayton campuses, I discovered three unique gospel choirs that negotiate challenges presented by the conceptual ideas framing this study. The participants at each of these institutions approach gospel music through their own collective and subjective cultural memories of how gospel music performance "should" function. Additionally, choir members experience double consciousness through performing gospel music in secular, academic contexts with multiple ethnic groups and religious backgrounds. Through the emotive employment of voice, the cross-cultural appeal of gospel, and the fostering of community, these college and university ensembles self-perpetuate and create support systems for their members. Utilizing the characteristics that allow gospel music to be both performative and participatory, college and university gospel choirs create academic environments that are equipped and motivated to promote cultural dialogue and inclusivity on campuses. I explain how college and university gospel ensembles embody the ideas of double consciousness, cultural memory, and cultural representation as tangible concepts for academic investigation. Studying gospel choirs provides opportunity to continue exploring African American music in a dynamic academic environment.

As I have shown, college and university gospel choirs provide a wealth of information regarding African American sacred music study and much more work needs to be completed. An ongoing study of this genre remains necessary in order to understand fully African American music and, moreover, to understand and create an all-encompassing American music history. Grasping the importance of these non-traditional ensembles in the academic and extra-curricular lives of students presents an opportunity to employ the gospel genre to facilitate the success of other students who might benefit from participating in non-traditional choral ensembles. Furthermore, investigations into the cultural differences that exist within the gospel classroom provide a chance for discussing diversity and inclusivity in academic settings. Therefore, to continue understanding how these ensembles may thrive, scholars will need to continue researching the role of community within gospel choirs.

Additionally, musicologists will need to continue studying the performative-participatory dichotomy in the gospel setting. I challenge music education specialists to produce curricula and instructional method texts to teach gospel music within an academic approach and to introduce it into new environments. And, above all, future researchers in college gospel music must remember that, as Southern argues (see 1973, p. 51), this genre, and all other African American musics, can be written on paper, but the lived experience of observing and participating rests at the heart of studying and understanding African American music.

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Appendix

Participant Survey

The survey below was completed by research participants in the various choirs studied in this thesis.

Hello and thank you for participating in this survey. Your anonymous responses will be included in Masters of Music research discussing the role of Gospel Choirs on college campuses, so your most thorough honest answers are appreciated. Please answer the questions below and return the questionnaire to your instructor.

General Questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, (1 being worst and 10 being best) how would you rate your experience so far in gospel choir?

2. What factors did you consider in your rating?

3. How long have you been in choir?

4. What made you choose to audition for choir?

5. What are the positives of participating in choir?

6. What are the negatives of participating in choir?

Event Specific Questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, (1 being worst, 10 being best) how would you rate the experience of singing at your most recent event?

2. What factors did you consider in your rating?

3. How would you rate your actual part in the performance on a scale of 1-10?

4. What were the positives of the experience?

5. What were the negatives of the experience?

6. Generally speaking, what did you think of the audience?

7. More specifically, do you think the audience had any effect on the quality of performance?

8. What would you have liked to seen differently about the performance?

Conclusion Questions:

9. Do you think you will continue to participate in gospel choir beyond this current semester?

10. What factors affected your answer in question #9?

Thank you for participating in this survey!!!

Vita

Emmanuel Joshua Stokes, a native of Morristown, Tennessee, graduated from Berea College, Berea, Kentucky with a BA in Music, emphasis in Voice, in 2008. He received the MM from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2013. Stokes served as the Assistant Director of the Berea College Black Music Ensemble from 2008-2009 before attending The University of Tennessee.

Stokes is actively engaged in music performance, research, and education. In addition to pursuing gospel music academically, he is an avid participant. Stokes serves as the current director and coordinator of the Berea College Black Music Ensemble Alumni Choir and is a faculty participant in the annual Berea College Festival of African American Composers. Additionally, he served as the Coordinator of Exhibitions for the National Symposium on Multicultural Music, sponsored by The University of Tennessee and NAfME, in both 2010 and 2012. Stokes was also a guest artist for the Oak Ridge Symphony Summer Conservatory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee in 2011 and 2012.

Based on his research interest in various forms of African diasporic music and music of political involvement, Stokes is currently completing a series of lecture recitals honoring the work of Nina Simone and Sarah Vaughan. In addition, he continues an on-going research interest in the racial integration of the Metropolitan Opera House and, more broadly, in American classical music.

Stokes plans to attend the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign to complete his doctoral work in Musicology.