

ALPHA CHI  
**RECORDER**

UNDERGRADUATE ISSUE

VOL. 56, NO. 1, 2013



**Published three times a year at Searcy, Arkansas: an Undergraduate Issue, a Proceedings Issue (online only), and an Alumni Issue.**

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**(ISSN 0893-889X)**

# ALPHA CHI RECORDER

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# An Analysis of the Arab Spring

By **KENDRA FIDDLER MEHL**

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*Kendra Fiddler Mehl is an Alfred H. Nolle Scholar for 2012-13.*

In December 2010, an uprising in Tunisia marked the onset of a wave of revolutionary movements throughout the Middle East and North Africa that came to be known as the Arab Spring. The insurgents in these movements—from Egypt and Libya to Bahrain and Syria—called for freedom, justice, and the overthrow of their oppressive governments. The protests shared common modes of expression such as music and women’s rights activism to resist the regimes. They also used similar means of organization and publication, relying heavily on banned technologies such as social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Many of the strategies used by the revolutionaries stunned observers. Music was an unanticipated medium of revolt, yet Arabic hip-hop took the region by storm. The voices of oppressed women were also an unforeseen source of political change in the male-dominated societies, but women of the region stirred feminist enthusiasm by leading protests and making statements with their attire. And although information technology has had limited penetration into the region, it played a noteworthy role in facilitating the revolutions. Since Arab Spring regimes had been particularly oppressive to each of these features—music, the internet, and women’s rights—the uprisings exercised poetic justice in using them. To

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understand the Arab Spring, we must not only examine these unexpected aspects, but also how they will continue to impact the region and the world. For globalization ensures that no movement will affect only the region in which it began. It is not just the future of the Middle East; it is the future of the world.

### Music and the Arab Spring

Music featured prominently in the Arab Spring as artists reflected the ideas and emotions of the people, incited oppressed citizens to action, and brought awareness of their struggle to the Western world. Musicians such as El General of Tunisia, Mohamed Mounir of Egypt,

The musical styles that began arising in the Arab Spring resulted from decades of artistic repression by the nations' governments.

Boge of Libya, Shahram Nazeri of Iran, and others blended traditional and contemporary musical styles (Bostic; Sabra; Fathi). Mark LeVine, a professor of history specializing in Islamic studies at University of California, Irvine, believes these artists have “created a new genre of world music that has

yet to be named” (4). This distinctively Arab hip-hop was a striking feature of the Arab Spring.

The musical styles that began arising in the Arab Spring resulted from decades of artistic repression by the nations' governments. Zakaria Ibrahim, an Egyptian national, founded the group El Tanboura in 1980 to revive the traditional music that had been squelched by the government for at least twenty years (*El Mastaba*). Ibrahim related in an interview, “We sang against repression... [W]e had the same desires to ask for democracy and holding the government accountable, and just like today we went to prison for it” (LeVine 2).

Even thirty years ago, a pattern arose in which the government oppressed musicians, musicians indicted the regime for it, the governments jailed the musicians, and the musicians continued to speak out against the censorship they had experienced. This began again in 2011, as Libyan artist Boge and two fellow musicians were imprisoned for their music, and in Tunisia the rapper El General was incarcerated for releasing his songs online (Bostic 1). The plight of these musicians reveals the loss of creative liberty experienced by artists under the various regimes and the severe restrictions enforced on music, a plight that is only a microcosm of the oppression suffered by the nations' citizens.

Many Arab Spring musicians focused on giving a voice to the general feelings and emotions of the citizens. Bob Garfield, an interviewer with National Public Radio, reported, “Across the region, rap artists were providing the soundtrack to protests in the street” (“North Africa's Hip Hop,” 1). Abdulla Darrat, one of the founders of the Libyan hip-hop group Khalas, stated in the same interview, “[The musicians] very successfully put into words a lot of the sentiments that young people in the area are carrying with them, and they're voicing really the struggle of ... everyday people” (3). The struggles being voiced included

youth seeing its future being ruined by the corruption of the regime, youth's stance against oppression and bullying, and outrage over high unemployment rates (1-4). Despite all this, however, the citizens were still hopeful for the future that they could create (4). Martina Sabra, author of "The Soundtrack of the Arab Spring: Pop, Pathos, and Poetry," says the new songs created a sense of pathos, empathizing with the vehemence of the revolutionaries. She cites Tunisian musician Zohra Lajnef, who sang, "The hopes of the people have become a thorn in the throat of the tyrant" (2). Lyrics such as these gave outsiders a small taste of the emotions and thoughts of the protesters as they fought for their freedom.

The music of other hip-hop artists was a personal reaction to the injustice of their governments, reflecting the troubles of the population. LeVine notes that the jailing of musicians was representative of the general sufferings: "[T]he plight of musicians was no different than the plight of Egyptians more broadly" (3). The musicians were simply in the public eye, giving faces to the story. LeVine quotes Shahin Najafi, an Iranian rapper living in exile in Germany, as one who understands the rage of the oppressed: "[A]nger is an honest response to the beatings, killings, and executions the government has meted out to dissidents" (3). Thus, the music of the Arab Spring was often an instinctive reaction to the oppressive regimes. Nazila Fathi, a writer for the *New York Times*, also noted that "as the street protests have been silenced, the music has grown louder and louder" and that it seems clear that this "resistance music" (1) increases in direct proportion to how severely governments attempt to silence it. For citizens who have risked their lives to become free, such a visceral, emotional response to continued tyranny is unsurprising.

Another way Arab Spring music reflected the ideas and emotions of the revolutions was through the style of the music itself. Most of the songs branded "resistance music" can most closely be categorized into hip-hop or rap genres. The mix of hip-hop with traditional styles displayed the effects of globalization, but also expressed the youths' admiration of the West: they wanted the freedom of the West, and their adoption of its music was only a symbolic gesture. In an interview Libyan rapper Boge said that "rap was treated as a criminal offense under [President] Gadhafi's rule" (Bostic 1). The use of rap and hip-hop was, in itself, defiance against the system. The words in the protesters' songs evoked revolutionary emotions, but their music was also rebellious by sheer virtue of its style.

Arabic hip-hop was a synthesis of Western and traditional genres. The fusion was partially a necessity because the oppressive governments had not allowed new music into their countries in the last twenty or more years. Therefore, traditional songs of the previous generation were the only music publicly available. Young people mixed these older styles with the more Western beat that recent technology availed them. LeVine tracks musical styles from folk to rap and the entire continuum between the two. He notes that musicians of the Arab Spring came together for a Creative Commons in Tunis, in which they blended "traditional and contemporary forms of artistic production" to generate "truly powerful and innovative hybrid forms of music and art" (3). This creativity was rebellion, and the freedom from restrictions expressed in the musical styles embodied the revolutionaries' desire for liberty.

The musicians of the Arab Spring were also credited with stirring up revolutionaries and instigating protests. Karl Bostic of NBC News writes that "[r]ap music has inspired freedom fighters and pro-democracy protesters from Tunisia to Bahrain" (1). He also speaks of Libyan rapper Boge and others who "have even been credited with helping to spark

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the ... Arab Spring uprisings that deposed three long-serving dictators and rocked several other regimes” (1). Another article, “Top Five Arab Spring Hip-Hop Songs,” asserts that “musicians have been responding to—and provoking—the protests” (1). However, it is difficult to quantify exactly how directly music affected the Arab Spring revolutions.

In all of this, it is important to revisit Abdulla Darrat’s statement that the musicians of the Arab Spring were voicing struggles faced by the general population. If the music provoked uprisings, it was not because the songs coerced people into acting on ideas they did not already hold. The citizens were already protesting, whether publicly or privately. The musicians came alongside these citizens and gave publicity to their opposition, expressing it in a way that captivated the population. The musicians of the Arab Spring created an artistic movement to accompany and complement the politico-cultural movement.

Finally, the Arabic hip-hop and rap brought Western awareness to the governmental oppression in the Middle East and North Africa. The use of American-style music was a cry for attention, and broadcasting the songs via YouTube and Facebook further spread the message. In Darrat’s radio interview, he mentioned “Rayes Lebled,” a song (and YouTube video) by El General, which “went viral” after the Tunisian rapper was arrested (“North Africa” 3). No article on the music of the Arab Spring fails to mention the significance of the internet in spreading the messages of the revolution; most mention the hundreds of thousands of YouTube hits that the songs have received.

Protesters used Western networks (YouTube, Facebook, Bluetooth) to spread Western styles of music, which is either in English or English-subtitled Arabic, to get the attention of the West. The youth have taken Western media, infused their messages, and given it back. And, as Bostic points out, age is “the significant factor” as “60 percent [of the] people in the Arab world are aged under 30. Rap, a genre that appeals to the youth, popularized the calls for reform and the [i]nternet spread that message like wildfire” (2). The musicians knew that in order to alert the West, they needed to use Western styles and media of communication. And they succeeded.

The musicians of the Arab Spring capitalized on the emotional power of music and used rap and hip-hop to express their emotions, call citizens to action, and alert the world to their battle for freedom. Their messages included direct indictments of the rulers and warnings of the coming uprisings, as in Alia Sellami’s lyrics in “Revelation”: “The fire blazes and your stars disappear from the firmament. You want to envelope us in silence and bury us. Yet, we have awoken, we have arisen, and have decide[d] to be free men” (Sabra 2). The musicians’ messages were inflammatory, their methods effective, and their success demonstrative of the significance of modern technology, which had its own role to play in the revolutions.

### **Technology and the Arab Spring**

Never before has information technology featured so prominently in the arsenal of revolutionaries’ weapons. According to LeVine, the success of the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt was achieved chiefly because the “dictatorial regimes ... were unable to stop the uncontrolled flow of information” (3). While the role of technology in the Arab Spring must be understood as that of a catalyst and not a cause, the internet was a central means that was used creatively and extensively to revolt against the oppressive governments. Primarily, revolutionaries of the Arab Spring used the internet to organize protests, publicize occurring events, and post music videos and recordings of police brutality. This section will examine

these aspects, as well as the governments' censorship attempts and response to social media.

The use of the internet to organize protests is a phenomenon that began in Tahrir Square in Cairo and spread across the Middle East. According to Juan and Shahin Cole, a Facebook video by Asmaa Mahfouz "called on Egyptians to turn out massively on January 25<sup>th</sup> in Tahrir Square" and "went viral, playing a significant role in the success of that event" (2). Although many discussion forums and blogs had sprung up supporting change, this young girl's video was the first social networking post to have a tangible result. Also in Egypt, a Google employee became an icon for "privately administer[ing] one of the Facebook pages that were the [April 6 Youth Movement]'s virtual headquarters" (Morgan 2). Throughout 2011, countless protests in Middle Eastern countries were organized on Facebook. One writer was even so bold as to quip, "Nebuchadnezzar, the writing's on the Facebook wall" (Morgan 3), insinuating by biblical allusion that dethronement was inevitable and perhaps even aided by God.

Social media were used even more extensively as a vehicle for publicity. Bloggers recorded police brutality following anti-government protests in Tunisia (Riley 1). Leil-Zahra Mortada posted a Facebook album depicting women's involvement in the revolution in Egypt (Cole and Cole 2). Countless protesters recorded videos of the Tahrir Square demonstration on their cell phones, subsequently posting them to all manner of social media. Dalia Ziada of Egypt even used social media with a twist: posting false information to send government officials to incorrect locations (Wright 3). One article asserts that citizens publicized news more rapidly via Facebook

than did Al Jazeera (Stepanova 2). The rulers of these Middle Eastern nations tried to shut down the websites, recognizing the power of the internet. Fathi writes that the Iranian government "blocked websites used to download songs" and "shut down social networking sites" (1).

However, this attempted

silencing was largely useless. Once songs have been downloaded, they can be shared using Bluetooth or compiled into home montages. "[C]lamping down on music in the digital age is like squeezing a wet sponge," Fathi asserts (1). It appeared that the governments' efforts to hinder revolution were fruitless.

The regimes responded in various ways based on the individual nations' needs and cultures. In an essay in the book *Arab Media and Political Renewal: Community, Legitimacy, and Public Life*, Albrecht Hofheinz asserts that Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia were the four greatest "enemies of the [i]nternet" (57). Tunisian authorities blocked specific sites that they deemed troublesome, whereas Egypt's response was much harsher. Beginning with Facebook and Twitter, Egypt eventually blocked 93 percent of

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its networks in 2011. Bahrain and Qatar censored only a few sites, mostly as a symbolic gesture (Hofheinz 58, 60). And in countries such as Yemen, Sheila Riley points out, less government censorship is necessary because poverty severely inhibits internet access as it is (2). Some nations blocked unwelcome sites during daytime hours and allowed them only in early morning hours; others allowed the same sites during the day, knowing citizens would be at work, and censored them at night. Libya was one of the latter. Many Libyans used a U.S.-based software called “Hotspot Shield” of the AnchorFree corporation that enables anonymous internet access. The company’s CEO is quoted as saying that “the government likely blocked the [i]nternet at night so ordinary Libyans couldn’t access it after work, and then resumed it during the day so oil companies could function” (Riley 2). These are a few of the approaches the Middle Eastern regimes took to rein in the dissent.

However, it seems that regardless of the strategy, the authorities were only mildly successful in silencing the voice of political opposition. Hofheinz says: “Overall, despite

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persistent censorship, governments have not been able to silence dissent on the [i]nternet.... Whereas banning access to certain sites diverts the mass of average users, it does not hinder the most determined, who can counter official control with relative ease” (61). It has been several years since the publication Hofheinz’s article in 2007, and even then

governments struggled to control internet usage. With the increasing amount of internet usage throughout the revolutions, the resistance can only have grown stronger.

In this examination of technology in the Arab Spring, it becomes apparent that it is not possible to group the Middle Eastern and North African nations into a uniform style of internet usage or restrictions. The revolutionaries used a multitude of sites and strategies and were working under various degrees of censorship.

### **Women and the Arab Spring**

The role of women in the Arab Spring, like that of technology, varied widely from nation to nation in the Middle East and North Africa. There is great disparity in the laws regarding women and voting, political offices, marriage, and a host of other topics from Iran to Egypt to Libya. However, the Arab Spring featured women prominently, both publicly and behind the scenes, including cultural messages conveyed through their dress.

The number of women who aided and led the Arab Spring is considerable. The first blogger to announce the Tunisian protests online was a woman named Lina Ben Mhenni (Morgan 1). Tunisian women overwhelmed protest rallies “wearing veils, jeans and, miniskirts—young girls, grandmothers, [and] female judges in their court robes” (Morgan

1). Cole and Cole continue the description: “In Yemen, columns of veiled women have come out in Sanaa and Taiz to force that country’s autocrat from office, while in Syria, facing armed secret police, women have blockaded roads to demonstrate for the release of their husbands and sons from prison” (1). Women also led strikes, broke into government press conferences, and fought for equal rights amendments to constitutions (Cole and Cole 2-4). In Egypt, one woman ran for president (Cole and Cole 4).

Just like the youth, women are demanding a voice in their government and a role in their future, and they are doing so using the medium of technology. The call for democracy is uniting women across social boundaries: “We see women, Islamist or not Islamist, veiled or not veiled, coming together and leading what’s happening on the ground,” said one leader of the group Women of Egypt (Morgan 2). Television networks have promoted the view that women deserve equal rights by featuring many articulate women on news programs aired by Al Jazeera (Cole and Cole 5). But it is the use of social media that has primarily facilitated the leadership of women in the movement. Cole and Cole have noted, “Women can assert leadership roles in cyberspace that young men’s dominance of the public sphere might have hampered in city squares” (5). One reason women have shied away from leading protests is that if demonstrations result in physical violence, men are simply better equipped for self-defense. Technology alleviates this problem. Journalist Naomi Wolf also acknowledges a potential socio-cultural problem: women tend to shrink back from leadership when there is a stage or a spotlight involved (2). Perhaps this is stereotypical, and women like Dalia Ziada defy such stereotypes, but it seems to have some truth in Arab nations. When women join the debate through information technology rather than in person, their rhetorical skill and intellectual weight of argument are what determine the reception of their statements. Although cyber leadership is not an ideal situation for women’s rights, it is a beginning, and education is the key.

Education is one of the biggest factors in women’s effect on the Arab Spring movements. According to one Al Jazeera article, the women two generations ago received a university education only if they were the daughters of the rich elite—and even among those, only a select few (Wolf 1). Now, more than half of students at Egyptian colleges are female, and Cairo’s elite medical school valedictorians are famous for nearly always being women (Wolf 1; Wright 4). This indicates not only increased opportunity for women but also widespread analytical thinking among the women of these nations. Concerning this recent phenomenon, Wolf adds, “[Y]oung women in Egypt and other Arab Countries have now spent their formative years thinking critically in mixed-gender environments, and even publicly challenging male professors in the classroom” (1). In Tunisia women make up half of students, 26 percent of the working population, and 29 percent of magistrates (“Tunisia’s Gender-parity” 1). Wolf also uses history in her discussion of women’s education: “[H]owever violent the immediate future in the Middle East may be, the historical record of what happens when educated women participate in freedom movements suggest that those in the region who would like to maintain iron-fisted rule are finished” (2). She cites the examples of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* coinciding with the French Revolution and educated American women turning from fighting slavery to demanding female suffrage (2). “Feminism,” writes Wolf, “is simply a logical extension of democracy” (2), and educated Middle Eastern women have begun to believe this and to fight for their rights. One of the most fascinating developments of the Middle East feminist movement in the Arab Spring was

the “pink *hijab*” movement, which continues still. Ziada, interviewed by journalist Robin Wright, is a major leader of the group. The young women of this movement are putting aside the traditional black veils for clothing “more colorful and even shape-revealing, albeit still modest” (Wright 3). Part of the goal is a redefinition of what *hijab* means: “a declaration of activist intent rather than a symbol of being sequestered” (Wright 3). The veil is also, Ziada asserted, a sort of contract between a Muslim girl and the society: “Families feel much more comfortable allowing their girls to be active, to get higher education, or jobs, or even to go

Arab women have also  
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“democratic” revolutions  
in the past.

out alone at night when they are wearing *hijab*,” she stated. “I agree that I will wear *hijab* in order to have more space and freedom in return” (Wright 4). Another benefit of wearing *hijab* is that radical Islamists cannot claim that the woman has been tainted by Western society. These

women are said to desire not to be Westernized but to express their Islamic identity and to experience “change that is familiar to [their] culture and to [their] faith” (“Rock the Casbah,” 3). According to Ziada, this is a generation that desires both to be “faithful to their religion and [to] live a modern life” (Wright 5). Such tension has been a challenge for religious people of many eras and societies, and the adoption of stylish *hijab* seems to be a perfect step for Middle Eastern women. In these ways, *hijab* has become not a symbol of conservatism or subjugation, but what Wright calls a “stamp of authenticity” (4) and a means for a woman to gain more power in their male-dominated societies.

Although it may surprise the Western world, this is not the first time women have featured prominently in Arab political movements. In the 1950s and ’60s, Algerian women were leaders in that nation’s struggle for independence from France (Cole and Cole 1). Women also fought alongside men to gain autonomy in that era in Tunisia, participation that was reflected in the laws of the new government. Tunisia’s Code of Personal Status, passed in 1956, ended polygamy, required a minimum age of marriage for women, and gave women “equality in marriage, divorce, and child custody” (Morgan 1). The women of Tunisia have had more freedom, better education, and higher representation in politics since the 1950s than women in nearby Middle Eastern nations, according to Al Jazeera (“Tunisian Gender-Parity,” 1).

However, Arab women have also been dismissed after aiding “democratic” revolutions in the past. Robin Morgan, journalist and acclaimed author on Middle Eastern issues, writes of the Egyptian revolution against the British, “Women had been key to the 1919 revolution against the British, but after independence were ignored by the ruling Wafd Party” (1). Iranian women experienced a similar plight in Iran’s 1979 revolution. And even in Tunisia, daughters were permitted to inherit only half of what sons could. These women have discovered, as Morgan writes, that “‘democracy’ for half the people isn’t democracy” (1).

This leaves the future of Middle Eastern women in question despite the steps that were made toward freedom in 2011.

Women have not only joined the Arab Spring movements, but have been leaders and facilitators. They have a long road ahead if they are to claim all their rights, but they have shown courage and determination rather than fear. The future of women in Arab Spring countries is as yet unknown, but countries like Tunisia offer hope of a more nearly equal society.

### **Arab Spring: Cultural or Political Revolution?**

In examining the roles of music, technology, and women in the Arab Spring, it seems that the movement was both cultural and political. The societies continue to grapple with traditional and modern music, progressive technology and long-established ways of relating, the roles of women and the roles of men, creativity and oppression, government and faith, nationalism and globalization, the old and the new, the ancient and the modern. Throwing off oppressive regimes is only the beginning of a cultural search for identity. “Who are we?” these cultures seem to be asking. “What do we become now that we have the freedom to decide?”

As the nations of the Arab Spring look toward the future, the answers to these questions are, of course, unclear. Hybrid forms of music will continue to develop as the cultures change, but the exact path they will take is uncertain. Technology will play a prominent role in the unfolding events, despite attempted censorship. As for women’s rights, there is much debate: some fundamentalists desire to reinstate polygamy and centuries-old laws while others, including Islamic scholars, hold that “[t]he Quran unambiguously stands for gender justice” (Ali 2). Women such as Egypt’s Ziada, Yemen’s Karman, Tunisia’s bin Salama, and countless others confirm that the issue of gender equality will not be cast aside as a passing fancy in Arab Spring countries.

These events are crucial not only to the Middle East, but to the world at large. The effects of the Arab Spring will be felt globally in all aspects of international relations—economics, politics, and culture. The face of Islam, especially, will influence world events. To be informed citizens, equipped for life in the twenty-first century and prepared for work in cross-cultural settings, we must study these events. In order to work with others we perceive as different from us, we must learn the challenge of seeing without judging—to see a culture and not evaluate it by another culture’s standard. We must see and not judge, but to do this we must first see and understand. And to accomplish this, we must, first of all, see.

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# Prophetic Heroism in Ernest Gaines’ *A Lesson Before Dying*

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*Sarah Johnson LaBarbera was chosen as an H.Y. Benedict Fellow for 2012-13 but later declined the award.*

*Prophecy, which is dependent on the imaginative and not the moral faculty, need not be a matter of predicting the future. The prophet is a realist of distances, and it is this kind of realism that goes into great novels.*

Flannery O’Connor

In her essay “Catholic Novelists and Their Readers” in *Mystery and Manners*, Flannery O’Connor explains the roles of both the general fiction writer and the Catholic fiction writer. A fiction writer, regardless of religious beliefs, “is an observer, first, last, and always,” she writes (178). To O’Connor, a truly observant, and therefore proper, writer does not attempt to rearrange reality according to his or her beliefs, but insists on the meaningfulness of an imperfect reality—particularly from a perspective guided by absolute values and a rejection of relativism. O’Connor believes that recognition of imperfection and brokenness is part of the prophetic role of the writer. This writer, this “realist of distances,” uses imperfect reality not only to report what has failed and what has been lost, but also (and more importantly) to project what the hope of success looks like (179).

Ernest J. Gaines demonstrates such a prophetic role in his novels. In *A Lesson Before*

*Dying*, Gaines poses a scenario for possible heroism: Can a young black man, falsely convicted of murder and sentenced to death, overcome the prejudice of a jury who would “just as soon kill a hog” by choosing to face his execution with dignity? Gaines’s greatest character success in the novel—when Jefferson, the young man, demonstrates this dignity at his death—comes at the end of a narrative that has chronicled not only Jefferson’s development but that of his teacher, Grant Wiggins. Grant is charged with the task of teaching Jefferson how to be a man. Although he teaches Jefferson to recognize what a hero is, Grant fails again and again to be a hero himself. Grant is a manifestation of O’Connor’s “weakened reality,” which enables readers to imagine an antithetical and intact goodness (179). His failure to be a hero provides a deeper understanding of the concept and a greater appreciation for Jefferson’s realization of the role.

Grant defines “hero” for Jefferson during their pivotal discussion while walking around the prison dayroom. Here Grant makes the first plea to Jefferson that has any long-lasting effect, paving the way to Jefferson’s eventual triumph in the face of death. Before Grant explains to Jefferson that he has the chance to “be better,” Grant paints a picture of a hero for him: “Do you know what a hero is, Jefferson? A hero is someone who does something for other people. He does something that other men don’t and can’t do. He is different from other men. He is above other men. No matter who those other men are, the hero, no matter who he is, is above them” (191). Grant brings up this self-giving and community-focused concept of a hero after Jefferson has refused to eat the gumbo dinner brought by his godmother, Miss Emma. If Jefferson cares for Miss Emma, Grant explains, he should eat her food. From his explanation of a hero, Grant transitions to the greater issue of Jefferson’s impending death and his opportunity to be a hero by using his death to confront the racist misconceptions faced by African Americans in their community.

Katherine Daley and Carolyn M. Jones say that, for Gaines, “heroism has less to do with power than it has to do with responsibility, the essence of manhood” (98). Grant’s introduction of heroism, pulling together the ideas of worth, responsibility, and manhood, proves to be a turning point for Jefferson. His oncoming death takes on a new depth as focus is removed from his own plight and put on those individuals affected by his life and death—not just Miss Emma and other relatives, but also a community that sees Jefferson as a representative, albeit unfortunate and doomed. After his talk with Grant in the dayroom, he makes strides in accepting responsibility and assuming what Daley and Jones call the role of a “suffering servant”; his death becomes a productive task (98).

Much of Grant’s own failure to be the hero he describes to Jefferson is rooted in a misinterpretation of the hero concept he holds as it applies to himself. Throughout the novel, Grant reveals that he feels pressured to act as a savior for his community—a role he mistakes for that of a hero. After Miss Emma and Tante Lou approach him with the request to teach Jefferson to be a man, Grant complains to his girlfriend, Vivian: “I’m supposed to make him a man. Who am I? God?” (31). To Grant, the task seems pointless and ineffective. He interprets the request as a win-or-lose venture rather than as an opportunity to help. Critic Elise Ann Earthman says Grant perceives an unspoken assumption that his endeavors will rectify Jefferson’s situation and that by teaching Jefferson “to be a man,” he will reverse some aspect of his sentence—something Grant does not believe to be possible (170). Daley and Jones agree that Grant perceives a hero as a savior, the “conquering individual” who achieves restoration and “whom the community carries on its shoulders” (98). Grant’s

concern is for the outcome of his actions, not the essence of them.

Grant feels that his education sets him apart from his community but also imposes obligations on him. "Everything you sent me to school for, you're stripping me of it," Grant tells Tante Lou after experiencing "all those things [she] wanted [him] to escape" at Mr. Pichot's house (79). Although Grant may have wanted something better for himself without encouragement from his aunt, the expectations that were reiterated to him throughout his childhood have created a sense of obligation in him. He recounts that when he was a young student at the school, Tante Lou insisted that he "would not be one of the others," but would learn to move on in the world (63). He senses that the support he received in his schooling was given with specific intentions, but he fails to correlate his "escape" with Jefferson's situation. Instead, he believes that if he is going to live up to the advancement he has achieved, he must remain separate from the underprivileged society he has escaped. Grant fails the opportunities given him when he assumes that the situation he escapes through education is synonymous with his community; he views connection with his community as a willing step back into oppression and degradation. As a result, Grant has become accustomed to being a

Grant feels that his education sets him apart from his community but also imposes obligations on him.

savior-symbol rather than a true hero: a person leading his community not with action or compassion but by his indifferent example. In his dayroom discussion with Jefferson, Grant confides, "I'm no hero; I can just give something small" (193). This acknowledged failure to be a hero stems from Grant's persistent belief that he must preserve himself by remaining disconnected from his community, a decision that he ironically believes is for the sake of the community. If Grant is to be savior, he must protect what betterment he has achieved through his education. Despite the definition of a hero that he gives to Jefferson—that is, one who primarily gives and sacrifices, not necessarily conquers and accomplishes—Grant is still unable to realize that change in focus within himself.

Throughout the novel, Grant is subject to comments from those around him that seem to affirm his misconception. After he describes his humiliation in meeting with Henri Pichot, Sam Guidry, Louis Rougon, and the unnamed fat man, Miss Emma responds, "I'm sorry, Mr. Grant, I'm helping them white people to humiliate you. I'm so sorry. And I wished they had somebody else we could turn to. But there ain't nobody else" (79). Reverend Ambrose has a similar moment as he and Grant argue about what is best for Jefferson. "I want [Miss Emma] to believe that he'll be up there waiting for her. And you can help me do it. And you the only one," Ambrose challenges him. Saddled with statements like these—"ain't nobody else" and "you the only one"—it is easy for Grant to believe that his community expects some saving act that he feels unable to complete.

When Grant receives his early education from the mulatto Matthew Antoine, he encounters another force trying to impose a purpose and identity on him. However, unlike those who would have Grant be a savior or hero, Antoine resolves to mold Grant into “the loser,” an anti-hero: “You want to learn, I will help you learn. Maybe in that way I will be free, knowing that someone else has taken the burden” (63). He does not want Grant to break free from the oppressive situation in which he was raised, but to realize that he cannot.

Once Grant becomes a teacher, Antoine tells him that his choice to teach in the plantation school will make him realize how ineffectual is the attempt to educate young blacks. Antoine is correct, as Grant quickly becomes aware of the seemingly hopeless battle he faces. Critic Suzanne Jones calls attention to Grant’s questioning of his impact as a teacher (61): “And I thought to myself, What I am doing? Am I reaching them at all? They are acting as the old men did earlier. They are fifty years younger, maybe more, but doing the same thing those old men did who never attended school a day in their lives. Is it just a vicious circle? Am I doing anything?” (62) Antoine has intended for Grant to ask himself these questions and to find no comforting answer. To Antoine, the system of oppression and discrimination is to be hated, but not to be broken. As such, an individual should not spend his or her time sacrificing for others (as a hero would) but instead is justified in turning inward to selfish desires.

Largely due to the cynicism he picks up under the tutelage of Antoine, Grant fails to be a hero as a teacher. Elise Earthman maintains that Grant is a bad teacher “who knows it and hates himself for it” (169), but he cannot move past the pessimistic belief that he and his students cannot break past their current realities. Instead of exhibiting the heroic qualities as he has identified them to Jefferson (doing things for the sake of others), Grant interacts disconnectedly with his students, exposing them to strict and sometimes unnecessary discipline. When one of his students calculates math problem on his fingers and Grant smacks him with a ruler, the student “look[s] at [him] too angrily for [his] liking” (35). In response, Grant slaps his hands with the ruler again. Shortly after, Grant humiliates another student by telling her that her “simple sentence” is not a simple sentence unless it is written on a straight line. When he takes the chalk from her to draw an example line, he has to “pry” it out of her hands since “in her fear of [him] she continue[s] to hold on to it” (37).

Grant realizes his failure to be a hero in his teaching. After Jefferson’s execution, Paul, the white prison officer, recounts the events to Grant and concludes that Grant is “one great teacher” (254). But Grant immediately responds, “I’m not great. I’m not even a teacher. . . . You have to believe to be a teacher.” Grant realizes that he will not engage with his students on a level where he can exhibit optimism for their futures. He does not teach for their sake, and because of this he does not actually teach—he only trains. Reverend Ambrose, who sees Grant’s lack of connection with his students, brings this to light as the two argue over Grant’s methods of teaching Jefferson. Questioning Grant’s ability to influence Jefferson, Ambrose criticizes Grant’s indifference to his own community, insisting that mere academic instruction does not make one a teacher. Grant must know himself, the Reverend says, implying that Grant will only know himself once he acknowledges the community of which he is a part. Grant cannot be a teacher—or a hero—unless he commits to his work for the good of others.

However, as Grant tries to teach Jefferson to die like a man, he begins to attempt taking on a hero role himself for the first time: he begins to teach for the benefit of his student rather

than for himself or to fulfill demands of others and focuses on Jefferson rather than himself. During one visit to the prison, Grant realizes as they talk that Jefferson is not merely an education project but a soul with human desires as well. Grant makes the mistake of telling Jefferson that he hopes the execution day will be the kind of day Jefferson wants, when clearly this is of no importance to Jefferson at all. "The kind of day I want?" Jefferson responds. "I never got nothing I wanted in my whole life. Now I'm go'n get a whole day?" (170). At that moment Grant begins asking direct questions, hoping to discover what Jefferson does want in the time before his execution; he begins doing things for Jefferson's sake while they still matter. Does Jefferson want fruit, pecans, ice cream, funny books, or a radio? Grant starts to seek out needs and meet them. While Suzanne Jones believes that this is the second phase of Grant's effective interaction with Jefferson, she also writes that Grant's need-seeking creates a connection between Grant and Jefferson that did not previously exist: "The care and respect that Grant shows Jefferson have an effect. Jefferson begins to care for and respect Grant..." (58).

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However, this is not enough to make Grant a hero, and he still struggles with achieving the ideal selflessness of a hero. Following the dayroom discussion scene, Grant visits the Rainbow Club, where he overhears patrons discussing Jefferson and saying that authorities "should have burned him months ago" (198). Grant tells the patrons to "shut up, or get up," and a bar fight breaks out (199). Later at Vivian's house, he justifies his actions to her as noble and likens it to defending her honor: "Honey, suppose someone said something about you—would you want me to just walk away?" (209). Vivian refuses to acknowledge his point, having made it clear that Grant's choice to fight displayed carelessness for her security.

Grant's willingness to fight is not so much about defending Jefferson's honor as it is about defending his own success. When Grant first enters the Rainbow Club, he makes note of his high spirits due to the breakthrough with Jefferson. When the mulattos begin talking, Grant tries to talk himself into walking out rather than engaging with them: "You came here in a good mood because this was one of the best days you have had with him, and you can't let this kind of trash destroy that good feeling" (199). This self-argument is eventually flipped to encourage Grant to confront, which he does. When he receives a thorough beating from the mulattos, his feelings of happiness are sorely injured. At Vivian's house he tries to recreate his lost feeling of success by giving Vivian the prison updates before she has finished processing and dealing with his fight and its implications. At every step of the episode, Grant shows concern for himself and his recent success with Jefferson rather than putting his elation aside to address the needs of those around him.

It is through the reality and comparison of Grant's failure to be a hero that we can most clearly gauge Jefferson's success. In his last meeting with Grant before his execution, Jefferson speaks clearly about his role and expectation, saying that he is "the one got to do everything" (223). "I'm the one," Jefferson says. "Me, Mr. Wiggins. Me. Me to take the cross" (224). Jefferson's absolute statements are reminiscent of the statements Grant has heard from Miss Emma and Reverend Ambrose about being "the only one." Jefferson has realized his own situation and acknowledges that he cannot be a savior: "Now all y'all want me to be better than ever'budy else. How, Mr. Wiggins? You tell me." Jefferson, being granted an opportunity to influence and bring change to his community, faces similar expectations as Grant has and possesses the same uncertainty about his ability to realize those expectations.

Unlike Grant, however, Jefferson rejects the idea that his actions must fit into specific expectations. He says, "I'm go'n do my best, Mr. Wiggins. That's all I can promise" (225). This honest promise of action demonstrates Jefferson's development of understanding—he has learned that life is about responsibility and being mindful of one's own being. By promising only to do the best he can, Jefferson overcomes the battles Grant has had to be a hero. Jefferson does not try to accomplish anything significant in his death other than acting for the benefit of those connected to him. He breaks beyond oppressive racist thought by walking to his death like a man and being, as Paul describes him, "the strongest man in that crowded room" (253). Jefferson's death succeeds as a heroic moment because his last actions (walking with dignity for Miss Emma, returning the journal to Grant) reflect a mindset focused on others, not himself.

*A Lesson Before Dying* does not end with a lack of hope for Grant, however. Suzanne Jones says the fact "that Jefferson learns the lessons that Grant teaches, [and] that he makes something of himself, even within the confines of a jail cell . . . becomes a lesson for Grant" (59). Even before the execution, Grant begins to act for the sake of others, particularly Vivian. His approach is not perfect (as evidenced by the bar fight), but Grant makes sure to tell Jefferson that "it's Vivian who keeps me coming here" (129). If Grant had acted completely selfishly, he would have ceased visiting Jefferson, and in the same vein, as John Fleming indicates, Vivian becomes Grant's driving force to do what he does not wish to do (29).

As the novel closes, Grant fails at his last chance in the text to fully be a hero: he will not stand with Jefferson at the execution. Grant is still not completely able to act for others, even after he has told Jefferson, "We all need you. Every last one of us" (225). Grant is willing to ask Jefferson to be a hero for the sake of others, but Grant cannot honor Jefferson's sacrifice by standing in support for Jefferson's sake.

Despite this, Grant does go through a small transformation and at the end of the book shows that he is ready to assume the hero role. As Grant waits for Jefferson to die, he consciously refuses to cry, thinking, "[T]here were too many more who would end up as he did. I could not cry for all of them, could I?" (249). Grant still insists on remaining disconnected and pessimistic concerning his community, despite his relationship with Jefferson. The closing lines of the novel, though, show that some change has occurred: "I went up to the desk and turned to face them. I was crying" (256). Grant is able not only to cry vulnerably for Jefferson but also to do so in the community situation of his classroom. "[Grant] has learned to focus on the student rather than on himself, to feel and show empathy,

to apologize and cry," Earthman writes (170). Grant's willingness to cry demonstrates his growing willingness to abandon his strict and isolated identity in order to do things for others and to interact with them. The fact that he experiences this change within the context of his class of students provides hope that he will be able to assume the role of the hero in the classroom and provide those energies of service to his students.

If readers do not have an understanding of Grant's failure—especially in the classroom—the definition of a hero that he gives to Jefferson in the prison dayroom falls flat. In order for Jefferson's success to claim either a sense of believability or the full potential of meaning, it has to be evaluated against Grant's all too realistic and familiar inadequacy. In light of his inability (or unwillingness) to act for the sake of others, we recognize that Grant's definition of a hero is an ideal beyond himself, something he can conceptualize but cannot bring himself to completely embody, although he does make progress along the way in small successes of others-centered actions. When Grant acknowledges to Jefferson that he is "no hero," placing the hope and vision of a hero on Jefferson, he does so completely and honestly, but with the slight possibility that in time each man can be a hero. "I need to know what to do with my life," he tells Jefferson. "I need you to tell me, to show me. I'm no hero; I can just give something small. That's all I have to offer" (193). Jefferson does provide a model of a hero for Grant. Grant, in turn, provides readers with a silhouette of Jefferson's success, giving depth, context and reality to Gaines's prophetic vision of a hero.

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# Solidarity and its Mechanisms: A Study of a College Jazz Band Through Participant Observation

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this project was to research the group dynamics of the Valley College Jazz Band at the start of a new year with a new director. As a member of this group, I observed the types and frequencies of interactions that took place within the band for the first eleven weeks of the fall 2011 semester. The following seven terms designate themes that surfaced repeatedly during my observation. *Solidarity* refers to integration that is achieved through displays of Durkheim's concept of ritual solidarity (Collins 1988). *Social dynamics* include interaction patterns such as rate and who-to-whom. *Spatial dynamics* include interactions that are influenced by physical proximity. *Newness* includes interactions that show a dissipation of solidarity. *Humor* refers to interactions that serve as shared jokes. *Formal leadership* encompasses the teaching style, communication style, emphasis, and newness of the director. And *de facto leadership* (Ditrich 2000) comprises demonstrations of leadership by band members. At the conclusion of my research, I found that the Jazz Band illustrated

*Edited for length, this version of the study omits many detailed observations in the original paper.*

solidarity through the other six concepts, which served as supporting mechanisms; that a high rate of consistent interaction encourages friendships; that spatial closeness increases the likelihood of interaction and friendship; that newness occurs during times of uncertainty and stress, such as the introduction of new music at the beginning of the semester and after the first concert; that humor is a means of enacting ritual solidarity; that the elements of formal leadership can predict both success and solidarity; and that de facto leadership has the potential to create conflict and stress, which can be prevented by a strong sense of group solidarity.

### **Introduction**

This ethnographic project was a continuation of a course-embedded observation during spring 2011. I wanted to explore the impact of a new director and new membership on group dynamics. This study is worthwhile to the field of sociology because it provides additional insight into how people interact and how the rates and types of these interactions shape the group as a whole as well as the individuals within that group. My findings can also inform music education programs and music ensembles by shedding light on group dynamics and creating a more effective and productive music ensemble. Most importantly, this extended period of participant observation showed subtle trends of interaction, awareness of which may lead to revision of current theory on group dynamics.

### **Research Setting and Method**

In order to study the effect of new leadership on the group dynamics of the Jazz Band at Valley College, during the first eleven weeks of the 2011 fall semester, I conducted participant observation because I wanted to get a general sense of the group dynamics of the band rather than sort out the fifteen perspectives of members of the band. By using participant observation, I was able to see how various mechanisms of interaction and leadership affected the band as a whole and to discover how these mechanisms worked together to affect group dynamics and solidarity. Twenty-two hours of observation revealed hidden patterns of interaction, and my previous observation project informed my perspective of how the band shifted under the new director.

I conducted overt participant observation and obtained written consent from all members of the band, including the director. I tried to be discreet so that my role as a researcher did not interfere with the natural flow of rehearsals or inhibit the behavior and interaction of the members, including myself. As unobtrusively as possible, I made field notes on 4x6 cards. My position as pianist with the band at provided me with direct access and decreased the risk of participant reactivity. I continued my observation for eleven weeks in order to decrease any remaining chance of reactivity.

Throughout my observation, I was aware of my own potential observer bias. I also felt the tension between my role as a member of the band and my role as a researcher. At times it was difficult to balance my participation in the group dynamics of the Jazz Band with my observation of those same group dynamics. For example, I had to consider my observer role before joining an interaction because I did not want my interaction to be something out of character for my participant role. Instead, I had to pause for a moment to acknowledge this role conflict and refocus on my participant role. I also strove to be reflexive by weekly discussions with my faculty supervisor. Throughout my observation, I continued to make

an effort to interact with the rest of the band as I always did and included myself in my jottings, field notes, and analyses. According to Collins (2004), observation is meaningful only if it is reflective, but simultaneous action tends to reduce one's ability to be reflective. I recognized that my participant and observer roles both deserved attention and could not ultimately be separated.

With regard to maintaining a discreet style of observation, I participated and paid attention as I always would. I did not want the members of the band to feel uncomfortable or self-conscious and thus behave in an artificial fashion. Sitting at the piano and facing the band made it easy for me to observe the members. Observing the director was possible because it

was normal for me to turn and face her while she was speaking.

Throughout my observations, I continued to make an effort to interact with the rest of the band as I always did.

I observed the Valley College Jazz Band before, during, and after our one-hour rehearsals on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. I also observed the band before and after our concert on Saturday evening of Homecoming weekend. Working from

my observation notes, I typed up expanded field notes the evening after a rehearsal, or the following day, before my memory of the meeting faded. I then read my completed field notes multiple times in order to code all of my observations from September 6 to October 25. Additional observations after October 25 were similarly read multiple times and coded in order to supplement my previous field notes. During my research, the Jazz Band consisted of five new members (all freshmen) and nine veteran members, in addition to the new director. Observations took place in the main band room in the basement of the music building during rehearsals, the practice room lounge before and after rehearsals, and the sanctuary of the music building for the two rehearsals prior to the concert.

To prepare for the project, I read a number of articles about music ensembles, directors, and band classes. Although this literature informed my research, I aimed to use inductive analysis in order to reach a grounded theory. I did this by observing interaction trends in general, rather than focusing on what the literature suggested. Once I was nearing the planned completion of my observation, I began exploring the literature again and read more about group dynamics in general, as well as specific band directing methods. As I read and analyzed, analyzed and read, I was able to integrate my findings with this literature and develop my own perspective of group dynamics.

### Findings

After coding my field notes, I came up with seven conceptual categories: *solidarity*, *social dynamics*, *spatial dynamics*, *newness*, *humor*, *formal leadership*, and *de facto leadership*. *Solidarity* is an overarching theme because the other six categories are individual mechanisms that contribute to the overall solidarity of the Jazz Band. This concept is largely

related to theories of ritual solidarity and interaction rituals (Collins 1988; Collins 2004) and is illustrated by a group-wide attitude or a consensus of agreement. *Social dynamics* refers to general interaction between members, including the director, and demonstrates how friendships and sub-groups are formed, whether dyads or larger. *Spatial dynamics* refers to interaction that is influenced by spatial proximity or distance, whether the degree of integration or the rate of interaction. *Newness* refers to instances that illustrate the ebb and flow of solidarity and interactions that show a dissipation of cohesion, such as interactions that are awkward or absent. *Humor* includes jokes and laughter that occur in interaction between members, including the director. *Formal leadership* refers to the teaching style and communication style of our director, as well as what she emphasizes regularly. *De facto leadership* refers to interactions or other occurrences that show the leadership of other members (Ditrich 2000), such as our drummer and our first trombone player.

### *Solidarity*

Solidarity reflects Durkheim's concept of ritual solidarity, although it can also be thought of as cohesiveness. Cohesiveness means that a group feels emotionally close and attached and expresses good morale, coordination, motivation, cooperation, organization, friendships, collective commitment, similarity, and compatibility (Duvall 1960; Friedrich 2007; Grauly 2010; Hare 1962; Mills 1967; Seaman 1981). Group solidarity is beneficial because it increases commitment, length of existence, efficient labor division, effective communication, motivation, friendliness, productivity, closeness, morale, well-being, and trust (Hare 1962; Mills 1967; Parks and Sanna 1999). This concept is based on Durkheim's ritual solidarity because a co-presence, common focus, common mood, and sacred symbol increase group bonds. I also incorporated Randall Collins' theory of interaction rituals because effective interaction that is synchronized increases integration (Collins 1988; Collins 2004). For example, at the rehearsal after the first concert, which was a great success, the band met to listen to the recording. The band expressed solidarity because a collective positive attitude was evident when members shared praise and everyone agreed. After this striking show of solidarity, interactions that reflected cohesion were much more frequent before, during, and after rehearsals.

### *Social Dynamics*

The concept of social dynamics includes rate of interaction, who speaks to whom, friendships and subgroups, and conversations. Not surprisingly, I found that regular and frequent interaction between the same people increases friendships, which is beneficial because having friendships within a group increases enjoyment and productivity (Hare 1962). I also found that the pre-existing friendships of veteran members formed a sub-group separate from the forming friendships of new members and that interaction was also contained within the sub-groups of each section, both of which resulted in more interaction because there were fewer people competing for attention (Hare 1962; Mills 1967). However, widespread interaction became more regular and frequent with time, which is to be expected as solidarity increases (Collins 2004). Later in the semester, group-wide conversations were common, especially before and after rehearsals when members would gather to socialize in the lounge and were not impeded by the supervision of the director (Janzen 1985).

*Spatial Dynamics*

In regard to spatial dynamics, proximity influences four things: how conversations and information spread, how much interaction occurs, what friendships develop, and how integrated members are. Proximity is important because the emotional energy of solidarity is transferred more easily when a group is gathered together (Collins 2004). Spatial arrangement also determines the frequencies, durations, and directions of interactions because limited space and close proximity lead to more interaction (Janzen 1985; McFeat 1974). And, as mentioned above, friendships tend to result from being spatially close (Hare 1962). Prior to the concert, there were three separate conversations that were determined by proximity, which were later combined into one collective conversation. When the band met to listen to the recording of the concert, expressions of approval started with two members and radiated outward to the rest of the band. There was less interaction within the trombone section when seated on one side of the square format than when seated behind the saxophone section, most likely because they felt more supervised when out in the open. Friendships are more likely in close proximity, and were most common between members of the same section who sat next to each other. Integration can be impaired by interrupted proximity, which occurred

Solidarity is more likely to increase in close, face-to-face settings, where close proximity allows regular interaction.

somewhat in the rhythm section because of the placement of the piano. Overall, solidarity is more likely to increase in close, face-to-face settings, where close proximity allows regular interaction.

*Newness*

Newness refers to times of dissipated solidarity and is expressed by limited interaction,

which is common when members either do not know each other or are anxious (Parks and Sanna 1999; Seaman 1981). This occurred at two times during the semester. The first was during the first few rehearsals of the semester, when there was no interaction other than instructions from the director. Although the first concert produced solidarity and increased interaction, a second period of newness surfaced in the rehearsal that followed, when new music was introduced. There was again limited interaction, although there was more interaction than the first few weeks. This rise and decline of solidarity and the contrasting sense of newness suggest that solidarity is an ebb and flow with varying levels of strength and longevity.

*Humor*

Humor can counteract newness and increase solidarity through positive functions, such as releasing tension, increasing relaxation and enjoyment, enhancing cohesiveness, and establishing membership or leadership (Romero and Cruthirds 2006). Humor can be especially useful to music ensembles because enjoyable rehearsals increase the commitment

and productivity of members (Duvall 1960). Humor also fits well with solidarity because it reflects the four characteristics of ritual solidarity: a co-presence, common focus, common mood, and sacred symbol. For example, when jokes were made about a member's upcoming twenty-first birthday, there was co-presence because the entire band was together, there was a common focus when everyone was paying attention to the jokes, there was a common mood because members shared in the celebratory and amused emotion, and there was a sacred symbol when everyone responded to the jokes in a positive way. This instance of humor was especially positive because multiple members shared in the joke and prolonged the interaction ritual (Collins 2004). Humor also reflects the timing and strength of solidarity; I did not observe any uses of humor until immediately before the concert, and humor occurred with increasing frequency for the rest of the semester as solidarity continued to increase.

### *Formal Leadership*

Formal leadership in any music ensemble lies with the director because he or she has certain responsibilities (Hare 1961; Wis 2002). Characteristics of leadership include authority, intelligence, enthusiasm, dominance, self-confidence, social participation, and equalitarianism, as well as a focus on people, long-term goals, and relationships (Hare 1962; Mills 1967; Napier and Gershenfeld 1999; Wis 2002). Effective leadership is necessary because it facilitates a group's integration, morale, sociability, efficiency, and productivity (Hare 1961; Parks and Sanna 1999; Seaman 1981). The director's formal leadership is reinforced by her high rate of interaction and her title of doctor (Collins 2004; Hare 1962). For teaching style, communication style, and what is emphasized, I found that the director reflects a variety of recommendations that I found in various music directing handbooks and other articles (Duvall 1960; Grauly 2010; Harding 2010; Janzen 1985; McFeat 1974; Myers 2009; Seaman 1981). Newness occurred when the director's instructions were uncertain or unclear, which can result in problems within the band (Janzen 1985), but became much less frequent as solidarity increased with time. Formal leadership can be used to promote solidarity by participating in positive interactions and facilitating group-wide interaction, which was done frequently through humor during rehearsals and prior to the concert.

### *De Facto Leadership*

De facto leadership exists without a formal title and usually rests with the drummer of an ensemble (Ditrich 2000). It is also common for the most interactive member to be viewed as a leader (Hare 1962; Seaman 1981). Both of these were evident in the band, especially for the week when the director was absent. The director had asked the most interactive member, Matt, to guide these rehearsals, and his leadership was tested by the drummer, Michael, through interruptions and sarcasm. For example, after Matt announced a piece to play, Michael repeated the title. Or, when Matt was counting into a piece, Michael distracted him by drumming at the same time. Although there was potential for a serious conflict, solidarity prevailed for two reasons: it was late in the semester, and these two veteran members were already friends.

## **Discussion**

### *Summary and Implications*

Based on my observations, I argue that *solidarity* was primarily established by enacting

ritual solidarity through interaction rituals that include co-presence, a common focus, a common mood, and a symbol. Although solidarity may be negative if it ever distracts from the group task, establishing solidarity is important because a group will be both more productive and more satisfied when this feeling of solid cohesiveness has been established. I did not observe any shows of solidarity until immediately before and after our first concert, which means that eleven rehearsals occurred before the band really felt solidified. Even though the band displayed somewhat dissipated solidarity during the first rehearsal after the concert when we started working on new music, shows of ritual solidarity occurred again that same day. Because solidarity had already been established through the bonding experience of the successful concert, the second wave of dissipated solidarity did not last nearly as long (one rehearsal) as the first (eleven rehearsals). This finding is relevant to other groups because members should be aware of the function of ritual solidarity so that they can fully participate and enact ritual solidarity when the group experiences anxiety-induced newness.

With regard to *social dynamics*, the combination of rate of interaction and who speaks to whom results in a good predictor of which people will be friends, as friends will interact frequently and consistently. The group-wide conversation that took place prior to our concert was also affected by rate and direction of interaction; each member either addressed the whole group or responded to the person who spoke last (Collins 2004). Additionally, as the conversation grew to include the whole group, rate of interaction decreased because it is more difficult for individual members to interact as group size increases. This knowledge can be applied by other directors of music ensembles in order to recognize developing friendships and be aware of potentially disruptive interactions that may require intervention. It can also help them better understand why certain members interact with others and other members do not. For example, this awareness could be used when sub-groups or committees must be created, as the leader would understand which members are naturally inclined to work together and which ones may need more experience working with others.

The category of social dynamics is also inherently related to *spatial dynamics* because physical proximity greatly influences social interaction. If space is too large, interaction and integration of members and solidarity of the group are more difficult to achieve; on the other hand, if it is too small, social interaction can disrupt rehearsal and the director's leadership. Although the concept of spatial proximity has been addressed by previous studies of group dynamics and interaction, these observations contribute additional support for the fact that interaction increases as proximity becomes closer. Additionally, they can be used by group leaders to decrease interaction if it has become disruptive or increase interaction if members are not sharing information as necessary.

In regard to *newness*, the fact that the Jazz Band experienced this dissipation of solidarity twice suggests that future theories of group formation must go beyond simple linear or cyclical models by theorists Tuckman, Shultz, Worchel, and Wheelen (Napier and Gershenfeld 1999). Instead, the experience of group process may be more accurately represented by a wave with varying levels of cohesion. Newness occurred during high-anxiety situations, which supports Collins' (2004) statement that emotive states are important in determining solidarity. In formally led groups, it is important that the leader do as much as possible in order to counteract feelings of newness because, if left unresolved, newness can lead to randomness, confusion, and guarded interaction (Seaman 1981), as well as a

lack of cohesion and solidarity. Because all of these things can impair group productivity, group leaders should strive to decrease feelings of newness. This was accomplished in the Jazz Band by using humor to release tension and through positive reinforcement and encouragement from our director. It was also better solidified after our goal of having a good concert was successfully accomplished. Other groups can use these same methods to overcome feelings of newness and can also integrate other methods, such as introductory and group-building activities.

Shows of *humor* are important in establishing solidarity and cohesiveness, creating a relaxed atmosphere, and establishing membership or leadership. Humor can also be a distraction if it occurs too frequently or a detriment if it occurs too aggressively or negatively. Group members should be aware of the different types of humor—affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, mild aggressive, and self-defeating—and understand that affiliative and self-enhancing are the best types of humor because they enhance rather than damage the group and its members

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(Romero and Cruthirds 2006). Additionally, humor is also an effective way to counteract newness and enact ritual solidarity because humor includes co-presence, a common focus, a common mood, and a sacred symbol.

Focusing on *formal leadership*, I found that our director's teaching style accurately reflects advice given to band directors and music ensembles, such as focusing on certain sections of a piece, practicing under tempo, learning measures in reverse order, teaching improvisation, warning about mistakes before they happen, coordinating and involving all members, and expressing the band's purpose and objectives. I found that her communication style tends to be relaxed and encouraging, as well as frequent. This means that the band receives positive reinforcement regularly and does not have to wonder about the director's opinion because she always makes a comment, whether to correct, instruct, or praise. Frequent communication also contributes to solidarity because there are very few moments of silence. I also found that she regularly emphasizes rhythm and style, listening, and personal practice time, all of which are emphasized in advice given to band directors. Lastly, I found that our director occasionally contributed to newness, such as when she did not clearly express something or when she could not get the band to be quiet so that rehearsal could begin. However, these inadequacies were not observed past October 4 because they had been remedied by our director. Similarly, other group leaders or ensemble directors can use these methods to improve their effectiveness and promote group solidarity. It is also essential that leaders and directors are aware of their influence and their group's dynamics

so that they can remedy any shortcomings in their leadership and adjust their leadership to the shifting dynamics of the group.

With respect to *de facto leadership*, I found that Michael asserted his de facto leadership as our drummer only during sectionals and when he challenged Matt's responsibility to lead the band during the week that our director was not there. Matt was easily able to assert de facto leadership because he was the most frequent talker during rehearsals (other than our director) and because he expressed that our director had instructed him on what to do during the two rehearsals without her. Given the fact that members who talk the most are generally seen as leaders by other members, simply because their frequent interaction makes them the most present members of the group, it is possible that our director asked Matt to lead the band because she saw him as the leader among the students and understood that the band would easily accept his leadership. This is relevant to other groups for two reasons. First, in a group with formal leadership, the leader can consider who would be most accepted by the rest of the group if a temporary leader needs to be chosen. Second, in a group without formal leadership, members of that group should consider that quieter members can make important contributions, even if they seem less present within the group. This was true within the Jazz Band because every member, regardless of interaction frequency, was important to the collective success of the ensemble.

#### *Mechanisms of Solidarity*

The example of the flow of conversation as we waited for our first concert to begin is an excellent illustration of how the six categories (social and spatial dynamics, newness, humor, and formal and de facto leadership) all function as mechanisms of solidarity. The entire band (minus the trombone players, who were in the chorale concert) was seated in the Symphonic Band section of the band room and our director stood toward the front of the band setup. During this time, there were multiple conversations within three separate subgroups: Rachel, John, Andrew, and Jessica; Chris and Michael; and Amanda, Lauren, and me. Over time, Amanda, Lauren, and I joined in the conversation of the group of four and Chris and Michael later joined in, making the entire band involved in the conversation with the exceptions of Andrew and Ashley, who had seated themselves farther away. This example illustrates the category of *social dynamics* because it shows how interaction can flow across a group of people, such as when Amanda, Lauren, and I joined the conversation about Halloween and when Chris and Michael joined the conversation about high school marching band experiences. The category of *spatial dynamics* is also illustrated because our seating arrangement determined how the three groups were originally divided, as well as the fact that Andrew and Ashley were excluded because they were outside the circle.

The occasion also showed *newness* because, while freshmen were included in the group conversation, no veteran member chose to separate from the group, probably because they were confident in their integration within the band and less nervous because this was not their first Jazz Band concert. *Humor* was also used to distract from nervousness and establish solidarity in that we talked about funny Halloween costumes and funny memories of high school marching band. Lastly, *formal* and *de facto leadership* were also evident. Our director interacted with us as we shared stories and offered her own stories and input. While she thus communicated her equal membership, she increased her formal leadership by remaining standing. The de facto leadership of Michael was also evident in that he did

not end his conversation with Chris to join the group until we started talking about high school marching band experiences, when Michael offered his own knowledgeable opinion about being on drum line.

In conclusion, *solidarity* is a conceptual theme that encompasses the six other categories. *Social* and *spatial dynamics* contribute to solidarity because interaction and friendships increase integration and solidarity through collective action, shared events, shared awareness, and shared emotions. Such integration and cohesion are threatened by instances of *newness*, which can also be thought of as a dissipation of solidarity. *Humor* is also used to promote solidarity by including the ritual solidarity characteristics of co-presence, shared focus, shared attitude, and sacred symbol. Both *formal* and *de facto leadership* can either increase or threaten solidarity. To increase solidarity, a formal leader should focus on encouraging group members by interacting with them frequently and as equals. Additionally, solidarity should be protected from *de facto leadership* if there is the potential for too much competition or interruption. Lastly, *solidarity* is similarly observable in the above October 15 conversation. There was

co-presence because of the spatial arrangement of how we were seated; the common focus was the story-teller and the story; the common mood was somewhat nervous and wanting to be distracted from that nervousness; and the symbol was the story that was being told

Future research would allow my model of the ebb and flow of solidarity to be tested.

about the common experiences that were shared about Halloween and high school marching band.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

The main limitation of this study was the possibility of reactivity because all participants were aware of the research. Although I was as discreet as possible and continued my observation for eleven weeks, reactivity is always a concern and it is impossible to know whether members of the band would have acted differently had they not been informed of the study. The other main limitation was the possibility of observer bias. Although I struggled to balance my roles as a member and a participant observer and researcher, there is no such thing as truly objective qualitative research. However, this qualitative research provided the added insight of how the group dynamics of the band affected me and vice versa. For future research, there are a multitude of opportunities, such as other instrumental and vocal groups at Valley College and even non-musical groups. Such future research would allow my model of the ebb and flow of solidarity to be tested.

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# For Liberty's Sake: An Appeal to Libertarians for Restricting Biotechnology

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## Introduction

In political thought, there is frequently a single defining characteristic which a philosopher believes will steer the course of the future. For instance, Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in the nineteenth century, believed democracy to be a global trend that would not relent until it had engulfed the entire world. For Karl Marx, the proletariat was destined to coalesce, rise up, and overthrow the bourgeois power structure. For Leon Kass, technological progress is the freight train by which the human race is transported today, heading toward the destination of post-humanism (*Life, Liberty*). The evidence of our journey to this point inundates society. Although the likes of Bacon, Descartes, and Locke were advocating the mastery of nature for the relief of man's estate centuries ago, it would defy common sense to imagine that they envisioned where the human race finds itself today. Mastery of nature has advanced rapidly and relentlessly; while natural phenomena, such as tornados, tsunamis, and droughts, still bring humanity to its knees, technological progress has been impressive. Most recently, the task at hand has become the mastery of human nature—the mastery, that is, of our selves. The question, the answer to which may define humanity's

future, is this: Will the modern technological project continue to proceed unhindered into this most personal realm?

The arguments of biotech advocates are replete with benevolent will, and their case can be almost irresistibly compelling: "Let us alleviate suffering. Let us cure disease. Let us give a couple a child and, thereby, a family. Let us allow the elderly and infirm to die with dignity. Let us make children healthy and capable of reaching their fullest potential." Some notions of the sacredness of the human body may be the price of the transaction, but the humanistic benefits from the exchange seem decisive. In his advocacy of kidney markets, for instance, Benjamin Hippen notes that restrictions on the use of such biotechnology promote a "crisis" in which the kidney waiting list will "degenerate into an equal opportunity to die waiting"

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(54). While those favoring a restrained approach must rely on abstract conceptions of the body's sacredness, their opposition can posit countless lives saved and immeasurable suffering alleviated. Moreover, certain biotechnological innovations could purportedly elevate the ceiling of human potential. As Kass describes it, the promises

of biotechnology are "ageless and ever-vigorous bodies, happy (or at least not unhappy) souls, and excellent human achievement (with diminished effort or toil)" ("Ageless Bodies" 14). Who could resist that call to humanitarianism and greatness?

Libertarians, along with any who believe in the primacy of liberal rights, appear ill equipped to do so, if they are even so inclined. As a matter of fact, Peter Lawler goes so far as to assert that the progress of biotechnology is really the consequence of "creeping libertarianism [that] is starting to get pretty creepy" (62). Driven generally by John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle and laissez-faire philosophies, libertarians are simultaneously unwilling to be restrained or to restrain, including and perhaps especially when the issue at hand involves one's own body. However, a trio of arguments can be advanced that demonstrate the plausibility of a libertarian stance against a hands-off approach to biotechnology. First, issues of liberty and autonomy, in a biotechnological society, must be considered; biotechnology may well be the mechanism by which and the arena within which these cherished liberal values are restricted. Second, libertarians should be challenged to accept an objective standard of human dignity, a standard that supports liberal rights and freedoms while concurrently justifying measures to defend human dignity and prevent its violation. Third, the principles of John Stuart Mill, logically extended, can provide a legitimate basis by which to regulate biotechnological research and advancement.

### **Biotechnology and the Tyranny of the Majority**

In Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s short story "Harrison Bergeron," government control has, at long last, accomplished the task of making all citizens "equal every which way." Since the

focus of the story is the government's enforcement of compulsory equality, the method may be incidentally overlooked. That method is technology—crude, to be sure, but technology nonetheless. George, one of the story's central characters, has a “mental handicap radio”; he and the ballerinas on television wear burdensome weights. To say the least, this story seems far-fetched, but what once could serve only as a metaphor now strikes the mind as a potentiality. In this young millennium, the technologies which could be employed to such ends would be much more feasible. Further, even if society did not opt to obstruct mental or physical performance through biotechnology, the question remains whether citizens may be compelled to receive so-called “enhancements.” In either case, the net result would be a loss of liberty and autonomy that should give all libertarians pause.

Ronald Bailey, a libertarian journalist for *Reason* magazine, has expressed concerns over the tyranny of the majority manifesting itself in the obstruction of biotechnological research. Such a tyranny, he warns, would threaten the myriad of benefits deriving from technological research, including “the cure of diseases and disabilities for millions of sufferers [and] the production of more nutritious food with less damage to the natural environment.” Certainly, these products of research are valuable, and we should not seek the preclusion of their development without serious reflection. However, Bailey fails to acknowledge how tyranny of the majority may work in reverse—how unchecked biotechnology may be wielded against liberty. If majority tyranny is either a potentiality or a reality, then it is so in all cases, whether it is aimed at stifling technological progress or armed with it. Bailey employs his libertarian ideals to shield biotechnology from restraint and implicitly makes the assumption that these ideals will always win the day. But there is little justification to follow this line of reasoning. While it is reasonable to adhere to Tocqueville's and Francis Fukuyama's understanding that democracy will inevitably end governmental diversity, it does not follow that a libertarian philosophy of government will be similarly triumphant. In fact, save for the Tea Party movement's recent resurgence of limited-government, constitutional enthusiasm in the United States, most of the Western world is and has been moving toward bigger government at the expense of liberty. It is not difficult to conceive of a time when, for instance, enhancements constitute a prerequisite to receiving government health care, Medicare, Social Security, or any other entitlement. Kass mentions more subtle societal forces, including a potential “tyranny of expertise,” wherein, for example, doctors influence prospective parents concerning unborn disabled children. Further, Kass notes how the language of rights could easily be wielded to establish a “right” to be born healthy or enhanced (128).

In *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis cautions that “[e]ach new power won *by* man is a power *over* man as well,” that the power of modern science really “means . . . the power of some men to make other men what *they* please” (58-59). This warning should not be taken too lightly. Bailey is right to fear the tyranny of the majority, and we should not desire to go back to a pre-scientific age. Bailey notes, “Throughout history, people have opposed various biomedical advances,” advances that are “now widely accepted by the public” (qtd. in Ford). But if we are wary of majority tyranny in one sense, then we should be just as concerned in the other.

Libertarians should consider adopting an approach of ordered liberty, sacrificing a *laissez-faire* policy towards biotechnological research in order to guard against more severe ramifications for liberty in the long run. Ordered liberty may seem somewhat foreign to a

libertarian philosophy, but it should not be so. Exiting the state of nature—partaking in a social contract—is an exercise in ordered liberty. For philosopher Thomas Hobbes, individuals relinquish the Right of Nature, which is the right to everything and everyone, in order to avert a “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” life, to enable the pursuit of their desires, to permit them to enjoy their lives and flourish with the liberty they retain (76). For John Locke, individuals abdicate their ability to be the judge of their own actions and cases, trading such privileges for the security of their lives, liberties, and properties (68). Even John Stuart Mill’s two basic maxims can be viewed as an exercise in ordered liberty (163). In each philosopher’s formulation, individuals release some of their liberty to circumvent worse abuses of their freedoms in the future, to ascertain a *greater good*, if you will. This is the argument underlying the opposition to unlimited biotechnological research. Admittedly, the modern libertarian movement includes factions, such as anarcho-capitalists, that look upon the state of nature with an increasingly favorable gaze. Nonetheless, since libertarians generally are not anarchical in nature nor advocate a return to the state of nature, this argument should hold weight. Since the transaction of personal liberty in reference to biotechnology involves future calculations of such liberty, it should be even more potent.

Some may rebut this point by arguing that other nations will inevitably pursue such biotechnological research, and America’s avoidance of it will merely result in the loss of world dominance, especially in the field of science. To the extent that such a course of events may put Americans’ liberty in jeopardy, this point is well taken. Otherwise, to allude to a classic parental line, the likelihood that “everyone else” will jump off the cliff of biotechnological research is not adequate justification for our following suit. Moreover, libertarians should recall the oratory of Patrick Henry. In the Virginia State Ratifying Committee in 1788, Henry, reflecting that some early Americans wished to create an American empire, quipped, “When the American spirit was in its youth, the language of America was different: liberty, sir, was then the primary object.”

### **Human Dignity, Liberal Rights, and Biotechnology**

In addition to concerns about the future of liberty in society, the libertarian must consider the implications of human dignity. Human dignity is the foundation upon which modern liberal democracy rests. Robert Kraynak writes that, at the foundation of liberalism, one finds “human dignity that underlies individual rights and democratic consent” (21). He calls human dignity the “deepest, underlying premise” of modern liberal democracy (25). Thus, it is indispensable to libertarian philosophy. Without dignity at the core, there is no justification for individual rights, for justice, for liberty. Why does each individual merit consideration? In the absence of dignity, one may scorn tyranny, but one has no objective basis by which to condemn it. If there is no objective value in a human being, then there is no basis to criticize encroachments on personal liberty.

Consequently, since human dignity is integral to a theory of individual rights, it follows that it is worthy of protection. Certainly, a philosophy that rests upon human dignity should not permit its destruction; the very rights that would be employed to destroy dignity would collapse when the task was accomplished. Because rights depend upon a doctrine of human dignity, dignity can be classed among the inalienable rights of life and liberty. From a Hobbesian perspective, the rights to life and liberty are prerequisites to the pursuit of happiness, and, Kraynak would assert, human dignity undergirds those rights—although Kraynak also

argues that modern liberalism “takes away the grounds of human dignity,” most blatantly in the work of Hobbes (32). Locke might make the argument that, just as individuals cannot rightfully take their own lives, they cannot violate their own dignity (17-18). Dignity, after all, is the mark of our distinctive nature as human beings. To violate human dignity is, in essence, to destroy our humanity. Of course, the question arises as to what truly constitutes a violation of human dignity and whether it is even possible for human beings to literally annihilate their humanity, to accomplish Lewis’s “abolition of man” (64). Nevertheless, it is, at least, a legitimate question to discuss and an appropriate domain of action.

### John Stuart Mill and Biotechnology

Finally, we may examine the principles of John Stuart Mill as they apply to the biotechnological debate. In his advocacy of biotech research and advancement, Bailey is open about his dedication to Mill’s famous Harm Principle: “My basic commitment is that people should be allowed to do what they would like to do so long as they don’t harm anyone else” (qtd. in Ford). On its face, Mill’s principle appears entirely inadequate to deal with the complexity of the biotech issue. Reliance on his principle may induce us to see only the short-term, small-scale picture of consequences, and we will fail to recognize the broader canvas of societal and generational impacts. If our primary or sole priority is to preserve the liberty of researchers and enhancers, failing to gauge any *direct* harm, we may neglect the freedom and autonomy of countless others who will be impacted more or less indirectly. As mentioned earlier, Tocqueville’s tyranny of the majority and pure government tyranny come to mind. Even an aspect of survival of the fittest is applicable here.

Thus, a simplistic interpretation of Mill’s Harm Principle proves ineffectual in restricting

biotechnology. On the other hand, if we are permitted to substantially expand the principle, it may, indeed, be workable. Mill’s first maxim is that an “individual is not accountable to society for his actions in so far as these as these concern the interests of no person but himself” (163). The second maxim is that, “for such actions as are prejudicial to the interests of others, the individual is accountable” to society. These rules are salient to the biotech debate because, as Lewis asserts, biotechnology is largely about the interests of *others*. It is, in fact, about a lack of freedom and a consolidation of power. “Man’s conquest of Nature,” Lewis asserts, “means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men” (58). How much autonomy will our posterity retain when their very nature and identity are pre-determined prior to their births and even their conception? Lewis warns that we are entering an age of “conditioners who really can cut out all posterity in what shape they please” (60).

On its face, Mill’s famous Harm Principle appears entirely inadequate to deal with the complexity of the biotech issue.

One may rebut, as Bailey does, that the alterations would only *positively* impact others' interests; in other words, parents will always choose to enhance, not cripple, their children's intellects and bodies. However, while this is largely true, one may rightfully demand assurances. What stipulations will be placed on genetic engineers? Can we, as Bailey suggests, *presume* the consent of those altered when the alterations are not clearly and merely beneficial? For countless individuals, as Kass notes, will "inherit, not choose, life under [the world of the future's] utopia-seeking possibilities" ("Ageless Bodies" 10).

In another sense, biotechnology may harm posterity by destroying humanity itself, which has been previously discussed. We are embarking on a novel adventure into a "brave

new world," potentially catalyzing our extinction. As Lewis explains, "as soon as we take the final step of reducing our own species to the level of mere Nature, the whole process is stultified, for this time the being who stood to gain and the being who has been sacrificed are one and the same" (71). Moreover, others beside our posterity stand to suffer, as a consequence of the survival of the fittest.

Through the ages, individuals have been forced to adopt technology to compete successfully and thrive in society. For example, in the twenty-first century, it would be difficult to succeed, at least without great inconvenience, without a car—or some form of automatic transportation—or a phone. Capitalism, coupled with the industrial revolution, has authored a story of incessant innovations—the faster, the more efficient, the better. Surely, for partisans of liberty, innovation is a highlight—not a pitfall—of modern liberal society. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether biotechnology enters a novel realm in which it does not belong. Certainly, from a libertarian perspective, no one is guaranteed a right to success; liberty of action, not assurance of outcome, is the promise of a liberal society. The Declaration of Independence, as it echoes Lockean principles, pledges the *pursuit* of happiness, not its attainment. Nonetheless, what if biotechnological progress reaches the point where a person must be enhanced in order to survive in a competitive society? Do libertarians wish to advocate a situation in which individuals are virtually forced to threaten their nature and dignity through biotechnology? That may be the case, but it is not a foregone conclusion.

One may respond that restraining biotechnology is an equal limitation on autonomy by preventing an individual's ability to choose biotechnology. This raises the question as to whether these are substantively equivalent restrictions. Is compelling individuals to change their bodies the same as compelling them to remain unchanged, or at least not to change in a particular manner? It would seem that the former is a more egregious violation of autonomy. Libertarians may disagree on this matter, but a libertarian philosophy is not conclusive in and of itself.

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### Conclusion

Ultimately, these arguments, like those which Kass formulates about the sale of organs, are “not easy to make” (*Life*, 196). The default libertarian tendency always pushes for the government to stay out of the way. Through biotechnology, there is economic profit to be earned, lives to be improved, and scientific progress to be made. But the question is whether we want to ride this unbridled stallion to wherever its galloping strides may carry us. Regardless of preferences, libertarians may not have a choice, if commitments to limited government, individual rights, and autonomy and Mill’s Harm Principle mean that one must sit idly by and watch biotechnology advance with reckless abandon. Although it is, of course, more challenging to justify biotechnological restraint under the premises of libertarianism than other political philosophies, it has been argued that such commitments do not preclude biotech restrictions. Working from a love of liberty, libertarians can consistently adopt an approach of ordered liberty to preempt future encroachments on individual freedom. This approach is grounded firmly on their commitment to liberty, not obligating them to abandon any of their first principles. Likewise, recognizing the vital importance of human dignity for the support of liberal rights, they can reasonably endorse an active protection of human dignity. Finally, utilizing an expanded conception of Mill’s Harm Principle, libertarians can deduce that unrestricted biotechnology would serve to harm—or, at a minimum, inappropriately control—others and, thereby, warrant regulation. The precise restrictions to be adopted have not been defined, but, as Kass notes, “[i]t is up to us now to begin thinking about these matters” (“Ageless Bodies” 10). Our and our descendants’ liberty, dignity, and very humanity may hang in the balance.

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# The Impact of an International Childhood on My Artwork

By **ELISA BEEKMAN**

**Gardner-Webb University**  
**North Carolina Zeta**  
**Boiling Springs, North Carolina**

*Elisa Beekman is an Alfred H. Nolle Scholar for 2012-13.*

Where I grew up is a large part of who I am today. My parents are missionaries, my dad a jungle pilot, and they worked in Papua, Indonesia, where I was born and lived until I was 19. Instilled in me were a passion for the people of Indonesia and a passion for sharing my memories through art. Three of the pieces in my exhibit relate directly to my life in Indonesia, another depicts scenes from a travel experience during college, and the last, an abstract piece, conveys my sense of landscape, color, and artistic composition. The pieces range in technique and medium. The process and the content of my artwork fuel each other, creating the impression of my recollections and experiences.

## **“Remember—An Artist’s Autobiography”**

This self-portrait is an autobiography. I depicted my college-age self soulfully remembering the experiences of growing up in a foreign country. The medium of collage, a



*"Remember—An Artist's Autobiography," collage, 17.6"x12.4"*

process of taking pieces of paper and pasting them together, lent itself readily to my story. When I create a collage, I use hand-stained tissue papers and found papers, from magazines, music books, and my personal journals and sketchbooks. I work with fragments, putting them in and taking them out, all the while looking for clarity, much as I do when I recollect my childhood with all its fragments of events that make me who I am. My pieces of art are puzzles that captivate me as an artist and that I try to solve.

I pieced together the Papuan landscape using childhood memories. Woven together to make the mountains and sky are my dad's jungle airplane, my elder brother and me, childhood letters, a treasure map, a plane ticket from the United States to Asia, and a map of Indonesia itself. All these separate pieces of paper become one, demonstrating how Papua is a part of who I have become and how I was a part of Papua.

The beads that I placed around my neck are my most valued possession. They are Dutch glass beads that were traded to the tribes of Papua during the Dutch colonial period. The beads represent a rich cultural history, as well as the connection of my heart has with the Papuan people. Though I am not related through blood to this group, I feel as though I am part Papuan. Confusion comes when I realize that I am now residing in America, living as an American, and yet I am not truly an American. Who am I? Where do I belong? I have come to the realization that I am a refugee, a foreigner, in this world. I have no place where I truly belong. Yet, as C.S. Lewis says in *Mere Christianity*, "If I find in myself a desire which

no experience in the world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” This collage represents all of this for me. It is an expression of how I am always remembering all that I have come from, and am somewhat confused about all that I have come to. I am a foreigner holding on to the hope that one day I will find myself Home.

### “Bobby—A Portrait of a Family Member”

There are many pets I remember from my childhood: dogs, cats, chickens, snakes, fish, horses, and bunnies. However, there was only one Bobby, a Papuan king parrot from the south coast of the island. He joined our family before my older brother’s birth and was a friend to all five of us Beekman children. He favored a particular location for his cage, next to the dinner table in the front living room, near the patio. He knew all our family secrets, having overheard them all from his perch.

In the collage that I created of him (cover photo), I showed his bright colors using found and hand-stained papers. I used rubber stamps to create words that tell Bobby’s story, his character, and his words. Through piecing together the variety of papers, textures, shapes, and colors, I was able to capture the spirit of a family member. One is almost able to hear his parrot voice say, “Hello, Bobby!”

### “The Papuan Girl”

I loved growing up in Papua. I wanted to express my love for the people of the island in this painting of my sister in Christ. Though my life is very different from this girl’s, I experience a sense of kinship with her. We both were born in the same nation, both grew up under the same government, both smelled the same smells, saw the same mountains, and heard the same jungle sounds. In painting her portrait, I wanted to authentically capture her culture. I painted the piece with acrylics and worked from an original photograph.

In the Papuan culture, pigs are a source of wealth and are used in dowries. Pigs are a symbol of pride and celebration; pigs of great price will be slaughtered in honor of special occasions, when many families gather for a *bakar batu*, a “cooking of stones.” In this painting, the girl’s hands tenderly and possessively hold her small pig.

The traditional woven *noken*, or string bag, is prominently featured. Women weave these colorful bags, displaying their creativity and prosperity through varied color combinations. The bags serve essential purposes in the everyday work of tribal women, such as carrying babies and produce to and from their mountains gardens.

The last symbol in the painting is the girl’s smile. She smiles in the face of the reality that she lives in a rural village in a jungle forgotten by our busy industrial world. She smiles even though she lives far below the poverty line of this world. She smiles regardless of the fact that the pig and the string bag are the only wealth she possesses. She smiles despite having to work very hard to survive. She smiles because she has an overwhelming peace and

contentment with the things that she has been given and in the Savior she has come to know. She has somehow pierced the meaning of true joy, for which I have great appreciation.



*"The Papuan Girl," acrylic, 16.1"x20.4"*



*“Assisi—A Trip of Enlightenment,” watercolor, 11'x14' each*

### **“Assisi—A Trip of Enlightenment”**

This watercolor triptych is based on my photographs taken during a study tour in Italy with the Gardner-Webb University art department. It was amazing to experience in person the artwork I had been learning about in class, face to face with the masters. I also got to experience the beautiful landscape of Italy that has inspired so many before me. These watercolors are of the city of Assisi, where St. Claire and St. Francis set up their ministries. One can see within the paintings the steeples and bricks of times of old that have shaped our modern world. Using watercolor, a traditional medium for landscape painting, I worked to capture the timeless beauty of architecture and landscape. The transparency of watercolor caught the light of the landscape, and the layering of transparent washes brought out its depth. This layering resembles the layering of history, darks upon lights that create the whole. The stones and trees of this landscape seem unchanged, yet ancient.

### **“Abstract Landscape”**

This small abstract landscape is a collage based on an understanding of the strata of nature, color theory, and the principles of composition. I placed a warm color lower on the horizon, making it advance toward the viewer, and placed cool colors on the horizon and in the sky, making that area recede. This gives the illusion of the space found in nature. Then, by placing pops of color only on the horizon, I kept the otherwise calm landscape interesting to the viewer. The papers were hand stained with acrylic paint in a range of intensity and

hue to increase their painterly effect. I was able to create the illusion of landscape, giving the viewer the liberty to imagine or enjoy the simplicity. It is the simplicity of this piece that makes it strong.



*"Abstract Landscape," collage, 5"x5" (actual size shown)*

As I continue to paint and compose, I continue to discover more of how my environment has affected me as an artist and an individual. I desire to authentically capture the nature and beauty of the world I grew up in and to share it with those with eyes to see and hearts to feel.

# The Making of “Becoming”

By **KENDRA DREYER**

**University of Montana Western  
Montana Gamma  
Dillon, Montana**



*Kendra Dreyer is an Edwin W. Gaston, Jr., Scholar for 2012-13.*

*Editor’s Note: In the 2012 competition for Alpha Chi scholarships and fellowships, something happened for the first time—a chosen recipient submitted an original video as her evidence of scholarship, instead of the more typical academic paper or, as often happens, original art or musical performance. Actually, not only one, but two awards went to students who submitted film projects.*

*Kendra Dreyer, whose essay about her video and a still shot from the film appear below, and Kyle Tye of Lee University both won the Gaston Scholarships, the top two awards for members in their senior year during 2012-13.*

*Through the online version of the Recorder, we are able to make Dreyer’s video available for viewing. Go to the video link on this same page of the journal online at <https://www.alphachihonor.org/index.cfm/news-publications/the-recorder/>.*

*Because Tye is submitting his project to film competitions, he regrettably cannot allow its posting online at this time. We hope in the future to be able to make it available on the web site.*

## 46 THE MAKING OF “BECOMING”

“Becoming” is a stop-motion video based on my traveling experiences in Africa. A stop-motion video comprises many still photos that are rapidly played together to give the effect of motion. The project, assigned to me during my Drawing I class in Spring 2011, was based on the technique of Cubism, in which several separate views of an object or scene overlap or intersect within one painting. The result is a compilation of various views that together depict the artist’s temporal moments in one art piece. The idea of the assignment was to use the drawing techniques learned in class to create a conceptual piece that was illustrative of the element of time.

My first decision was to build the video around the images of hands and African drums. After researching the topic of stop-motion video, I refined my concept and began drawing and cutting out the various elements that would depict movement against static backgrounds.



The process of shooting some four hundred photos took two and a half days, as I slowly moved the pieces across the backgrounds, which I drew as I went. During the shooting, I settled on the music for the sound track, a song called “Ingoma” from the Soweto Gospel Choir’s 2010 album *Grace*.

The video depicts the journey of a white drum with a face on it, beginning in a modern place but being called out by the beat of another land. Initially the white drum has no hands. As she searches for the source of the new beat, her journey takes her through foreign places and various trials. Finally she learns that her new friends that are the source of the new beat, and her own hands are freed. She is able to be who she was meant to be. Although the final scene of the video suggests that the experience is possibly a dream, the truth of the experience is that she is now free to beat her own truth.



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AFF-0130ML (05/11)

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