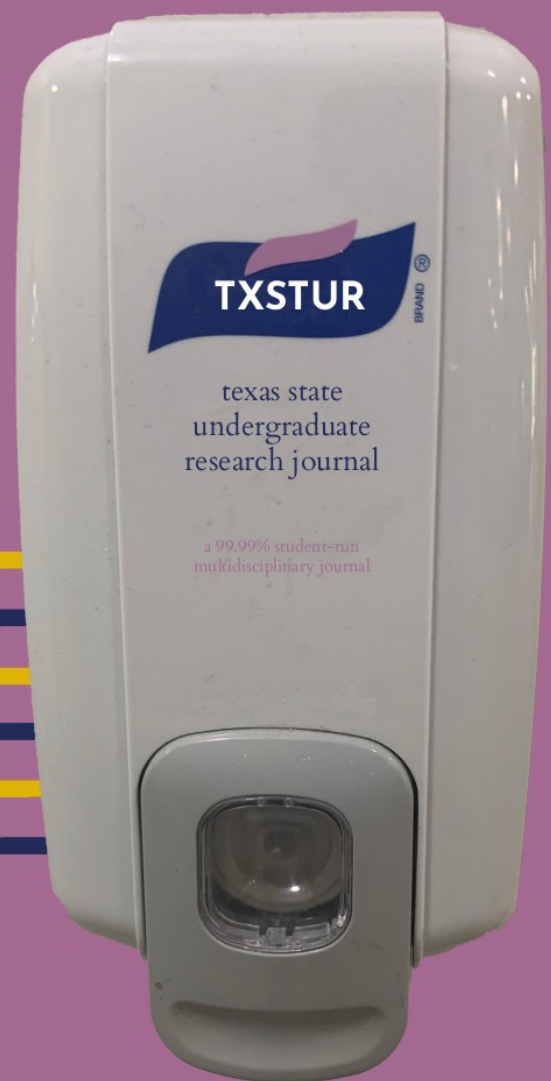


# TXSTUR

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# Texas State Undergraduate Research Journal

A peer-reviewed journal for multidisciplinary research

## Volume IX | Issue I

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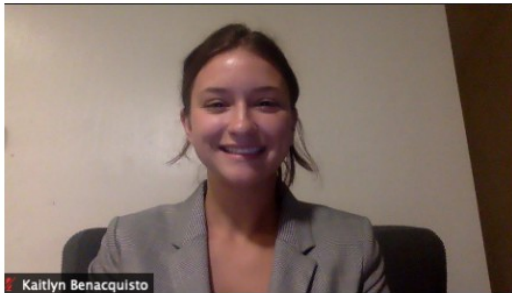


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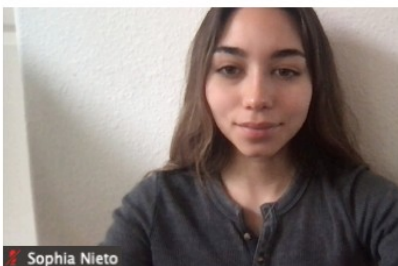
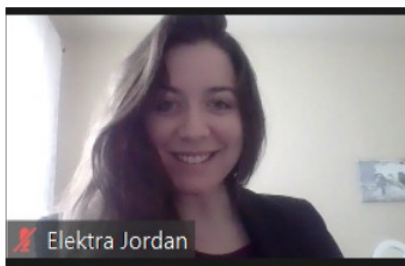
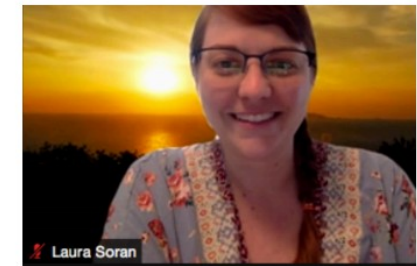
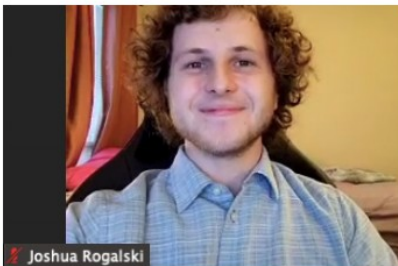
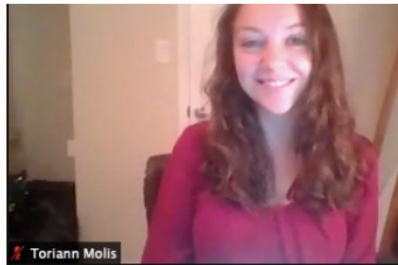
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# DEAR READER,

We are excited to present to you the Spring 2021 issue of the Texas State Undergraduate Research Journal (TXSTUR). As former editors and authors for this journal, it has been an honor to serve as this year's managing editors. We anticipate TXSTUR to continue to develop further in the years to come and to continue featuring the excellent undergraduate research occurring here at Texas State University. This year's publication reflects years of effort toward promoting undergraduate research at Texas State. We hope that TXSTUR inspires students to believe in their intellectual endeavors and strive to share their research with others.

We would like to especially thank Dr. Ron Haas for his dedication to TXSTUR and his mentorship, as well as Dr. Heather Galloway and the Honors College for their unending support of the editorial team. We would also like to thank all the incredible undergraduate students featured in this issue; we are so proud of our fellow Bobcats and the work they have produced. Finally, we thank our editorial board and faculty reviewers who worked to ensure quality above all else. The journal would not be at the caliber that it is without this collaboration. Because of the unusual semester that we have had, we are especially grateful to everyone choosing to continue to dedicate their time to the journal amidst a global pandemic. We are proud to say that TXSTUR has officially survived the pandemic. This edition of TXSTUR demonstrates the range of undergraduate research happening at Texas State. With articles ranging from focus on improvement in healthcare to cancel culture to the immigrant experience, this year's edition highlights a variety of voices.

We look forward to seeing the new realms of research Texas State students will explore in the future and encourage our readers to consider publication of their own work in TXSTUR. View our previous publications and find out how to get your work published at our Undergraduate Research website, [txstate.edu/undergraduateresearch/txstur](http://txstate.edu/undergraduateresearch/txstur).

**SINCERELY,**

**KAITLYN BENACQUISTO & CHEYANNE CLAGETT**

*MANAGING EDITORS, TEXAS STATE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL*

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# BREAKING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH:

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF MENTAL HEALTHCARE  
THROUGH TELEHEALTH AND MEASUREMENT-BASED CARE

BY KIRSTEN KEMP  
REVIEWED BY DR. LAWRENCE FULTON  
EDITED BY AUSTEN GUZMAN

As the U.S. continues through the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be important to monitor mental health as well as public health. Over the last 10 years, rates of mental disorders, suicide, and substance abuse disorders are on the rise. With the shift to remote care delivery, utilizing technology to produce quality mental health care will be crucial. This essay emphasizes the need for improvements in mental health care in the U.S. To accomplish this, implementing measurement-based care (MBC) through telehealth will provide patients and clinicians with a chance for personalized care and treatment. This idea will also expand access to underserved areas. Integrating MBC and telehealth is an efficient, cost-effective way to improve quality of mental health care. This essay will provide a discussion for implementation strategies and recommendations.

**Implementing  
measurement-  
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## **Introduction: A Rising Mental Health Crisis**

IN 2008, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act became a law that affirms Americans have the right to health-care benefits, including mental health and substance abuse services. Over 10 years later, there are increasing measures and efforts being taken to improve the quality and access to general

healthcare, yet mental healthcare seems to drag its feet (Malekoff, 2019, pp.167-171). The 2019 Nation Survey on Drug Use and Health found that adults with any mental illness (AMI) increased by over 20 million individuals from 2008 to 2019. In 2019, there were an estimated 9.5 million individuals that have a mental illness as well as a substance abuse disorder (SUD) (Substance Abuse and Mental

Health Services Administration, 2020). In 2018, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Americans aged 10 to 34, and the fourth leading cause for those aged 35 to 54. There were 2.5 times the number of suicides as there were homicides this year as well (National Institute of Mental Health, 2020). The most effective treatment option for addressing suicidal ideations and behaviors is psychotherapy. This creates a critical need for accessible mental healthcare in order to prevent suicide.

The demand for adequate mental healthcare is high within the United States, but individuals still face many barriers. Instances of barriers can include high costs, long travel times, stigma, and even perceived ineffectiveness of treatment (Goldberg et al., 2018). People who have experienced seeking health care for their mental illness have reported feeling “devalued, dismissed, and dehumanized” by the professionals with whom they come into contact. Patients have also reported not being included in decisions for treatment and “being spoken to or about using stigmatizing language” (Knaak et al., 2017, pp. 111-116). It takes courage to be able to seek help for an illness you cannot necessarily see. If an encouraged patient seeking help meets the barrier of stigma, it can result in the patient dropping out of treatment or even avoiding treatment entirely.

Likewise, lack of access to mental health care is roadblock for individuals seeking help. Over half of the counties in the United States have no practicing psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers. Rural areas are significantly affected by the shortage of health professionals. From 2005 to 2015, “rural counties had the highest estimated suicide rates, and also the largest increases over time” (Rojas et al., 2020, 700). Not only is physical access a barrier to mental healthcare, but the high costs are as well. A 12-year-old

boy from New York, Timothy O’Clair, died by suicide after his parents were denied insurance coverage for mental health care. Timothy’s story highlights why “access delayed is access denied” (Malekoff, 2019, p. 168). Then access and resources are restricted, individuals with mental illnesses will likely turn to risky, harmful behaviors and have higher chances of developing damaging coping mechanisms. Negative coping mechanisms (e.g., smoking, poor hygiene or eating habits, lack of exercise, SUD) result in destructive health outcomes.

These barriers to mental health issues are followed by a rising mental health crisis in the United States before entering the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the current climate of the pandemic has brought to light the necessity of high quality and accessible mental health care. Let’s uncover how some of the social regulations of COVID-19 impact mental health and what is being done to improve mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health**

As we entered 2020, the COVID-19 virus spread rapidly. Due to the swift spread and high death rates, several measures were implemented to ensure public health and safety in the United States. The federal government suggests avoiding group gatherings of more than 10 people as a reduction strategy. Likewise, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended limiting community movement and practicing social distancing (Mahmoud et al., 2020, pp. 35-41). Wearing a mask in public, working from home, remote schooling, and reduced capacity limits have been consequences of the virus as well. Isolation has been a key component to safeguarding personal and public health. These social regulations could trigger mental health problems in individuals



who do not suffer from AMI, as well as worsen the condition of those currently battling AMI.

The viral outbreak has triggered mental health problems for some, such as anxiety and depression. This can be described as a “parallel epidemic” (Vigo et al., 2020, p. 681). Mental health problems can affect anyone, such as people with preexisting mental disorders, the general population, essential workers, and people that are infected. Health anxiety can range from high to low and was instilled into individuals across the nation (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020, pp. 14-22). An example of low health anxiety could be the thought that an individual can recover from the virus with no repercussions; therefore they do not take recommended health precautions. Contrarily, someone with high health anxiety could “demand testing” consistently in fear of catching the virus (Vigo et al., 2020, p. 682). Individuals who experience high health anxiety can lead to behaviors such as overstocking essential goods (e.g., toilet paper). Social isolation can increase stress, irritability, insomnia, and more in those who do not suffer with AMI. For those who already fight their mental illness or SUD every day, social isolation can worsen their already existing struggles.

Individuals who suffer from mental disorders have the potential to become more vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis. The increased likelihood of smoking or poor physical health could lead to these individuals becoming immunocompromised, which increases their risk levels (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). Individuals who are likely to have both AMI and SUD could face an escalated risk of death due to social isolation protocols, because no one else might be present if an overdose were to occur (Jayasinha et al., 2020, pp. 692-694). Intervention programs, such

as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, thrive off of social support groups. Patients with AMI and/or SUD may opt out of their current treatment or be reluctant to initiate treatment because there might be a lack of service availability (Jayasinha et al., 2020, pp. 692-694). Our nation’s mental health care contains gaps currently, but the pandemic could be pivotal if we integrate individualized health care while using advancing technology. As we have seen, many social regulations have forced individuals to enhance and utilize technology in order to communicate between friends, families, colleagues, doctors, etc. Specifically, we have seen growing developments in telehealth throughout the pandemic.

### **Rise of Telemental Health and Its Effectiveness**

Telehealth is defined as “the use of telecommunications to provide health information to care across distance” (McCord et al., 2020, p. 1061). Telemental Health (TMH) refers to the use of health information technology (HIT) and communication technologies to deliver remote mental health care. This includes, but is not limited to, services for evaluation, medication management, and therapy via telecommunications. This delivery method removes or diminishes travel time for patients and providers by delivering remote health care (Mahmoud et al., 2020, pp. 35-41). Under the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act in 2020, CMS removed key telehealth requirements while allowing psychologists to continue services via “audio-only telephones” (Owings-Fonner, 2020, para. 6). In addition, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services waived penalties for certain violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for providers using platforms, like Zoom, to treat their patients. Bill-



ing Medicare for telehealth remains the same as it would for in-person care. Also, due to state regulations differing among state lines, APA drafted letters offering partnership with state psychological associations in all 50 states. State governors responded quickly amidst the crisis, resulting in executive orders for telehealth costs to reflect in-person costs (Owings-Fonner, 2020). With the continuous effort to expand telehealth, the discussion of mental health has peaked the nation's interest.

Combatting stigma of mental healthcare with public awareness will hopefully dissolve stigma entirely (Ross, 2020, pp. 135-137). A meta-analysis of fifty-seven studies published from 1997 to 2019 found that using videoconferencing technologies (VCT) "consistently produced treatment effects that were largely equivalent to in-person delivered interventions" (Batastini et al., 2021, pp. 1-22). In an article written by Lara Payne et al. (2020), the effectiveness of telepsychology was analyzed. It was concluded that telepsychology "service-users cite improved access" and "removed treatment barriers such as stigma around" mental health (p. 675). The nature of COVID-19 has pushed clinical areas of psychology and psychotherapy to implement technology to reduce the stigma around mental health and broaden access of mental health care. Individuals who struggle with AMI may find it difficult to complete mundane tasks, which can result in a number of problems. Considering the ease of access, patients with AMI can obtain help without leaving their home and potentially at any time of the day. Similarly, in a systematic review conducted in 2017, Mostafa Langarizadeh and team (2017) reviewed research articles from 2000 to 2017 associated with advantages and challenges associated with telepsychology. They concluded that offering telemental health for "mental services

improve patient satisfaction and reduces the costs of care" (Langarizadeh et al., 2017, p. 241).

While this service delivery process seems to be an easy efficient way to improve mental health, the implementation of telepsychology remains inefficient. A study conducted by Hanneke Kip and team (2020) found that "the implementation process was mostly focused on skill training of therapists" as opposed to focusing on organization, patient awareness, and design of the technology (p. 18). I believe that focusing on patient awareness and the organization of care can improve the quality of mental health care. Implementing evidence-based care models and highlighting the patient's autonomy treatment planning could result in enhanced treatment results. Specifically, in a measurement-based care model there is an emphasis on individualized care and boosting communication levels between patient-provider.

### **Measurement-Based Care**

While technology has the potential to be a great resource for improving the nation's mental health crisis, mental disorder and suicide rates continue to rise. Tarlow's (2019) study concluded that using data from PHQ-9 to assess depression can be a predictor for suicide ideation or mental disorders among areas, rather than using geographical, age, race, and gender predictors. The study concluded that 51 percent of individuals who struggled with depression reported thoughts of suicide before starting treatment (Tarlow et al., 2019, pp. 247-252). The patient health questionnaire (PHQ) provides a brief depression screener with nine PHQ items that assess mental health. This questionnaire is a license-free mental health assessment tool that is used widely. There are many assessment tools used for analyzing mental health and substance abuse. Using assessment tools can

help providers determine their patient's level of acuity quickly, as well as help to monitor treatment. Although it is hard to quantify your own feelings and thoughts, using this rapid and easy tool can provide a clear understanding of the next steps in your treatment plan. Peter Drucker, management consultant, notoriously said, "What gets measured gets done" or improved (as cited in Strachman, 2013, para. 1).

In 2006, the term *measurement-based care* (MBC) was devised by Dr. Trivedi. A review article by Ahmed Aboraya (2018) defined MBC "in psychiatry as the use of validated clinical measurement instruments to objectify the assessment, treatment, and clinical outcomes...in patients with psychiatric disorders" (p. 14). These include effica-

**Utilizing MBC in a mental health care setting could include creating a routine where regular assessment of symptoms is integrated into decision making, emphasizing self-reported measurements.**

cy, safety, tolerability, functioning, and quality of life.

MBC has three core elements: (1) continual monitoring of patient outcomes; (2) analyzing the data to make treatment decisions; and (3) discussing measurement data with patients.

Utilizing MBC in a mental health care setting could include creating a routine where regular assessment of symptoms is integrated into decision making, emphasizing self-reported measurements. Consistently monitoring symptoms while simultaneously communicating with the patient could pinpoint what mental illness diagnosis and plan is needed. Also, collaborating with a patient could possibly shed light on their negative coping mechanisms such as misusing substances or poor lifestyle habits. Due to

the fact that individuals are unique, goals for recovering are not one-size-fits-all. By monitoring the data collected from assessment tools over time, it can show how well or poorly the action plan is working and if any changes need to be made. Using MBC as a collaborative tool can potentially improve patient engagement, treatment fidelity, and outcome of treatment. Giving a patient autonomy and a safe space to talk about their mental health could result in individualized action plans that align more closely with their needs.

The baseline of MBC is patient-reported outcomes (PROM) of symptoms, reported by rating scale questionnaires like the PHQ-9. Patients complete these questionnaires themselves, so it requires patients to assess their own mental health

and become increasingly self-aware. If patient's have the ability to monitor positive progression with their provider, it is possible that it could encourage the patient to stay on track. MBC has also been suggested as a method for "de-

tecting non-response to treatment and tailoring treatment to needs of individual patients" (Goldberg et al., 2018, p. 1). By monitoring negative progression, providers can make important decisions with their patients such as changes in dosage of medication or switching medication entirely. Patient-reported outcomes can pave the way for quality improvement on a clinician level, as well as producing data for mental disorders in order to progress research (Kilbourne et al., 2018, pp. 30-38).

Considering the fact that Medicare reimbursements are dependent on patient-reported quality of care, MBC can also help "organizations align with value-based payment models by providing data about care quality and patient outcomes" (Connors et al., 2020, p. 252).



A randomized controlled trial conducted by Tong Guo (2015) compared standard treatment to MBC in major depression. Ultimately, Guo found that more patients achieved desired results in the MBC group, and in less time (pp. 1004-1013). MBC has been gaining interest in mental health care and has seen several efforts of integration (e.g., Department of Veterans Affairs, Kaiser Permanente).

In 2016, the U.S. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) implemented this method of care into their national treatment system for behavioral health. The VHA's application of MBC highlights the benefits of the care model, as well as emphasizing the areas that could use improvement. The VHA also shows how incorporating technology can support the enrichment of an MBC model.

### **MBC in Veteran's Health**

**Administration:** In a research study by Holliday and colleagues (2020), the VHA's execution of MBC was analyzed (pp. 211-223). The implementation included 185 clinics across 59 sites that agreed to pilot MBC procedures. Participating sites used at least one core MBC measure (e.g., PHQ-9) at the first patient encounter. These measures were taken as often as seen fit, but no less than every 30 days. There were no specific execution rules in terms of what measurement system to use or when to talk to the patient about the results. The data was inserted into electronic health records (EHRs) to ensure that the patient and other providers had the results. Twenty-six clinician-patient dyads were recruited and interviewed on their experience of using MBC. The study found that this method of care provided a more "standardized basis for discussing progress—or lack of progress—with a given patient" (Holliday et al., 2020, p. 220). Holliday found that not all clinicians had access to feedback systems data because of a purchasing

or licensing requirements. Large health-care organizations, like VHA, have the potential to develop clinical benchmarks based on their own data collection. Holliday's study highlighted that due to the individualized method of care, the process of implementation differs amongst clinician-patient relationships.

Comparably, Ashlee Warnecke and Ellen Teng wrote a paper on MBC in VHA that was published in 2019 (pp. 795-804). Although research shows the positive outcomes of using MBC, in the VHA "60% of patients were given a measure at least once" but only few routinely measured (Warnecke & Teng, 2019, p. 799). Successfully applying MBC proves to be an effective method of care, but it has to be properly utilized. Integrating MBC into telemental health (TMH) could increase quality and access of mental health care. An article published by Bradford Felker (2020), of US Department of Veteran Affairs, emphasized that despite efforts to initiate TMH, few providers went on to apply TMH (pp. 26-31). In 2017, a two-year training project on telepsychology was initiated in the VHA. Studying post-training results, the provider's perception of knowledge, skills, and engagement increased after training. Felker and colleagues (2020) also found that Veterans who received telemental health care doubled from 5 to 10% (pp. 26-31).

While MBC shows promise for being an effective care model for those battling AMI, there are areas that could use improvement. Applying an MBC model through telehealth could improve the quality of the current mental health predicament. Technology holds the power to make mental health care easily and widely accessible, as well as enhancing the communication levels between patients and care teams.

---

### **Telemental Health**

### Measurement-Based Care (tMBC)

With the rise of telehealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic, technology can aid the implementation of measurement-based care. Telehealth can feel less personable due to meeting over a video chat or phone call. Merging telehealth and MBC can help enhance communication levels to ensure that patient-provider relationships feel genuine and amiable. Clinical trials that have incorporated the two “have already shown initial success for this model of care, with some evidence that such services can at times even outperform traditional office-based care” (Douglas et al., 2020, p. 148). A key part of success of tMBC is training. Training providers on digital health is time-intensive but expands the capability of providing high quality care. Patients also being knowledgeable is critical for their engagement. Building programs, like Our Digital Opportunities for Outcomes in Recovery Services (DOORS), that help develop technological “skills and competencies that have been well received by those with serious mental illness” ensure that knowledge of technology used in tMBC on both sides of the patient-provider relationship is thorough, possibly increasing the likelihood of staying on track with the treatment plan created (Torous et al., 2020, p. 3).

Another key factor in producing tMBC is the integration of health information and communications systems. A systematic review of studies on tMBC found that technology appears to be feasible, acceptable and effective. Notably, “treatment engagement was also enhanced with [tMBC]” (Gual-Montolio et al., 2020, p. 18). Data science has significantly transformed fields and can help improve mental health care. EHRs have provided the data to produce algorithms to predict suicidal behavior more accurately than standard assessments in clinics. These records can also predict pat-

terns predicting response to treatments. A rational fear of analyzing big data is the fact that quantity of data often dominates the quality of data. We can hope that the move to tMBC will “facilitate more accurate recording of outcomes that matter to patients, clinicians, and researchers” (Simon, 2019, pp. 349–350). It is important to note that technology can help predict success for treatment, but that does not substitute the need for the patient’s preference or collaborative efforts between patient-clinician. In order to successfully take advantage of MBC through telehealth, proper structure of the care model is very important.

### Structure

In a tMBC system, it is important to find a way to get patients to routinely utilize the assessment tools like PHQ-9. After the initial telehealth meeting and assessment, I believe assessing a patient’s symptoms once or twice a month could prove to be valuable to both the patient and provider. In order to ensure communication with the patient, I suggest scheduling follow up appointments to discuss patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) and treatment plans. I also believe both patient and provider taking notes and making them accessible to both parties, can provide a clear understanding on symptoms, thoughts, and feelings. Making past assessments available for review on the patient’s part can also enable them to monitor and visualize their progress. Communication is the root of MBC and because telehealth is easily accessible, it is important to find a system that allows a patient to utilize resources other than scheduling appointments with a provider. Sharing resources on potential therapists, meetings for substance abuse, information on their diagnosis, etc. in a telehealth system can make it easier for patients to reach out for help.

In a report published by the APA



this year, practice strategies for enhancing communication with tMBC were suggested (Douglas et al., 2020, pp. 143-149). These include, but are not limited to:

- Sending links via text message/e-mail to complete measures (the web-based platform Better Outcomes Now was suggested)
- Ensuring data measured is within a HIPAA-compliant and encrypted secure platform
- Sharing feedback with screen sharing to reinforce measure completion

Clinicians are recommended to implement as they see fit and what feels natural. Many tMBC systems can notify clinicians when a patient's symptoms are declining or if a patient is at risk for "increased suicidality or child abuse" (Douglas et al., 2020, pp. 143-149). Molly Howland and colleagues (2019) conducted a study to assess the implementation of two telepsychology models (pp. 1-8). They suggested using a MBC approach "that combines the team environment of collaborative care and more intensive psychotherapy availability" (Howland et al., 2019, p. 6). tMBC could potentially improve all levels of care when implemented with these recommendations.

### Conclusion

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, telehealth has become increasingly popular. As we start to see the negative consequences of social isolation, it is logical to prepare for a "parallel epidemic" (Vigo et al., 2020, p. 681). MBC methods have proven to be effective and can be implemented remotely with existing technologies. The design of MBC involves communication between clinician-patient at every step, along with recording these measures, which can help providers understand the patient's goals and provide a pathway for treatment. The individu-

alization of tMBC makes it possible for patients to reach their personal recovery goals. Likewise, the accessibility of technology in an MBC makes communication between patient and a care team easier to achieve. Technology provides a wide range of resources at a patient's fingertips for them to help themselves. On the other hand, technology can help providers correctly diagnose a patient and be alerted of worsening symptoms or suicidal ideations. Mental health treatment is usually not a linear progression, and MBC does a great job of being flexible and emphasizing need for change. Patients having this care model and resources at their fingertips through technology can make all of this easily accessible. Nonetheless, using a tMBC has shown improved quality of mental health care (Kopelovich et al., 2020, pp. 1-11). With the promising results of MBC and the rise of telehealth, I believe further research could help assess the future benefits of tMBC.

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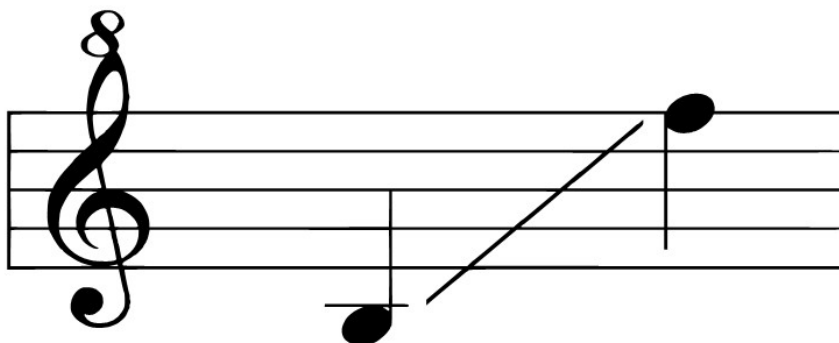
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# UP FROM ABSOLUTE MUSIC



BY CUTTER GONZALEZ  
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The idea of “absolute” music is central to many debates about what music is and which music should be considered beautiful. This essay engages with Mark Evan Bonds’s book, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*, to understand the historical roots of the term and its philosophical implications and contradictions. By exposing issues in the “absolute music” framework, new pathways emerge which synthesize knowledge from diverse fields—including sociology, ecology, musicology, and psychology—to create a more informed, scientifically grounded, and culturally situated perspective on what music is, how it should be treated, and how it might be used.

THE effects of music have dazzled minds from ancient times to the present. Despite the ubiquity of their subject, however, the task before contemporary philosophers of music is surprisingly difficult. The deceptive simplicity of music is evident in defining what music is—which is an essential starting point. I echo Socrates’ admonition in the *Meno*: that if a virtue is teachable, we must first know what it is (Plato, 385/1997a, p. 880). If we are to understand, create, and teach music, we must know what music is. Set-

ting the parameters for studying music is a normative process—deciding what is “in” as much as what is “out” for serious scholarship.

So, what is music? The philosopher Stephen Davies (2012) found, unfortunately, that definitions of music are “rarely attempted” and speculated this was because it was easily identifiable (p. 535). But, while definitions like “I know it when I see it” might work for the Supreme Court, they are unsatisfactory in musicological scholarship (Mikula & Mabunda,



1999, “Other Opinions”). Debates over the essence of music are many; however, in the Western philosophical tradition this essence is a key component of an object’s definition. For some of the titanic figures in this debate—such as Hanslick and Wagner—so-called absolute music held the key. Mark Evan Bonds (2014) describes absolute music as the conception of “autonomous, self-contained, and wholly self-referential” music (p. 1). This idea is necessarily and unequivocally linked to the non-verbal music of the orchestra in Western

thought. Orchestral music (as well as band music and instrumental chamber music for that matter) does not require words, visual stimulants, or any other extra-musical element to be enjoyed.

As an art form, it is the manifestation of Bonds’s definition: autonomous, self-contained, and wholly self-referential. Put simply, it is music boiled down to that which makes it music.

Much of the oxygen in the room is sucked up by arguments over absolute music, so I will engage with the history and philosophy of music as it progressed toward and through the concept of absolute music vis-à-vis Mark Evan Bonds’s book (2014), *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*. This will provide a robust understanding of music’s essence as it was understood in the Western tradition and offer contextualized critiques. Then, I hope, we can create a better and more comprehensive path forward. To understand how we arrived at “absolute music,” we should consider how thinking about music progressed from antiquity to present.

For St. Augustine (400/1992), music was something powerful—in all the

fear-inducing connotations that word may convey (p. 207). Music purportedly gave Orpheus control over animals, which should expose the stunted, anthropocentric definitions of music as unsatisfactory (Bonds, 2014, p. 21). More on that later. For Plato and others (375/1997b), the hypnotic effects of music were so immense that even the state should be wary of them (p. 997). Later thinkers, undoubtedly hampered by advancements in science and philosophy, found music moving (in one way or another), but

perhaps not quite a siren-esque enchantress worthy of irrational fear. Make no mistake, though—people still fear it. After all, is there a recent generation whose parents, upon hearing the new music of a burgeoning youth, didn’t dust off the

family Bible, phone the parish priest, and secure outward-facing locks on their children’s doors? The conservative impulse is perhaps never as quickly revealed as when it is exposed to new patterns of sound. But maybe that’s what music is about. New music and changing musical tastes undercut the idea that musical experience is static and universal.

Part 1, “Essence as Effect,” of Bonds’ book (2014) introduces the figures of Orpheus and Pythagoras. Orpheus was a practitioner of music whose abilities to enchant even the non-human were mentioned earlier. He gained a reputation exclusively for his mastery of musical effect. Pythagoras, on the other hand, was more theoretical. He engaged as a mathematician and philosopher. Pythagoras’ contributions in and popular notoriety for mathematics is also applicable in his discussion of music, which was, in his view, a manifestation of number. According to Bonds (2014), the legacies of Or-

**If we are to understand, create, and teach music, we must know what music is.**

pheus' "effectualness" and Pythagorean essentiality were mutually reinforcing (p. 17). These are exciting suggestions that no doubt continue to persuade listeners and analysts, but they tell only part of the story of music. In fact, they expose little more than the physics of sound and physical techniques of music-making. Music is more than this, as Plato and Augustine made clear already in considering its effect.

In the middle-to-late centuries of the last millennium, humanist thinkers rejected a cosmic significance of music, but maintained the idea of numerical representation in music (Bonds, 2014, p. 39). During that period, five considerations took primacy of place in considering the connection between the nature and power of music: expression, form, beauty, autonomy, and disclosiveness (i.e., music's ability to disclose higher truths) (Bonds, 2014, p. 40). But the ability to discern any of these is secondary to musical experience. Here, music exposes the fatal flaw of humanism and reaffirms the necessity of a broad definition for itself. Encounters with music are often instantaneously impressive, meaning analysis follows rather than leads in considering music. Further, music is shared beyond our species, where appeals to "higher truths" in the human sense are obviously absent.

Between 1850–1945, absolute music was conceptually formed and subjected to intense critique. Most prominently, Wagner insisted on combining music with other art forms to rectify music's inability to convey concepts when presented alone, riling the formalist sensibilities of such thinkers as Eduard Hanslick. Hanslick's treatise *On the Musically Beautiful* (1854/2018) explained musical beauty in purely musical terms. That is, combining it with other arts (and, thus,

changing its effect) did not change the essence of music itself. The implications of Wagner and Hanslick's philosophies of music had ramifications for political sensibility as well. The rise of realism, a controlling school of thought in the academy to this day, encouraged what we might now call the intersectional paradigm. For music, that meant its effects must be put to use to further the community so that it could catalyze social reform. Hanslick (1854/2018), often the conservative, disagreed heartily. Relating it to Bonds's definition, music's beauty and subliminality (wherein lies its power) is self-referential, not governed by social or political context.

Wagner seems utterly reasonable in suggesting that music can't convey concepts, but it does convey something.

**Encounters with music are often instantaneously impressive, meaning analysis follows rather than leads in considering music.**

Hanslick seems equally reasonable in suggesting that the core of what makes music is its organizational scheme. But organization for organization's sake is pointless.

These debates between Wagner and Hanslick were passionate and remain central to discussions of musical beauty to the present day. (As of at least 2002, Peter Kivy is still in the business of making formalism more workable by making concessions about the emotional expressiveness of music in his books. See his *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* for an example.) Further, they reflect debates within other departments of the academy and the evergreen politics of school funding, free speech, and publicly funded research that ring out any time two or more legislators are gathered. A prac-



tical musician would do well to think about these ideas. They will inevitably be forced to defend them.

So, what is left for music after these warring titans? Everything. I would like to begin sculpting a new way forward, informed by the emerging subfield of ecomusicology. My reasoning follows.

Many of the debates about the essence of music—that which proponents of an absolute music try to isolate—are arguably more appropriate to the scholarly pursuits of psychology, neuroscience, and music theory than philosophy. The essential elements already mentioned fail to consider the whole of what music is. Physicists and music theorists offer answers measured in intervallic terms with musical or engineering dress (e.g., decibels or dynamics; interlocking frequencies or major, minor, perfect, augmented, and diminished intervals; the passing of seconds or beats). Psychologists describe how it relates to others (the feelings evoked by listening) and itself (the tonally moving forms of Hanslick's pure music, but without the pseudo-spirituality; in other words, music theory). These are important answers, no doubt, but they are partial. Their concern is with the systematic and physical organization of music alone or with the effects on humans only, but what some call the essence of music lies in its real-time experience. In the end, essence is no longer functional. We cannot distill music into anything less than what it is, in all its fullness and multiplicity. We can study how music is used—that is, its purpose—or components of musical experience, but this tells us relatively little.

This last point brings a big issue to the fore, one in which ecomusicology offers a relevant critique. The idea of absolute music is tenable only with humans and human reason at the center. It takes a narrow view of music, implicitly asserting that only humans make and en-

joy music—at least as we know it. But this logic is circular. That is, we baked a bias into how we define music which has been hindering us ever since. It is based on reality-defying notions of purity and the possibility of an absolute, neither of which reflect the fullness of existence.

Ecomusicology, the study of “the relationship between sound, nature and people or culture,” can force us to reckon with the breadth of music by showing the ways in which definitions dependent on human reason and experience fail to grasp music's many effects, uses, and experiences (Beard & Gloag, 2016, p. 84). Emerging research in zoosemiotics (animal signs) supports the point that beauty or aesthetic judgment is not exclusively human. In *The Evolution of Beauty*, Richard O. Prum (2017), a Yale ornithologist, provides striking evidence that birds have aesthetic sensibilities. This idea is not totally new, as Prum readily admits. It comes from Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, in which Darwin (1871/2004) expounded on a second method of reproductive choice-making (complementing natural selection): sexual selection. Prum adapts this term as “aesthetic selection.” I was stunned by discussions of paleontological and floral exhibits created by bowerbirds to attract a mate vis-à-vis their aesthetic sensibilities. (Seriously, read the book.) It had never crossed my artistic mind that what we call art—or consciousness, or romance, or friendship for that matter—could be more than human.

Luckily for me, this realization coincides with the advent of a revolution in personal thought away from the creationist, man-in-God's-image, toward an integrated view of the universe. That is, a growing acceptance of what Timothy Morton (2010) calls “the ecological thought.” Thinking ecologically requires one to recognize the fundamental connection between all things—a universal

ecology. In line with Prum's writings, Morton (2020) suggests the immense similarity between all things we know to exist. Even the human form is not a discrete bundle: micro-ecologies make the stomach and mouth function, and individual cells comprise us. This thought is gaining traction in environmental management, public policy, urban design, architecture, visual arts, and geography (I should know, being a degree-holding geographer). Music is the odd holdout. For a craft whose practitioners are (in) famously Left-leaning, this is striking. Musicians look more like William Buckley, Jr. than the tolerant, scientifically grounded, progressive image they otherwise cultivate. Buckley (1955), a founder of the conservative magazine, *National Review*, famously described a conservative as "someone who stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it" in the magazine's 1955 mission statement (para. 2). It's time for our understandings of music to catch up.

Even in human terms, what we often argue about in music is the *experience* of music. But these debates often ignore the how and why of our experience. That is, they ignore the neurological origins of experience. To discuss music more appropriately, we should integrate our knowledge about what we experience, which is often subjective, with the neurological machinery responsible for processing the inputs that create it. Subjectivity is of principal importance to me and suggests the near impossibility of creating a universally satisfactory aesthetics. It's like trying to answer Steven Pinker's (2009)

tongue-in-cheek question in *How the Mind Works*: "What is it like to be a bat?" (p. 146). How can we ever know? Where subjectivity is limiting in one sense, it is the most expansive in another. The ecological thought allows us to co-create value together—and to create value alone. This ecomusicological project is already being undertaken by researchers like Holly Watkins (2018) in her book *Musical Vitalities*, where she confronts the biases that limited our understanding of music as something only human, argues against exceptionalism, and redefines

music as the art of possibly animate things. This is only a beginning. We would be better researchers if we cracked open the silo door and experienced sunshine—perhaps for the first time since graduate school.

If there's any hope for musical aesthetics, it's found in being more broad, more eclectic, and more scientific. This doesn't mean that the beauty goes away, but it's 2021, and I am rightfully tired

of bickering, especially about nonsense. But this project isn't just about getting along. It's about accepting and appreciating more as beautiful because it is. This perspective is a long-overdue shift. If we can create more beauty in the world without moving from our armchairs, why shouldn't we?

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# ART AND PROPAGANDA: THE PROBLEM WITH IDEALIZED COLONIALISM

BY LAURA SORAN  
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EDITED BY RYLIE TAYLOR



*Penn's Treaty with the Indians When he Founded the Province of Pennsylvania in North America.* Benjamin West. 1771-72. Oil on Canvas. 75 ½ x 107 ¾ in. Accession # 1878.1.10. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection.

This paper examines the power of art commissions as a means for political and cultural gain through art narration at the detriment of some sectors of society. These ideas are explored through the art commission of Benjamin West by Thomas Penn, son of William Penn, which sought to solidify the Penn family legacy in the United States and was widely circulated as a form of political propaganda. Through the use of primary and secondary sources, this paper demonstrates the influential command of commissioned artwork and the dangers of keeping high art in the hands of the select few without equal opposing discourse.

NARRATIVE maintains power. Any intricate political system understands that the party which controls words and images controls the society's identity and truth. Art is commissioned for many reasons, but forming society's narrative is the most prized among them. The power of art has long been established by pharaohs and kings and continues to remain predominantly in the hands of churches, wealthy elites, and government agencies.<sup>1</sup> Art greatly influences public opinion; to demonstrate this, I will examine the case of Thomas Penn's commission for *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* by Benjamin West. The Penn family carefully used this commission to reflect specific assertions: their entitlement to lands already occupied, reinforcement of colonial power over current residents, and the right to garner venture capitalists for the region. The Penn family further solidified its legacy of colonial legitimacy by systematically circulating West's commission as propaganda, thereby dodging pains that arose after the American Revolutionary War. Many previous scholars have examined West's piece before but never in the vein of commission. Through examining Penn's commission, I will demonstrate the power art narratives hold for those who commission art and its influence over societies' percep-

<sup>1</sup> Artworks used to promote and display kingly, religious, or governmental powers include items such as, (1) *the palette of King Narmer*, Hierakonpolis, Egypt, (2) *Victory Stele of Naram-Sin*, Susa, Iran, (3) *Last Judgement*, west tympanum of Saint-Lazare, Autun, France, (4) *Presentation of Captives to Lord Chan Muwan*, Bonampak, Mexico, and (5) and Joe Rosenthal's *American Marines Raising American Flag on Mount Suribachi*, Iwo Jima.

tion of the past.

## Thomas Penn: A Public Relations Disaster

William Penn is known as the founding father who created peace with Pennsylvania's Native nations, but his legacy was bolstered by his heir, Thomas, through widely circulated commissioned art. Benjamin West sent letters to William Darton in February 1805 indicating that Thomas commissioned the painting of Penn's Treaty around 1771 (Abrams, 1982, pp. 61, 68; Brinton, 2012, p. 102).<sup>2</sup> Thomas requested this commission of his father's legacy during the recovery period after the French-Indian War, which had occurred between 1754 and 1763 ("French and Indian War," 2020). The request strategically followed the French-Indian War after a tumultuous fall from grace for the Penn family which rendered them extremely unpopular (Abrams, 1982, p. 61). With this commission, Thomas and West were able to seize upon settler resentment for Native groups to reestablish the Penn family as famous Native conquerors.

The Penn family's popularity declined around 1737 when the family experienced a period of financial hardship.<sup>3</sup> The family authorized a controversial land grab now known as the "Walking Purchase," which confiscated Native lands to be given to settlers (Abrams, 1982, p. 61).<sup>4</sup> During the original creation of the

<sup>2</sup> There is some ambiguity over whether Thomas, or his wife, first approached West to commission the painting. The full letter is available on p. 115 of Brinton's article.

<sup>4</sup> Favorable land located above the Falls in Bucks county was under sales negotiation with Thomas Penn, Lasse Cock, Måns Cock, and several settlers. As part of the

**Any intricate political system understands that the party which controls words and images controls the society's identity and truth.**



Province of Pennsylvania, William Penn created the *Certain Conditions and Concessions* land law, which granted the Penn family 10,000 acres for every 100,000 acres given to settlers. Additionally, the Penn family began surveying the best tracks of land in the province and ordered that every 500 acres must be occupied by one family or the land be seized and resold. After the land was seized, the owners would be given commensurate lands in less desirable locations (Cocoran, 1994, p. 480). These land grabs provided apparent benefits to the financially strapped Penn family. However, these agreements angered Native and settler populations because the Penn family failed to live up to their promises. Native nations soon went on the defense and started to arm their lands from further seizure, ending any foreseeable peace between Natives and settlers (Abrams, 1982, p. 61).

Thomas had gained proprietary control of Pennsylvania from his father (before the French-Indian War) in 1746 when the province was plagued by territorial disputes and rising violence between Native nations and settlers.<sup>5</sup> This violence continued to increase as German and Scotch-Irish immigrants poured into Pennsylvania, encroaching upon Native lands relentlessly. At the same time, Thomas experienced conflicts with the Quaker Assembly due to the Penn family's ties to the Anglican Church before their Quaker conversion (Abrams, 1982, p. 61).<sup>6</sup> The constant land disputes with-

negotiations, the Natives demanded a large number of goods to be delivered from England before relinquishing the land to settlers. Thomas Penn never delivered the goods, but the draft deed was used to acquire land from Bucks County to the Poconos. For more on the "Walking Purchase," see Soderland, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> William Penn was 58 years old when Thomas was born, and Thomas was 61 when his son Granville was born, which explains the expansive amount of time that the Penn family controlled Pennsylvania. For more on Penn's genealogy, see Brinton.

<sup>6</sup> William Penn converted to the Quaker faith, but his father was a well-known and respected member of the Anglican

in the colonies in conjunction with territorial disputes among European rulers led to the French-Indian War, a proxy war for Europe's Seven Years War. The war created alliances in Pennsylvania that greatly varied based on economic, national, and religious affiliations far beyond this paper's scope ("French and Indian War," 2020).<sup>7</sup>

The postwar society Thomas encountered was very different from the one crafted by his father (Abrams, 1982, p. 61).<sup>8</sup> Many residents felt the Penn family's unscrupulous land dealings influenced the war development, and citizens vocalized for Thomas to step down as proprietor.<sup>9</sup> The most vocal of these citizens was Benjamin Franklin, who traveled to London in 1765 to request Thomas's removal and replacement with a royal government.<sup>10</sup> While the Royal government denied Franklin's request, Thomas faced the severe threat of losing support

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church. Anglicans regularly persecuted Quakers early-on in the faith's development. For more on Penn's family, see Schwartz.

<sup>7</sup> The French and Indian War started over which Empire, French or British, would retain control of the upper Ohio River valley. In this region, certain Native tribes aligned themselves with either French or British settlers, both of which made promises to the Natives in exchange for their loyalty on the battlefield. This dynamic created unusual bedfellows during the war.

<sup>8</sup> Many Quaker residents were against arming the Colony (in opposition to Quaker teachings) and felt Thomas Penn was regularly using Native disputes to increase the Colony's armory at taxpayer expense. Thomas Penn himself was exempt from these taxes, which created further animosity.

<sup>9</sup> During this period Pennsylvania was experiencing an increase in violent interactions between Natives and non-pacifist settlers (non-Quakers). A gang of backwoodsmen called the "Paxton Boys" led massacres on Native villages and attempted to overthrow Pennsylvania's government. For more, see p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Franklin lost his position as head of the Quaker Assembly due to the increased violence. In response, he returned to London in 1765 to recruit support for Thomas Penn's removal. He also called on Benjamin West to pay his respects, which may have been an attempt to use West to gain access into prominent circles. Franklin and West later became close friends, with Franklin becoming the godfather to West's son.

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in the province (Abrams, 1982, p. 66).<sup>11</sup>

Thomas' final controversy before commissioning West's painting was at the *Treaty of Fort Stanwix* in 1768 (Abrams, 1982, pp. 68-69).<sup>12</sup> Thomas hoped to use the negotiations as a public relations event to emulate his father's legacy for himself. However, now that the Native nations had a better understanding of the Penn family's intentions, Thomas's minimal gifts were scoffed at, and negotiations were problematic.<sup>13</sup> This event demonstrated another attempt by the Penn family to grab lands greedily through treaty transactions, and many citizens again complained of the Penn family's abuses against settlers and Natives (Abrams, 1982, p. 68-69).<sup>14</sup> Thomas spent the remainder of his proprietorship fretting over Native violence, lack of settler support, and Franklin's constant campaign to remove him. Eventually, in 1775, Thomas Penn would suffer a stroke and die, after which his wife would retain ownership of West's art commission (Abrams, 1982, p. 69).<sup>15</sup>

### **"Savages Brought into Harmony"<sup>16</sup> (on Canvas)**

After Thomas Penn's failed negotiations at Fort Stanwix, West created the

painting (Abrams, 1982, p. 69). Today, the artwork should be understood for the public relations campaign it truly was. The painting was created as an homage to William Penn's right, as a colonial father, to Pennsylvania lands recently secured in hard-fought battles of the French and Indian War. In the painting, not only do the Penns receive the King's blessing, as is apparent by the many English merchant ships, but also the blessing of the Natives who represent the voice of the American motherland. West may have exaggerated the story, but he probably believed some of the information to be accurate.<sup>17</sup> However, no physical treaty or writing has surfaced to prove that a meeting definitively took place as West painted (Brinton, 2012, pp. 110-112).<sup>18</sup>

Benjamin West was a Pennsylvania native son, born in 1738, in Springfield—fifty-six years after the supposed treaty between Penn and the Natives occurred (Brinton, 2012, p. 100).<sup>19</sup> West left the Americas in 1760 to study with the art masters of Italy, thereby experiencing only a short segment of the French-Indian War (Abrams, 1982, pp. 64, 62).<sup>20</sup> West eventually chose to stay in England, living there from 1763 until his death in 1820 (Brinton, 2012, p. 101).<sup>21</sup> West was

<sup>11</sup> For a short period, the feud between Franklin and Penn paused as the two men joined forces to fight the Stamp Act. Implemented by Britain, this act increased taxation on imports, directly impacting settlers and merchants.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Penn tried to extend the Pennsylvania border to the Ohio River and annex Pittsburg with this treaty. Led by John Penn (Thomas' nephew) and Sir William Johnson (the Native agent), the meeting was held at Fort Stanwix.

<sup>13</sup> Neither party was willing to budge on their demands, and negotiations were problematic. The Natives required more money and goods, and the Penns requested more land.

<sup>14</sup> Settlers feared a resurgence in violence and criticized the Penn family's handling of the situation. The settlers accused the Penn family of using these treaties to refill their declining wealth by holding one-tenth of each land negotiation before selling the remainder.

<sup>15</sup> Abrams notes that Penn had suffered a "stroke of Palsy," dying four years later.

<sup>16</sup> From reference list (Brinton, 2012, p. 114). Quoted from a letter by Benjamin West to William Darton.

<sup>17</sup> Brinton recounts that the legend of William Penn was perpetuated by West and shared in his "old age" to Thomas Clarkson, who wrote about William Penn and Quaker history in a variety of books.

<sup>18</sup> Brinton defines the concept of "treaty" to mean a written agreement between two parties with written witnesses' accounts to be preserved in an archive. By this definition, a treaty between Penn and the Natives never occurred.

<sup>19</sup> The birthplace of West, now known as the "Benjamin West House," is currently located at the Swarthmore College campus and has since been restored.

<sup>20</sup> West's good friend William Smith, a staunch supporter of Penn, secured West's trip to Italy by requesting William Allen's patronage. West traveled with Allen's son and mercantile heir Joseph Shippen, placing West in direct contact with elite circles. West apparently trained with a militia group under Colonel Isaac Wayne's direction, but never participated in the war. He was only present in America during the early years of the war.

<sup>21</sup> West planned to only visit England on his way home

a popular artist among his fellow Americans, but achieved even greater success in the British Isles with the help of prominent colonial aristocrats (Abrams, 1982, pp. 62-65). While West was colony-born, he preferred residence in England, and his English patrons primarily influenced and informed his work. English art patrons during this time had a particular fondness for the Native populations of the Americas, and the story West created quickly went viral. Credited with circulating Penn's legend in English circles, West utilized the story to promote his painting and reputation as an artist (Brinton, 2012, p. 112). However, historical inaccuracies abound in the painting. West expressly discussed his desire to paint a positive narrative of William Penn. Based on the many inaccuracies in West's work, it is clear that the result is a piece of fiction which has been widely sold as an accurate depiction of peace among men.

One example of West's many inaccuracies in the painting is his depiction of William Penn. West confided in a letter to Mr. Darton that he utilized multiple mediums to achieve William Penn's likeness, including a wax medallion (Fig. 1 & 2) by Silvanus Bevan and descriptions by his father, John West (Abrams, 1982, pp. 69-70).<sup>22</sup> Both of these depictions would have been versions of William Penn much later in life, when, in reality, West knew that Penn was a young man at the time of the alleged treaty (Abrams, 1982, pp. 69-70).

Additional inaccuracies occur in the painting as West opted to place Penn and his companions in modern Quaker



Fig. 1. Silvanus Bevan, William Penn Medal, front, 1720 (Abrams, 1982, p. 71).



Fig. 2. Silvanus Bevan, William Penn Medal, reverse, 1720 (p. 71).

dress instead of dress from the period.<sup>23</sup> West's use of this attire has been argued as a way to demonstrate "contemporaneity" in his work (Abrams, 1982, p. 72). However, I would argue, the fashions West painted are so distinct to Quakerism that he purposefully depicted it this way to distinguish Penn's ideology as progressive to a current audience. On the other hand, historian Anne Abrams (1982) argues that West's use of modern dress in the painting attempts to reassert his religious heritage after family disputes within the Quaker group (p. 72).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Some accounts of the legend state that William Penn wore formal court dress at the ceremony to include a blue silk sash which is still preserved at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For more, see Brinton pp. 116-117.

<sup>24</sup> West's mother, Sarah Pearson West, second wife to West's father, was disavowed from Quakerism and therefore

from Italy but found so much work in London that he sent for his bride to join him. They were married in St. Martins, and West was buried in Westminster Abbey after death.

<sup>22</sup> The medal was drawn from memory by Bevan two years after William Penn's death, and all subsequent images of Penn tended to follow this medal's likeness. Coins like the Bevan medal were often given to tribal officers attending peace conferences as a sign of goodwill.



In support of Abrams's argument, West chose to include and honor his family members in the painting, including his father, brother, and wife, further demonstrating his willingness to exaggerate the truth (p. 72).<sup>25</sup>

West grew up as the son of a Quaker in Pennsylvania, well informed on William Penn's legacy and the Native Americans of the region. He paid particular attention to Native dress and customs in the painting by accurately depicting the items utilizing live models of authentic clothing as a guide (Abrams, 1982, p. 72).<sup>26</sup> West had a real fascination with Native Americans as a boy but described his move from Pennsylvania to England as a transition " [from the] Wigwoms [sic] of American savages [to the] refinements of the Royal Palaces of Europe," seeing it "[as] an extensive scale in human progress" (Abrams, 1982, p. 62).<sup>27</sup> West indicated Native Americans were stuck in a child-like state that, although admired, should be reformed by English paternalism. The artist's depiction of Penn echoes this very sentiment. West admitted his specific goal of depicting William Penn in a paternalistic light was to reference

not permitted to marry in a Quaker ceremony. Apparently, Sarah had "given way to a Libertine Spirit" and fallen from grace. Due to her behavior, Benjamin and his siblings were not birthright Quakers.

<sup>25</sup> West included John West (his father) and Thomas West (his half-brother) among the Quakers pictured next to William Penn although neither were in attendance. In a copy of *Quaker Biographies* (1909) by the Representative Meeting of Religious Society of Friends from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware (vol. I, facing p. 140), Horace J. Smith recounts the names of modern associates West included in the painting, also identifying the Native mother with child as being modeled after West's wife. For more on this, see Brinton p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> The Native dress Penn depicted in his painting also comprised a mix of historically accurate dress and modern dress. West used real Native garments from the Penn family collection as well as descriptions William Penn included in his advertisement to the Free Society of Traders.

<sup>27</sup> Originally recounted in letters located in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1894, pp. 219-222. Also see J. Morris to B. West, May 16, 1796, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

his authority in conquering the Pennsylvania Natives. He highlighted his belief by expressing Penn's inherent superiority and righteousness in subduing their savagery, telling Mr. Darton:

The great object I had in forming that composition, was to express savages brought into harmony and piece [sic] by justice and benevolence, by not withholding from them what was their right, and giving to them what they were in want of, and as well as a wish to give by that art a conquest that was made over native people without sword or dagger [sic]. (Brinton, 2012, p. 114)

The artist paints Penn as a father figure, gently nudging the Native groups into compliance by appealing their child-like "savage" side. The subsequent French-Indian War, in tandem with previously stated historical evidence, indicate that West's image of the peacefully subjugated "savage" is a gross overstatement of the political climate Penn perpetuated. West used his skills as a classically trained history painter to reinforce a colonial ruling class. The image intends to revisit a sentimental, idealized past that West believed to be greater. West's rendition reflects the hopes and desires of a select section of society without rebuttal, as Native nations were often silenced because their histories were predominately oral. By glorifying a conflict-free past that never truly existed, West removes the Native narrative from societal view.

### **Penn Propaganda Circumvents the Globe**

West and the Penn family widely circulated the painting throughout the colonies and Great Britain between 1771 until it found its final resting place at the free exhibition in the National Museum,

Independence Hall, Philadelphia in 1873 (Brinton, 2012, pp. 99–110).<sup>28</sup> The painting reinvigorated the legend of the Penn family as early conquerors of Native nations. Many colonists were still psychologically recovering from the French and Indian Wars, which explains why West's piece of nostalgia for a more peaceful past became so popular.

West's imagery of Penn's idealized actions circulated heavily before the Revolutionary War and would also be copied and distributed across Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, and Mexico (Brinton, 2012, p. 99).<sup>29</sup> The painting is an allegory for British colonialism and provided a platform for the global retelling of a nation-building story (Abrams, 1982, p. 60).

The painting became so popular it was widely copied and recreated by various artists, lithographers, and engravers; it was even set into new forms of mediums such as fabrics (Fig. 3), china (Fig. 4), tapestries, currency (Fig. 5), and banners (Fig. 6) between 1771 and 1888 (Brinton, 2012, pp. 133–189). These visual media proved highly effective at reaching both the educated wealthy and the uneducated impoverished through smaller versions of the image and everyday household objects. The constant reminiscence of Penn as the peaceful subjugator permeated media and households for years.

The mass-produced and widely spread image worked as a propagand-

da machine for four years preceding the American Revolutionary War. This notoriety could not arrive at a better time for the Penn family because the Revolutionary War stripped the family of its granted lands and titles when the United States moved to form a new government (Vaux, 1839, p. iv).<sup>30</sup> The story of William Penn as the “founding father of Pennsylvania” assisted Thomas Penn's heirs in seeking compensation for these government adjustments during two separate litigations, one against the United States and one against Great Britain (Vaux, 1839, pp. iiiv–xvi).

The Penn family litigated against the United States first, with the argument that Pennsylvania's success was the direct cause of William Penn; thereby, the Penn family was owed compensation for its war losses.<sup>31</sup> The new United States government endorsed the Penn family's argument and settled by compensating William Penn's heirs through post-war payments in the form of installation payments surmounting 130,000 pounds (Vaux, 1839, p. vi).

William Penn and his heirs presented a second argument to the British parliament with the council stating, “The merits and services of that family were so eminent in the history of this country and others, that he conceived it would be the wish of the committee, and the nation at large, to make a liberal provision,” as the Penn family had remained faithful to the royal crown (Vaux, 1839, p. vi). After hearing the arguments, Her Majesty's Command ruled in favor of a 4000-pound, tax-free, annual annuity to

<sup>28</sup> Upon completion, the painting went to the Royal Academy Exhibition, Stoke Park, near Winsor, and then to Thomas Penn until Joseph Harrison bought it at auction for £500. Harrison later presented it to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) in 1852. For the letter from Harris to the HSP, see p. 104. After Harrison's death in 1873, his wife sent the painting to the National Museum, Independence Hall, Philadelphia for display, but Mrs. Harrison formally relinquished ownership to the Academy of Fine Arts of Philadelphia.

<sup>29</sup> These circulations were mostly reproductions by other artists in the form of engravings. Slight variations in the rendition of West's work are documented in Brinton's detailed index of recorded images, pp. 133–193.

<sup>30</sup> From an abstract of Proceedings in Parliament, Feb. 1788, May and June 1790.

<sup>31</sup> The proceedings were presented by Mr. Frederick Montagu on behalf of the Right Honorable Lady Juliana Penn, and her son, John Penn, Esq., and her nephew, John Penn, Esq., to the House of Parliament. In Montagu's presentation, the awards issued by the newly formed United States of America became his defense for compensations owed by the British government.





Fig. 3. Linen Design No. 2 Mr. Francis Brinton, West Chester, Pa., 35 ½ x 25, brown; Arthur J. Sussel, Phila., 33 ½ x 26, Brown (Brinton, 2012, p. 185). These linen patterns were used for curtains and bedcovers in many households. In 1788, at a public auction of Penn's grandson's (named John Penn) home in England, bed curtains, window curtains, and tassels in this pattern were recorded among his belongings. For more, see p. 128.

Fig. 4. China set of Blue Staffordshire by Thomas Green, 61 pieces, owned by Mr. Henry Paul Busch (p. 183). Thirteen designs illustrating William Penn, his companions, and Natives adorn various pieces of the China set first bequeathed to Busch's mother.



Fig. 5. Banknote issued by the Sparkes Bank Exeter, England (p. 186).



Fig. 6. Engraving by Lambert Alpigini of the E.A. Wright Co., Philadelphia, 1913, 2 ¼ x 5. Used by the Pennsylvania Life Insurance Company from 1913 to 1934 at the top of their insurance policy forms (p. 186).

William Penn's heirs indefinitely (Vaux, 1839, xii). This elevated treatment of William Penn and his heirs was very much influenced by the circulation of Penn's legend, as depicted by Benjamin West.

The painting also transcended West's lifetime, as Ellen Brinton (2012) details in her extensive catalog of Penn imagery, and recirculated during her lifetime in the 1940s before the United States entered World War II. This recirculation also featured smaller images and everyday items, generally tied to Christian holidays, in the hopes of reinvigorating the ideas of a more prosperous and peaceful past led by colonists (pp. 99-100, 133-166).<sup>32</sup> These images helped fuel educational trends of children reenacting the first friendly encounters of Native Americans and colonists as part of their curriculum for decades.

### "Most of Us Were Born in this Country Long Before the Quakers Came"<sup>33</sup>

So, as for the legend of William Penn, what really happened in 1862? Here is what we definitively know. In 1681, William Penn was granted a province within the English colonies by King Charles II. He called it Pennsylvania, after his namesake. William Penn was a convert to the Quaker faith, and as a young man, he rejected the Catholic religious ideas of his father (Schwartz, 1983, p. 289).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Brinton recounts in note two, p. 100, the circulation of West's image during the 1940s. The items include (1) a Christmas card reproduction entitled *Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks for the Conde-Nast Company of New York, (2) a "Merchandise Gift Bond" for Gimble Brother's department store engraved with West's central figures, (3) a 1941 calendar inlay for the Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company of Philadelphia, (4) a February 1941 Edward Savage copy of West's painting in the offices of the Philadelphia Electric Company.

<sup>33</sup> From reference list (Soderlund, 2015, p. 166). Quoted from a letter sent to Queen Anne of Great Britain in 1711 from the first settlers of Pennsylvania.

<sup>34</sup> Penn denounced the Catholic church and accused it of



Quaker values advocate for religious autonomy free from persecution by a central religious faction and the “free individual quest for truth” (Schwartz, 1983, 285). Penn viewed his new appointment as an opportunity to bring Quaker values to his province and economic vitality to the region (Schwartz, 1983, p. 293).

In 1862, Penn arrived in Pennsylvania hoping to create an experimental utopic society, which would operate under the tenements of tolerance for religious freedom without persecution.<sup>35</sup> In Penn’s view, a nation allowed to assert “individual liberty of conscience” built a healthier, less fractured society than one with religious uniformity (Schwartz, 1983, p. 285). Pennsylvania’s long-established community—Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish settlers living with the Iroquois-Seneca, Leni-Lenape, and Shawnee in relative peace—was the perfect hub for this social experiment (Schwartz, 1983, p. 295; Soderlund, 2015, p. 149).

Penn’s ideas were progressive, but his behaviors were plagued by Anglo-Christian supremacy and entitlement, which often accompanied colonial interaction (Penn, 1683, pp. 1-13). Despite his Quaker affiliation, William Penn was, first and foremost, a businessman and politician set on creating profits for himself, his heirs, and his Quaker patrons. Before Penn arrived in his Pennsylvania province, he actively recruited investors for lands he had never seen by encouraging financial prospects to relocate to his province and convert to the Quaker faith (Schwartz, 1983, pp. 292, 294-295).<sup>36</sup>

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corrupting the original intent of the scripture. In particular Penn disagreed with the Roman Catholic church’s custom of persecuting those that questioned the Pope’s authority.

<sup>35</sup> Quakerism, as a reformation, experienced an early period of individualism but was beginning to stabilize into an organized system of religion around the time Penn converted to it in 1667, at 22 years old.

<sup>36</sup> William Penn advertised Pennsylvania to the “Committee of the Free Society of Traders” of that Province, residing in

Ahead of his arrival in the colonies, Penn sent his cousin William Markham, whom he appointed Deputy Governor, to orchestrate and establish transitional court governments.<sup>37</sup> Markham primarily constructed the new Pennsylvania court system on the existing New Netherland system under the Duke of York, with a twelve-man jury implementation. These twelve-man juries included a mix of first settlers and transplant English colonists (Soderlund, 2015, p. 150-156).<sup>38</sup>

After Penn’s arrival in the winter of 1862, with more English colonists moving into the area, it became increasingly clear that political positions were quickly reassigned to prominent Quakers once held by first settlers (Soderlund, 2015, p. 157).<sup>39</sup> In a grievous letter sent by Swedish first settlers to Queen Anne, the dispute among old and new is articulated:

Most of us were born in this country long before the Quakers came, and...our ancestors and some of us their children living still...have reduced the natives here to general obedience, which was too difficult for men of Quaker principles to have done, so that the Quakers when they came found a country at peace. (Soderlund, 2015, p. 166)<sup>40</sup>

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London.” Penn’s advertisement contained a “Portraiture of Plat-forms thereof” and “Purchaser’s Lots,” describing them as the “Prosperous and Advantageous [sic] Settlements of the Society” on the pamphlet’s cover.

<sup>37</sup> Markham set up a council of nine inhabitants and temporarily continued the authority of the pre-existing Upland Courts; when Penn arrived later, he established his provincial assembly and county courts.

<sup>38</sup> This change was implemented on the existing Upland Court’s procedures during the transition between 1681 and 1682. These twelve-man juries included a number of first settlers, usually a mixture of Swedes and Finns.

<sup>39</sup> After 1682 Penn created new courts in multiple counties and dissolved the single court in Upland. Appointees to the new county courts over the next several years were predominately affluent English Quakers, leading to a stark decline in first settlers’ political power.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from a letter sent to Queen Anne of Great Britain

Penn's political slight toward the first settlers created a rift between the established population and new arrivals. In response, first settlers aligned themselves closely with their Native neighbors, forming informal political ties (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 166–167).<sup>41</sup>

One significant advantage first settlers had over Penn's entourage was their vast knowledge of the many languages and dialects in the region. This knowledge forced Penn to utilize them as intermediaries in negotiations for an extensive period, notably the Swedish interpreter Lasse Cock (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 156, 166).<sup>42</sup> Soderlund (2015) notes in his research that the Swedish ambassador was quoted as saying, “[the first settlers know] all kinds of languages, Swedish, German, Finnish, Dutch, sometimes French, English, and American [Lenape, Susquehannock], as their own language, the greater part of them, while the English only know their own” (p. 167). The Native groups were much more trustful of the first settlers, with whom they had built relationships and shared language long before Penn's arrival.

However, part of Penn's Quaker marketing campaign aimed to assure prospective buyers that Penn was ethically sourcing the land from Native inhabitants (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 175–176).<sup>43</sup> Penn sent letters to Native tribes introducing

in 1711 from the first settlers of Pennsylvania. Swedes opposed Quaker authority in Pennsylvania by seeking assistance from the Anglican queen due to their shared Anglican affiliation.

<sup>41</sup> Soderlund quotes Andreas Sandal as saying, “[the local Natives] are so faithful to the Swedes that if one of them should hear that a Swede was in any kind of danger, he would be willing to run a hundred miles to warn him.”

<sup>42</sup> Soderlund notes that Swedish pastors described the Swede and Native relationship as “they are like brothers and sisters.”

<sup>43</sup> Quaker beliefs strongly held to pacifist ideology, which made fair dealings with the Natives an attractive selling point to Quaker patrons. Taking lands from Natives by perceived unethical means would have been counterproductive to Penn's sales pitch for his customer base.

himself as the new Governor before he arrived. Once present in the province, Penn (1683) mailed detailed reports back to British investors espousing his close and peaceful relationship with the natives (pp. 1–13). Penn discussed his supposed interaction with a Native during negotiations in a promotional letter to the Free Society of Traders, stating:

“He first pray'd me, to excuse them that they had not complied [sic] with me the last time; he feared, there might be some fault in the interpreter, being neither Indian nor English, besides, it was the Indian custom to deliberate, and take up much time in Council, before they resolve; and that if the Young People and Owners of the Land had been as ready as he, I had not [would have not] met with so much delay.” (p. 7)

Penn's words highlighted the genuine issue of having the first settlers as go-betweens with the Natives. Penn often remained in the dark during negotiations, and the closeness between Natives and first settlers placed him at a disadvantage. Penn was fully aware of this and worked hard to learn the Native language to cut first settlers out of negotiations (p. 5).<sup>44</sup> Penn further went on to say, “when the purchase was agreed, great promises past [sic] between us of kindness and good neighborhood, and that the Indians and English, must live in love, as long as the sun gave light” (p. 7). Penn's narrative was vague regarding timing and lands negotiated. It operated less as a factual document and more as a reinforcement to investors that Penn had everything under

<sup>44</sup> Penn writes, “Their language is lofty, yet narrow, but like the Hebrew; in signification full, like short-hand in writing; one word serveth in the place of three, and the rest are supplied by the understanding of the hearer: imperfect in their tenses, wanting in their moods, participles, adverbs, conjunctions, interjections: I have made it my business to understand it, that I might not want an interpreter on any occasion...”



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with Natives (on record) occurred under Markham's guidance before Penn arrived in the province, with Lasse Cock as an intermediary.<sup>45</sup> Markham based his treaty negotiations on models already established under New Netherland's first settlers and reinforced them during new land acquisitions (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 167-173). Native negotiations sought to maintain the following guidelines: The Lanapes would (1) warn the English of planned Indian attacks, (2) hold annual meetings to renegotiate, renew, and resolve terms, and (3) file a grievance with Pennsylvania before launching attacks. In exchange, the Lenapes were granted right-of-passage on all lands for open hunting and fishing across Pennsylvania (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 170-171).<sup>46</sup>

Historical accounts of Penn's interactions with Native nations and first settlers are not without controversy. In fact, many are akin to modern-day gentrification problems. Penn prematurely promot-

<sup>45</sup> The Natives also ensured that they would maintain right-of-passage on all lands, which they first negotiated with the Swedes in the 1640s. In the eyes of the Natives, they were to maintain full access to the lands William Penn purchased. This agreement did not transition well once the lands were resold to Penn's investors.

<sup>46</sup> Soderlund notes that Penn discusses in correspondence with Markham that the Native Tribes reoccupied lands which were not being inhabited, thereby requiring renegotiations. Penn writes, "The Indians do make people buy over again that land the people have not seated in some years after purchase which is the practice also of all these governments towards the people inhabiting under them." Penn acknowledges the similarity between the practices of the Native Tribes and European governments.

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first settlers and Natives already occupied the best tracts of land (Soderlund, 2015, pp. 149-150). So, Penn utilized his governmental powers to strong-arm residents. He then re-surveyed and re-allocated lands owned by first settlers to resell to his own investors (Soderlund, 2015, p. 163).

The Native Tribes of Pennsylvania could not ethically enter into a treaty with Penn because the treaty concept did not culturally translate for the Tribes. Cultural understanding, under Tribal law, designated that lands for hunting and planting could be shared and temporarily transferred but never permanently owned (Bevan, 2007, p. 95).<sup>47</sup> Native negotiations with Penn were probably understood as temporary transfers to be renegotiated at a later time. Penn's many real estate transactions in the region systematically pushed out the original small neighborhoods of mixed ethnic and linguistic groups by setting up large homogenous English Quaker communities. Ironically, Penn's actions created a society in direct opposition to his ideology—one of a robust multicultural society.

### "[Not] Simply Seized by Conquest"<sup>48</sup>

The colonial days of the past, idealized in art, have real implications that

<sup>47</sup> Smith accounts the Native cultural customs of land ownership in his history of land acquisition for the area which would later house the World Trade Center.

<sup>48</sup> From reference list (Minderhout & Frantz, 2008, p. 63).



carry through into the present. When colonized groups are removed from the storytelling of history and only the colonial point of view is visually apparent in society, these groups are erased. This phenomenon is seen throughout our country today, with very few statues erected to the colonized and marginalized, while many statues stand of the colonizer. Colonization, slavery, and the mistreatment of minority groups are part of American history, and equal space should be realized for art commissions that speak to these narratives. Additionally, the earlier falsehoods that were so quickly sold as historical facts should be rectified with visual counterarguments of truth. The Native tribes in Pennsylvania feel the effects of letting these mistruths continue without correction today.

Currently, the federal government and Pennsylvania deny the existence of modern Native populations in the state, offering no formal recognition or a reservation. However, the 2004 U.S. Census places the number of Native Americans in Pennsylvania at 18,348, while another 34,302 identify as partially Native American (Minderhout & Frantz, 2008, p. 61). Native Americans in Pennsylvania have consistently tried to gain state recognition, and the state has consistently denied them. In an ethnographic study conducted by David Minderhout and Andrea Frantz (2008), it was determined 32 unrecognized groups of Native American affiliates are living in Pennsylvania (p. 62). Minderhout and Frantz also stress that Native claims to land in Pennsylvania are deterred by the fact that William Penn supposedly purchased the grounds with “legal title” and that the lands were not “simply seized by conquest” (p. 63).<sup>49</sup>

What is written and recorded is solidified over what is heard and fleeting-

ly observed, and unfortunately, colonizers were documenting history in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For marginalized groups to truly become part of society, they must be visually reflected within it. Consider the remarks of a Pennsylvania Lenape man who says: “We are the only nationality that must prove we are who we say we are” (Minderhout & Frantz, 2008, p. 62). Similarly, a Lenape mother states, “You have a child and you raise him in your culture. And he goes to school and in the school he hears that there’s no such thing as the American Indian. Pennsylvania has no American Indians” (Minderhout & Frantz, 2008, p. 62).

The Penn family managed to control the narration of their legacy through Benjamin West’s images, and the effects persist in Pennsylvania today. In examining West’s depiction of *William Penn’s Treaty with the Indians* (and all historical art), it is essential to understand the purpose of its commission. For historians, one must always place art in its historical context and ask—Why was this message developed and for whom? But more importantly—Whose message is going unheard?

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<sup>49</sup> Minderhout and Frantz reference C.A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History*, Rutgers University Press, for this statement.

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# Dante's *Inferno*: The Mirroring Between Farinata and Capaneus

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Within *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri's depiction of Farinata, the 13th century Florentine leader of the Ghibellines, and his depiction of Capaneus, one of the seven warriors against Thebes, contain a significant number of parallels. By analyzing cantos X and XIV through "vertical reading" and examining Farinata and Capaneus' similar themes and commonalities, I will argue that Dante writes Capaneus and Farinata to be entwined mirrors of each other in order to establish how life before death affects a sinner's experience in hell within *The Divine Comedy*.

MIRRORING of cantos and characters within *The Divine Comedy* is not uncommon. P.W. Damon (1965) argues that Ulysses and Cato are anti-types of each other; Guido da Montefeltro and his son Buonconte Montefeltro are written as opposite mirrors of each other in terms of sin; and metamorphosed, entwined pairs — such as Ulysses and Diomedes — are found all through the work. Catherine Keen (2016) argues to connect cantos by a type of "vertical reading" saying that "the value of comparison and retrospection, to identify connections between episodes in different canti or cantiche [cantos], soon emerges" when this type of reading is done (p. 55). Dante's *Inferno* (1472/1996) centers around planned separation of human sinners by divine edict, but at the same time, centers around human connection: the desire to see loved ones or enemies, to speak with each other even when not allowed, and to metamorphose into one being from two. When applying this type of analysis to Farinata of canto X

and Capaneus of canto XIV, they quickly emerge as another pair created in tandem with each other. By analyzing parallels concerning I) linguistic similarities, II) personality and pride, III) physical sensation in hell, IV) parental strife, V) earthly attachments and lack of confession, and VI) their negative charge in movement towards purgatory, I will argue that Dante establishes commonalities between the two characters and makes them mirrors of each other in order to establish how life before death affects a sinner's experience in hell within *The Divine Comedy*.

### I: Linguistic Parallels

Linguistic parallels between Farinata and Capaneus make themselves immediately apparent as the first indication that these men reflect each other. They share disdain for their Christian surroundings: "He [Capaneus] had, and still seems to have, / God in *disdain*" and "He [Farinata] was / rising up with his breast and forehead as if he had / Hell in great *disdain*" (Dante, 1472/1996, XIV. 69-70, X. 34-36). Farinata is one who is "great-souled," and Capaneus is "great" (X. 73, XIV. 46). Both sinners are also predominantly static; Farinata's head and eyebrow movements in X. 88 and X. 44 are the only movements he makes, whereas Capaneus remains still through his entire canto.

Fire and heat play a similar role both linguistically and within each man's death. Each canto mentions fire in relation to cities: "City of fire" and "Flames that Alexander saw in the hot / parts of India" (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 22, XIV. 31-32). Farinata bakes within his sepulcher, and Capaneus lies on burning sand with fire raining down upon him. Regarding death, Farinata and his wife's bodies were "exhumed and burned," and Capaneus was struck down by Zeus's thunderbolt: "...another example of fire from heaven" (pp. 163, 228). Their cantos are writ-

ten to mimic each other in a way that is quickly visible, easily establishing a connection from the first reading.

### II: Parallels Pertaining to Personality and Pride

Farinata, born Manente de Uberti, was a real person who led the Florentine Ghibellines from 1239 to 1264. He was an extremely powerful leader and warrior, responsible for driving the invading Guelphs out of Florence in 1248, and again in 1251. After his death, he was charged with heresy by the Guelphs and excommunicated (note by R.M. Durling on Dante, 1472/1996, X. 32). Capaneus, in comparison, is one of the Seven Against Thebes, seven characters of Statius' (90/1995) *Thebaid* who fought against Thebes as a result of King Oedipus' death. He is an extremely proud, large warrior who holds contempt for the gods and does not pray to them. When he screams insults at Jupiter from atop a wall of the city Thebes during book ten, Jupiter strikes him down with a lightning bolt due to his pride and hubris. Both men were fierce warriors fighting to take hold of a city, despite being from different eras and even different realities.

Capaneus is, of course, a symbol of pride and hubris. Dante knew Capaneus from the *Thebaid*, in which H. A. Mason (1992) argues that "Statius converted Capaneus from a human rebel against the gods [referencing *Seven Against Thebes* by Aeschylus] to a potential *rival* of the gods" (p. 8). It is this characterization that Dante has of Capaneus—not the human-against-the-gods, Prometheus-like, "bad boy" of the *Seven Against Thebes*, but a Nimrod-like figure of rivalry and hubris. Statius' (90/1995) Capaneus hates the gods: "Held justice irksome and despised the gods," only worshipping himself (3.603). His own pride extends past the acceptable measure of even Pagan standards, meaning that his prideful atti-



tude within Christian standards would be immeasurable.

Farinata's own pride, while not as blatantly spoken of as Capaneus', is also significant. "All generations of readers have been struck by the indomitable pride and courage displayed by Farinata's monumental figure, perhaps the most impressive in the entire *Inferno*," says Durling (1998, p. 139). Farinata is described using the word *magnanimo*, which has important connotations: "If we turn to Latin poetry, we find that the adjective *magnanimus* could be used in a way that emphasized the link between *magnitudo animi* and pride or ambition" (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 73; Scott, 1962, p. 98). Farinata is hailed as a great man, but the etymology surrounding his description reveals his un-Christian-like pride and ambition.

Dante (1472/1996) characterizes the sin of pride as physically large and imposing within both cantos, creating yet another parallel between the two. Capaneus is a massive figure, physically: "Held justice irksome and despised the gods; / And prodigal was he of his own life / Should anger urge—a centaur he might seem / of Phloe's dark forests or a match / For Etna's Cyclopes" (Statius, 90/1995, 3.603-607). Farinata is described as "great-souled"; he "stood erect" even when sitting (X. 73, 32). Furthermore, the placement of Dante in relation to Farinata creates the image of a massive figure towering over Dante: "He stood at the foot of [Capaneus's] tomb" (X. 40). Instead of using different methods to physically showcase pride that would distinctly separate these men and give them more individualistic personalities, they are brought closer together by

their matching manifestations.

### III: Parallels Concerning Physical Sensation in Hell

An Epicurean, Farinata appears in Canto X where he is placed within the sixth circle (the Heretics) because of his belief that the soul dies with the body, instead of believing that the soul will be reunited with the body come the second coming of Christ. "Epicurus and his followers have their cemetery in / this part, who make the soul die with the body," states Virgil—a belief which directly contradicts the teachings found within the Bible (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 13-14). To Epicureans, the soul is not immortal: their body and soul are bound to the earth.

The placement of Capaneus is more complicated and requires more discussion to understand. Capaneus—a Pagan who existed before the time of Christ—appears in Canto XIV of *Inferno* and is punished for

blaspheming against Zeus. Dante places him in the third subcircle within the seventh circle of hell, "the violent against God, Nature, or industry," a placement that fascinates scholars due to Dante's seeming assertion that even Pagans who blaspheme against their Pagan gods are still placed within a Christian hell (Dante, 1472/1996, XIV). Virgil says that Capaneus "holds / God in disdain and respects him little" instead of holding Zeus in disdain (XIV. 69-70). The implication here is that even a sinner who has never heard of Christianity before, if they act in a way unfitting for a Christian to act, will be sent to hell. Dante the Poet appears to assert that those who go against their own non-Christian gods are rebel-

**Despite their differences in sin and their differing placement in hell, Farinata and Capaneus are the only sinners who do not physically experience their punishments.**

ling against the Christian God himself and will therefore be punished.

As seductive as that idea is, however, a more realistic analysis is due to the commonly held belief in the Middle Ages that Pagans could be pre-Christian prophets and therefore their Pagan gods were prefigurations of the Christian God. To Dante, Zeus and God would be the same creation. In Dante's time, many Christians believed that the Pagans had seen some spiritual Christian truth even before said Pagans knew what Christianity was, and therefore the Pagan gods would be treated in a somewhat similar fashion to the Christian God:

On the one hand, the Christian poet does not hesitate to denounce the 'false and lying gods' of the ancient Romans (Dante, 1996, i, 72); on the other, he associates ancient divinities with the angelic intelligences that govern the various heavens (Convivio n, iv, 1-7), as though the Pagan Romans had glimpsed part of the Christians' truth. In fact, the Christian poet who was bold enough to refer to Christ as "supreme Jove" (Purg. vi, 118) judges a Pagan by the laws and religious numina he knew and should have revered. Capaneus is therefore damned for his impious rebellion against God, known to him under the mask of Jove. (Scott, 1998, p. 188).

In reading Zeus as a pre-Christian symbol of God, the placement does make sense. Capaneus denied Zeus as his savior and blasphemed against him—he therefore denied God and blasphemed against Him as well, actions that appropriately place him in the third subcircle.

Despite their differences in sin and their differing placement in hell, Farinata and Capaneus are the only sinners who do not physically experience their punishments. Capaneus does not register the physical pain his shade should be enduring.

“Who is that great one who seems not to mind the / fire, and lies there scornful and frowning?” Dante the pilgrim asks Virgil of Capaneus, who is unbothered by the fire (Dante, 1472/1996, XIV. 46-47). He lies there surly and annoyed, the rain not “ripening” him in any way (XIV. 48). Similarly, Farinata rises from his tomb “with his breast and forehead as if he had / hell in great disdain” and is never described as bothered or in pain (X. 35-36). The image of a tortured shade being disdainful towards his torturer is striking and almost singular throughout *Inferno*—his only companion in such an attitude being Capaneus.

I posit that Farinata appears unbothered by hell's punishments due to his Epicurean beliefs when he was alive. The following Epicurean philosophy explains why Farinata would not believe in physical sensation after his death:

The soul has sensation owing to its protection within the body, to which it communicates sensation. Even though parts of the body be lost, the soul still has sensation; but if the soul be lost, the body ceases to feel; and so does the soul when the body is broken up. (Epicurus, 207-217/1940a, p. 17)

Additionally, Epicurus (207-271/1940b) states, “Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil consists in sensation, but death is a deprivation of sensation” (p. 30). According to his own philosophy, Farinata does not believe that he can feel once he is dead. There is, of course, contention between scholars whether the claim that Farinata does not feel his punishment is accurate, but Dante's own description of Farinata in combination with the additional evidence that the Epicurean philosophy provides supports the argument that there is a much stronger chance that Farinata does not feel his physical punishment than academics have previously



considered.

As for Capaneus, he has not changed from his earthly, living state at all; he has no concept of a Christian God. Hilari-ously, Capaneus doesn't seem to even understand where he is: "As I / was alive, so am I dead" (Dante, 1472/1996, XIV. 50-51). Capaneus cries out, this cry also being "a reference to the Stoic idea of consistency and imperturbability, again involving allusion to Farinata," further emphasizing his unchanging nature and his dismissal of Christian theology (note by R.M. Durling on Dante, 1472/1996, XIV. 51). He still believes that he has rebelled against Zeus, not God—he refers to all powers as Zeus (XIV. 52-60). Capaneus implies that he does not understand where he is—so much so that the idea of a Christian God and a Christian Hell, even as he experiences those things, remain completely unknown and unacknowledged. Capaneus died a Pagan and his grasp of Christianity is as non-existent as it was when he died; how can it be any different, if he is dead as he was alive?

The lack of physical pain that both sinners endure, when analyzed in tandem with Farinata and Capaneus' beliefs in life, creates the possibility that living beliefs also affect the strength of how a sinner physically feels their punishment. Hell does not exist independently of the living world. Rather, "What we see in the punishments of the damned are figurative replications of the actions or natures of sins themselves," which accounts for the way hell reflects the choices that the damned made during their lives (Cogan, 1999, p. 37). In both cases, the choice to turn away from God was a willing one, despite the different theological backgrounds. Farinata had Christian knowledge and chose to turn away from God knowing Biblical truth. As for Capaneus, his choice to turn from Zeus functions in the same manner when contextualizing

Christian theology towards Paganism in the Middle Ages. In life, neither Farinata nor Capaneus adhered to Christian tradition. It is my argument that Farinata and Capaneus' living beliefs and actions predict their experience in hell, and in their cases, predict their inability to feel pain.

#### IV: Parental Strife

Both Farinata and Capaneus display a broken parental-versus-filial relationship with their creator and turn away from Him. Farinata is positioned like Jesus Christ, his body placed in *Imago Pietatis*, but unlike Jesus whose soul existed past death, Farinata did not believe in the immortality of the soul. In contrast to Jesus Christ who allowed his body to die because of the will of God, Farinata "literally cause[s] his soul to die" by being an Epicurean (Durling, 1998, p. 138). The abrupt arrival of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, who interrupts Farinata to ask Dante about his son and becomes overcome with agony when he believes his son to be dead, throws the bastardized representation of Jesus and God's familial relationship into even greater relief (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 52-73). This emotional exchange between Dante and Cavalcante highlights Farinata's lack of emotional connection to other humans and to God: he does not ask about anyone he loves, simply of Florence. This parental strife and representation of fatherhood is so strong in Canto X that it even reaches Dante: "In Farinata and Cavalcante, then, Dante encounters fathers: literally the father and father-in-law of his closest friend, but also fathers of his city, past leaders of Florence, where they were partly responsible for the heritage of civil strife that plagues it" (Durling, 1998, p. 137). Canto X is ripe with fathers and representations of failed and/or misconstrued father-son relationships.

Capaneus is linked with parental strife as well when we read him as De

Scipio (1990) does: “If Capaneus is the prime example of pride in his revolt against God, then the seventh circle represents the central point for the structure of Hell. It establishes a direct symbolic link between Capaneus and Lucifer as the primary figures of rebelliousness against God” (p. 176). In this way, we can see Capaneus as being linked with Lucifer. We see an emblem of not only pride but also failed love linked with pride—Lucifer was God’s most beloved angel. However, Lucifer chose to abandon God and reject him, similar to the way Capaneus cannot even recognize God. Lucifer also chooses to go against God and fight him, in the same way Capaneus chooses to rage against Zeus and turn from him. Additionally, not only are Capaneus and Lucifer linked, but Capaneus is also from the *Thebaid*—Thebes itself being profoundly emblematic of parental-versus-filial strife.

### V: Earthly Attachments and Lack of Confession

Both Farinata and Capaneus are bothered more by earthly events than their own punishments in hell. Farinata’s laissez-faire attitude towards Hell is clear throughout his speech. He speaks to Virgil and Dante the Pilgrim only of earthly, political things such as Florence, their ancestors, and the wars. When discussing the discord between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, Farinata states, “If they [the Ghibellines] have / learned that art [of returning] badly,’ he said, ‘that torments me / more than this bed’” (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 76-78). As for Capaneus, his earthly emotion was so powerful that it directly shaped the way in which he experiences Hell. Even Virgil says, “No / punishment, other than your rage, would be / suffering of a measure with your fury” (XIV. 64-66). Additionally, an interesting parallel appears here between Farinata’s earth-bound philoso-

phy and Capaneus’ body being forced to lie on hell’s ground. For both these men, these earthly events are more powerful than the punishment God has created for either of them.

Neither Farinata nor Capaneus are able to explain why they are in Hell. In both cantos, Virgil is the one to explain why they are punished (Dante, 1472/1996, X. 13-14, XIV. 62-71). Other sinners do not understand their sin, really, but they are still able to discuss it, such as Francesca does in Canto V: “But if you have so much desire to know the first / root of our love, I will do as one who weeps and / speaks” (X. 124-126). Importantly, there is no confession for either Farinata or Capaneus, when in many other cantos the sinners confess. Neither Capaneus nor Farinata admit to guilt, or to their sin as a such. Capaneus talks only of his death by thunderbolt and does not name God once, not understanding the truth of God or Christianity, or understanding that his death and placement in hell is the result of committing a sin. Farinata speaks only of earthly politics. The only statement that could be considered a confession is spoken by Farinata when he says, “Your speech makes you manifest as a native of / that noble fatherland to which perhaps I was too / harmful” (X. 25-27). Here, Farinata’s admission of guilt is not about his being an Epicurean—rather, it is about his earthly acts. To both Farinata and Capaneus, their sins do not exist, and therefore they never partake in any form of meaningful confession.

The absence of confession from Farinata and Capaneus creates interesting implications, especially when considered in tandem with the standards of confession at the time. “Regular confession—with its focus on personal sinfulness and the need to examine one’s faults year after year—was a longstanding and intimately familiar practice,” Steinberg (2013) says of medieval Christian tradition (p. 479).



Confession, being one of the seven sacraments, is still considered a way of vital importance to be close to God. Farinata and Capaneus' lack of confession and lack of guilt does not just create yet another mirror between the two, but also establishes a similar distant relationship with Christianity—just as their failed parental relationships with God and their connection to the earth instead of the Christian afterlife do.

## VI: Negative Charge in Movement Towards Purgatory

Farinata and Capaneus have the potential to go to Purgatory, but it would require much change. This is an extraordinarily contentious statement. Virgil believes that Pagans are permanently damned; he says about the damned Pagans that “they did not sin; and if they have merit, it is not enough, because they did not have baptism” (Dante, 1472/1996, IV. 34-35). His assumption is that even a Pagan who does not sin is still damned to hell, no matter what. However, Steinberg's (2013) conclusion differs: “Virgil's claim, then, that the souls in Limbo have not sinned is without foundation” (p. 479). As the Harrowing of Hell indicates, spirits cursed to Hell can be saved: there is the possibility that a sinner can ascend to Purgatory, even after being damned. Harrowing of Hell creates an exceedingly small possibility of transformation, one that is so fascinating that it deserves some consideration.

Farinata and Capaneus' lack of guilt for their sins and their lack of confession, as well as their lack of love for any form of God—really, their lack of even *comprehension* for what they did—create a sort of ‘negative charge’ in terms of their spiritual journey and/or redemption. If a sinner has the potential to ascend to Purgatory or to leave Hell, as many sinners did during the Harrowing of Hell, there would certainly be certain standards a

sinner must meet. If Purgatory is about refinement, then a sinner must accept that they require refinement and trust in God to change them for the better. Confessing one's sin is the first step—acknowledgement of what one did wrong. Many sinners, both Pagan and Christian, possessed such knowledge: Francesca, Brunetto, Guido da Montefeltro—seemingly the majority. They are able to explain why they find themselves interred in eternal damnation. But Farinata and Capaneus cannot do even that.

Interestingly, if this purification does begin to occur, Farinata and Capaneus might begin to experience pain. To experience pain in Hell is to allow God to influence you, which neither Farinata nor Capaneus do. I believe the first step in their ascending to Pur-

gatory would be letting go of those earthly attachments and allowing God's Hell to perform the duties it is supposed to do, including the torture of physical sensation. Purgatory is refinement, transformation, and a letting go of all earthly desires. If the way to be saved from Hell and sent to Purgatory is to truly be worthy of such a movement, like those that Jesus saved during the Harrowing, then a love for God is necessary, as well as an acceptance of Him, his acts, and influence

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in order to receive that love. Pain would also be necessary because as the first step in experiencing a Christian connection.

Interestingly, if this purification does begin to occur, Farinata and Capaneus might begin to experience pain.

## References

### VII: Conclusion

Dante's *Inferno* is a mix of intertextuality from his main characters, themes, and quoted books. It is a puzzle of Classical and Medieval references, wrapped in conjoined meanings which tie together Christianity and Paganism. To not care about these connections dismisses an integral part of *The Divine Comedy*, an aspect so important to Dante that he constructed the entire story around it. For this reason, the study of Farinata and Capaneus is extremely important. Ignoring this pair of men ignores the vertical weaving of *The Inferno* and, in doing so, ignores one of the most essential elements of the entire poem.

When analyzed together, Farinata and Capaneus provide insight into both Dante's concept of Christianity and organization of characters, as well as his philosophy on the various sins that Farinata and Capaneus commit. These two warriors are another example of Dante's fascinating intertextuality which creates the vivid world of *The Divine Comedy*. Their mirrored strong earthly attachments, lack of physical pain within hell, broken familial relationship with God, excessive pride, lack of confession, and lack of guilt connect them through the *Inferno* as another remarkable, entwined pair. The negative charge they demonstrate in terms of sin and how the theology surrounding these characters creates the possibility that ascension from hell is possible an extremely exciting analytical possibility that is worth further study.

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# The Latinx Immigrant Experience as Depicted by Los Tigres Del Norte's Music

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The objective of this research paper is to explore ways in which Los Tigres Del Norte's music depicts the Latinx immigrant experience in the United States. Los Tigres Del Norte (LTDN) are one of the most celebrated norteño bands on both sides of the U.S. border. They have received numerous awards for more than fifty years in the business, cementing themselves as cultural icons for millions of people across the American continent. Their music offers a look into the overlooked world of Latinx immigrants and their daily struggles. A non-obstructive content analysis method was used to gather and analyze LTDN's music. The data was made up of thirty-two individual songs from different albums, all of which made some reference to immigrants and their experiences. Three reoccurring themes emerged when analyzing their music. They describe the Latinx immigrant experience as: (1) painful and unjust; (2) stressful; (3) and contextualized by a Pan-American identity. LTDN's music takes on an ethnographic role within the Latinx community that has earned the group the title of *la voz del pueblo*, *vox populi*, or the voice of the people. The immigrant experience remains complex and often misunderstood by outsiders; however, LTDN's music offers insight into the lives of millions of Latinx immigrants living in and making their way into the U.S.

## Introduction

It is estimated that by the year 2050, non-Hispanic Whites will become the minority race in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2008). For the first time in history, Latinx, African Americans, Asians, and other racial and ethnic minorities will make up the majority of the population. Of these groups, the Latinx community is the fastest growing minority group in America. As the Latinx population increases, so does its political and socioeconomic influence. This major shift in the U.S. demographic has been slowly forming for more than sixty years. As a result, the Latinx culture has flourished. Los Tigres Del Norte's (LTDN), a Mexican American musical group, are just one example of flourishing Latinx culture in the U.S. The present study aims to analyze ways in which LTDN's music portrays this Latinx immigrant experience.

For years America has relied on immigrant labor to keep the economy moving in agricultural, restaurant, construction, and hospitality sectors and continues to do so today. Although there is no concrete data on the labor of undocumented immigrants, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2020) found that "in 2019 that there were 28.4 million foreign-born persons in the U.S. labor force, comprising 17.4 percent of the entire labor force" ("Highlights from the 2019 data"). This 17.4 percent is made up of both legally admitted and undocumented immigrants, refugees, and temporary residents. The BLS also shows that about half of those 28.4 million foreign-born immigrants are Latinx, who are "more likely than native-born workers to be employed in service occupations; natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupation; and production, transportation, and material moving occupations" ("Highlights from the 2019 data").

Millions of Latinx people have

filled the demand for labor, bringing their own culture and music into the U.S. One of the most acclaimed and celebrated cultural icons on both sides of the border has been LTDN. They are considered *la voz del pueblo*, the voice of the people. Los Tigres are an extremely popular group, in the U.S. and Mexico, as well as in all of Latin America. The band was started in 1968, and in their 52 years as professional musicians they have received many honors and achievements—such as winning seven Grammys, a star on the Hollywood walk of fame, a dedicated MTV special, and even streets named after them ("About Los Tigres Del Norte," n.d.).

LTDN have recorded over fifty albums and more than five hundred songs. They are so popular within the Latinx music scene that other artists, from various different genres, choose to collaborate with them—Paulina Rubio, Juanes, Marco Antonio Solis, Calle 13, Alejandro Fernandez, and more. One of their most recent and notable honors has been to play at Folsom state prison for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. They played the first concert in Folsom since Johnny Cash, who historically performed there in 1968. Furthermore, LTDN are recognized by general audiences in significant numbers. They have accumulated 5,266,412 monthly listeners and 2,407,656 followers through Spotify. Their top 10 songs in Spotify range from 11 million listens, to as high as 94 million (Birchmeier, n.d.). These numbers are impressive considering that not all Latinx people in the U.S. and their home country strictly use Spotify.

LTDN have been very popular with Latinx immigrants. Unlike many other artists who lose their popularity once subsequent generations assimilate, LTDN continue to mix their traditional style with newer musical trends that keep them on top of billboards and pop-



ular among the younger generations. As the Latinx population continues to increase, the influence of LTDN grows with it. Because of their influence, the growing Latinx population in the U.S., and the heightened xenophobia in the current political climate, it is now more important than ever to explore how the Latinx immigrant experience is portrayed by the lyrics of LTDN. An analysis of their music can improve the lives of millions of Latinx immigrants by dignifying them, giving them a sense of belonging, and most importantly, encouraging our political and cultural leaders to create a more just and equitable society.

### **Literature Review: Music Para La Raza**

Most of the current literature agrees that LTDN is popular with the Latinx immigrant population because of their explicit effort to tell Latinx stories. This natural authenticity and connection with their listener make their music an ethnographical record of their lived experiences, values, and ever-changing identities. Their music is a record of what immigrants see themselves as and of the things that they have always wanted to say but have never been able to say due to fear and a lack of political influence.

### **Historical Context**

To appreciate the significance of LTDN's music on the topic of immigration, an understanding of immigration in the United States must first be established. The U.S. is commonly referred to as the nation of immigrants. Since its conception, it has seen an influx of individuals from numerous nations. Although immigrants come in from all parts of the world, new waves have primarily been from Latin American countries south of the border. Much of the literature highlights the connection between immigration and the American economy, saying

the primary cause of immigration has been a demand for labor caused by wars and an increase in international trade (Calvillo, 2016). We cannot understand immigration or LTDN's lyrics without first taking into consideration the historical context of the American economy, like the Bracero Program<sup>1</sup> in the 50s and international policies like NAFTA (Anzaldúa, 2012; Bigalondo, 2014; Calvillo, 2016; Eive, 2000; Saldívar, 1999).

Close to four million Mexicans came to fill the labor demand in agriculture caused by World War II under the Bracero Program; however, most of these immigrants were later deported under the Operation Wet Back when their labor was no longer needed (Calvillo, 2016). Although there has been a constant movement of people between the Mexican-American borders, the Bracero Program marks the first U.S. sponsored campaign to bring cheap labor into the U.S. Although the program has ended, its cultural effects are still present, one of them being the stereotype that any Latinx immigrant who looks "Mexican" is undocumented, uneducated, dirty, and willing to work for low pay (Golash-Boza, 2006). From the start, LTDN's music emphasizes the demand that Latinx immigrants have filled throughout labor shortages in America. They also point out how the average American citizen has benefited from and continues to benefit from Latinx labor.

### **Corridos and Their Role in Society**

What makes the U.S. a *mélange* of cultures and ethnic diversity is its immigrants. They come with their traditions, their language, and most importantly their music. Music is a form of communication and art that can offer a window into the lives of its community. Mexican immigrants are no exception, and

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<sup>1</sup> The bracero program was enacted in 1942 and operated for almost 20 years (Calvillo, 2016).

one of the most popular forms of music they have brought to the U.S. is *corridos*—a narrative style ballad that is popular in Northern Mexico and Southern U.S. (Sauceda, 2014). According to Jonathan Saucedo (2014), corridos have been around for five hundred years and usually tell a story of an event, a person, or historical occurrence. Their themes vary with time and the historical context in which they are being composed. Apart from being a form of entertainment, corridos have served many societal functions such as communicating social norms, spreading news, and conserving cultural identity for Mexicans and their descendants (Addison, 2007).

Just as story-telling is used to strengthen the social fabric in other cultures, corridos are used among the Latinx community for the same purpose. According to Eive (2000), corridos have been the primary vehicle for the voice of the masses for a very long time. Eive and many other scholars place corridos as the songs of the working class (Saldívar, 1999; Addison, 2007; Saucedo, 2014; Tatar, 2004). Taking into consideration that corridos are most popular among the immigrating working class and that the lyrics promote traditionalistic norms and values, it comes as no surprise that immigrants would take this music with them to the U.S.

### Corridos and Immigration

The genre of corridos has changed as society changes along with it. As Mexicans started immigrating to the U.S. at higher rates in the 1950s and 60s, corridos started referring to their experiences (Bigalondo, 2014; Calvillo, 2016). Jorge Hernández, the lead singer and accordion player for Los Tigres, explains to Josh Kun in an interview that the goal of the band has always been to tell the real stories of their audience through their corridos (2007). Analysis of LTDN's lyrics

by other scholars has found various patterns in LTDN's interpretation of the immigrant experience. The feelings that immigrants had all overlapped, regardless of time and song. Some of these emotions were depression, isolation, stress, impotence, hope, and humor (Bigalondo, 2014; Eive, 2000). Apart from describing the immigrant's feelings, the songs also recount the immigrant experience as a painful and challenging journey from start to finish (Bigalondo, 2014; Calvillo, 2016; Saldívar, 1999).

One of the flagship corridos that well represents all of these emotions is *La Jaula de Oro*.<sup>2</sup> This song perfectly embodies the complicated and paradoxical relationship that Latinx immigrants have with the U.S. (Bigalondo, 2014; Saldívar, 1999). The corrido is the story of an immigrant who compares himself to a prisoner in a golden cage. He is grateful for the opportunities that America has given him, yet at the same time feels trapped. Because he is undocumented, he spends all of his days in his house for fear of being deported. This corrido brings up the feeling of ambivalence towards the U.S. that many immigrants have. They are happy for the economic progress they have made but saddened by the price they paid for it: their family back home, their youth, their social life, and the loss of their children's culture.

### Critique of the Status Quo and Establishment of a Pan-American Identity<sup>3</sup>

Many of the scholars who have worked with the Latinx immigrant topic have used a critical perspective to critique societal problems that affect Latinx immigrants. A critical perspective or critical theory is a lens used by sociologists to iden-

<sup>2</sup> English translation: The golden/gilded cage

<sup>3</sup> Pan-American refers to the collective American continents. This identity includes all nationalities from the American continents into a single one, regardless of race, color, language, religion, etc.



tify and critique social problems through reflection.

Among the social issues they found are the exploitation of Latinx immigrants in the American economy, the politics that have criminalized immigration, and the infamous border (Bigalondo, 2014; Calvillo, 2016; Addison, 2007; Tatar, 2004). LTDN take on a critical perspective themselves in their music and invite the public to see society through the eyes of an immigrant. Their lyrics point out issues that many of us easily overlook and challenge the way we think about borders, derogatory words, colonialism, and power (Tatar, 2004).

Borders and territories are social contracts, and the denormalization of the border state is a common motif in LTDN's music. A scholar who is instrumental in the establishment of Latinx studies is Gloria E. Anzaldúa, whose ideas are echoed throughout the literature and LTDN's music. Anzaldúa (2012) established the border theory, which is the idea that an in-betweenness or a liminal space exists on border regions and births new blood, culture, and art. This border culture gives rise to its own language (Spanglish, or the common code-switching and code-meshing native to border towns), music, idols, folkways, and other cultural forms that are not from one nation or the other, but a combination of both. Los Tigres Del Norte, rising to fame in San José, California, are a product of this *mestizaje* that Anzaldúa discusses in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (2012). LTDN are the perfect embodiment of Anzaldúa's border theory because their music deviates from popular ideas and presents a new and authentically Latinx paradigm. A major component of the Latinx paradigm is the introduction of their Pan-American

## Through the establishment of the Pan-American identity, LTDN's music gives the immigrant a sense of belonging in a society that still often rejects them.

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identity—a cultural identity that merges all Latinx nation-

alities into one. Furthermore, through the establishment of the Pan-American identity, LTDN's music gives the immigrant a sense of belonging in a society that still often rejects them (Bigalondo, 2014; Eive, 2000; Kun & Hernández, 2007; Tatar, 2004).

### Previous Research on Los Tigres Del Norte

Existing literature on this topic uses content analysis as its primary method of data collection. This is because almost all of these studies analyze the lyrics of LTDN. Eive (2000) and Calvillo (2016) also used content analysis and a sample composed of other artists. Alternatively, Kun (2007) conducted an in-depth interview with Jorge Hernández (lead singer, accordion player, and director of LTDN) to better understand the musical group. According to the literature, Latinx immigrants are portrayed in LTDN's music as sincere, hard workers, and most importantly as people who experience pain, love, and ambitions for a better life. Something that the literature is lacking is quantitative research and in-depth interviews or focus groups with LTDN's audience. This quantitative research would be necessary to confirm that their findings are generalizable across multiple populations and regions. Interviews and focus groups might also be useful to explore the ways in which individual members of their audience feel about LTDN's music. In this study, I will analyze a total of thirty-two individual songs from LTDN, which goes beyond the previous limit of six in other studies. In doing so, I recognize emerging themes of songs that might not have been so popular or make

explicit references to immigration.

Los Tigres have transformed themselves into a mirror through which many Latinx immigrants can reflect on their experiences. Their music plays a vital role in the conservation of culture by analyzing the problems and experiences of the community and then singing about them. This process of listening, analyzing, composing, and singing have made the group into ethnographical researchers who sing their work instead of publishing it in academia. In other words, as critical storytellers of the Latinx immigrant, LTDN are simultaneously public educators. I argue that their unique and deep understanding of Pan-American sensibilities, as immigrants and outsiders, can do three things for society. First, they have the potential to destigmatize the lives of millions of immigrants within the U.S. Second, their music can give Latinx immigrants and other immigrant groups a sense of belonging in a country that has been historically discriminatory and abusive. Lastly and most importantly, the power of their music inspires activism and helps government officials make more informed decisions about immigration, creating a more just and equitable society in which people of any nationality or race are given respect and dignity.

### Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the way that the Latinx immigrant experience is portrayed by LTDN's music. Content analysis is an appropriate

method of research for this project because it is a non-obstructive qualitative approach. This means that the researcher does not interfere with generating the data because the data already exists outside of the research. Content analysis is time-efficient and inexpensive. However, it can only be used to answer exploratory and descriptive research questions. Additionally, content analysis requires a process of triangulation to offer the re-

search greater validity, since a single study cannot completely address all the different layers within a topic (Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Although there are hundreds of other songs and artists within the same genre as LTDN, I chose to focus on LTDN's music for several reasons. The members of LTDN, four brothers and a cousin, are all immigrants who migrated at a young age to San José, California from their hometown of Sinaloa, Mexico. This gives them first-hand experi-

ence with immigration. When they sing the stories of their people, they are also singing about themselves. Having first-hand experiences with immigration gives LTDN a personal connection to the topic. Secondly, out of all of the norteño bands that have come from the U.S. and Mexico, LTDN are by far the most politically outspoken. They are often seen performing in rallies, making donations, and advocating for civic responsibilities like voting. LTDN's political engagement makes them more than storytellers for their people; their corridos and political efforts give the immigrant community a

**This process of listening, analyzing, composing, and singing have made the group into ethnographical researchers who sing their work instead of publishing it in academia. In other words, as critical storytellers of the Latinx immigrant, LTDN are simultaneously public educators.**



real and powerful voice. Lastly, LTDN have been in the music industry for over fifty years and are well respected. Unlike many of the newer bands or singers talking about immigration, LTDN already have a high reputation with the public. These three reasons make them an ideal musical group to study.

As mentioned previously, the data for this study is sampled from a number of LTDN albums and focuses on songs that refer to immigration. My sample included songs quoted in the current literature and online blogs. I also listened to the LTDN discography and compiled a playlist of the songs that mentioned immigrants. Last, I read through all of their song titles in all of the albums that are available on Spotify and included the songs whose titles referred to immigrants.

After listening to and reading through the albums, I ended up with a sample size of thirty-two songs, all of which were in one way or another associated with the immigrant topic. The sample includes the following songs: *La Jaula De Oro* (1973), *El Chicano* (1974), *El Ausente* (1976), *Vivan Los Mojados* (1977), *El Gringo y El Mexicano* (1980), *Me Voy de Estas Tierras* (1982), *Frontera Internacional* (1983), *La Tumba Del Mojado* (1984), *Pedro y Pablo* (1984), *El Otro México* (1986), *Los Hijos de Hernández* (1986), *América* (1986), *Tres Veces Mojado* (1988), *Sin Fronteras* (1989), *El Tren* (1994), *El Mojado Acaudalado* (1997), *Mis Dos Patrias* (1998), *Ni Aquí Ni Allá* (1998), *Por Ser Sinaloense* (1999), *Adiós Amigo* (1999), *Al Sur Del Bravo* (2000), *De Paisano a Paisano* (2000), *Campesino Soy* (2001), *Somos Mas Americanos* (2001), *El Centroamericano* (2001), *José Pérez León* (2004), *El Santo de los Mojados* (2004), *El Muro* (2007), *América Central* (2007), *Rumbo al Sur* (2008), *El Emigrante* (2009), and *El Gallo Del Mojado* (2014).

I became familiar with the songs by consistently listening to them before

I started any analysis. After becoming familiar with the songs, I made notes of each song on how it portrayed the immigrant experience by using an open-coding approach. I noted how each song depicted feelings, ideas, and a sense of identity regarding immigration. From these notes, three major themes emerged. Ultimately, the collection of songs worked together to create a tapestry of the immigrant experience according to LTDN.

### Analysis

The three major themes established in the music of LTDN are as follows: (1) LTDN's music portrays the Latinx immigrant experience as unjust and painful; (2) LTDN's music portrays the Latinx immigrant experience as stressful; (3) LTDN's music portrays the Latinx immigrant identity as a Pan-American identity. In the following section, I discuss these themes in greater detail and explore their sociological significance.

### Pain and Injustice

The most prevalent theme regarding immigration in LTDN's music is that the Latinx immigrant experience is painful and unjust. Latinx immigrants in America suffer because they are separated from the lives they lived in their native country, are exploited in the U.S., and experience oppressive societal pressures. This is most apparent in reoccurring lyrics about longing for what was left behind and the painful experience of being separated from family, partners, friends, land, and culture. In the song *La Jaula de Oro* (*The Golden Cage*), the narrator describes himself as a prisoner of his house and his undocumented status: "*De que me sirve el dinero, Si estoy como prisionero, Dentro de esta gran nación, Cuando me acuerdo hasta lloro, Aunque la jaula sea de oro, No deja de ser prisión.*"<sup>4</sup> Even though he

<sup>4</sup> English translation: What's money good for, If I live like a prisoner, in this great nation, When I'm reminded of this, I

is thankful for the opportunities that the U.S has afforded him, he compares the country to a golden cage that has given him riches, but is simultaneously taking away his liberty.

This motif of imprisonment is repeated in other songs like *El Emigrante* (*The Immigrant*), in which the narrator describes himself as a prisoner who suffers in separation from his loved ones:

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**LTDN point out this paradox that one of the most powerful nations in the world, priding itself on freedom and justice, might have created a society where its people have neither.**  
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the home-country. The painful experience of immigrants in these songs subsequently communicates values that might be important to listeners. When analyzing the lyrics of *Pedro Y Pablo*, *El Ausente*, and *El Tren*, we can understand that Latinpeople value connection with loved

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cry, although this cage is made of gold, It's still a prison.

<sup>5</sup> English translation: I am an immigrant who suffers, because I am so far away from my parents and my homeland.

ones<sup>6</sup> and their homeland, while separation from both causes pain.

LTDN music also tells us how immigrants are often abused and exploited in the U.S. because of their undocumented status. The song *El Gringo Y El Mexicano* (*The Gringo and the Mexican*) tells the story of a couple who went to work for an American in McAllen, Texas. The American takes advantage of their vulnerable social status by raping the woman. Under threat of deportation, the Mexican woman has no other choice but to give in to her employer's demands. She tells her husband "*Si no le daba mi cuerpo, la inmigración nos echaba.*"<sup>7</sup> Many of these abuses are often times unreported by the immigrant population because they fear deportation. The American political system and demand for labor has created a vulnerable population of people who are not protected by the law and whose humanity is under constant threat. LTDN point out this paradox that one of the most powerful nations in the world, priding itself on freedom and justice, might have created a society where its people have neither.

Another song that explores how undocumented immigrants might be exploited is *De Paisano a Paisano* (*From a Friend to a Friend*). The song opens with: "*Nos han echo la guerra patrullando fronteras,*"<sup>8</sup> in which the immigrant is vulnerable to abuse by a militant border patrol and ranchers. The declaration of war on the border and xenophobic comments by the past presidential administration have dehumanized immigrants and opened the door to abuse. The corrido also mentions the economic abuse that immigrants must endure, such as not being paid for work. The employer gets away with this by threatening deportation, which would

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<sup>6</sup> Commonly referred to as familismo, familismo is the shared communal value of family in the Latinx culture.

<sup>7</sup> English translation: If I did not give him my body, border patrol would have deported us.

<sup>8</sup> English translation: They have declared war on us, patrolling the border.



leave the undocumented immigrant in an even more vulnerable position than before. Their undocumented status prevents them from going to the police for help, because, if they did, they would be making themselves targets for deportation. The immigrants are cornered into a position of inhumanity that makes them easy targets for economic, psychological, and sexual abuse.

According to LTDN, American society and its institutions cause explicit suffering in Latinx immigrants. In the song *Frontera Internacional* (*International Border*), the narrator blames the economy and the U.S.'s immigration policies for his brother's death because global capitalism pushed his brother to make the journey across the border. However, strategically placed border walls are what forced him to take a dangerous route through the desert that ultimately killed him. The temptation for a better life is so strong that immigrants are willing to risk it all for the opportunity that the American economy could afford them. Los Tigres propose that the only way that business owners and landowners will increase profits is through exploitation of immigrants. They point out the paradoxical relationship immigrants have with capitalism—a relationship that promises both economic progress and exploitation. In other songs like *Ni Aquí Ni Allá* (*Neither Here nor There*) and *El Otro México* (*The Other Mexico*), the Tigres take on a critical perspective to analyze the role that social realities such as classism, government, economics, and social norms have on Latinx immigrant suffering. For example, economic exploitation from employers, unequal protection by law, discriminatory housing, increased militarization at the border, and their general social status within the U.S. as undocumented immigrants all contribute to troubling social circumstances.

## A Life of Stress

The second theme that I found in the lyrics of LTDN was that the immigrant experience is stressful. They experience stress from the moment they decide to immigrate and throughout their journey into the U.S. The song *Tres Veces Mojado* (*Three Times a Wetback*) tells the story of how difficult it is to cross three borders—those of Guatemala, Mexico, and the U.S. The character in the song says he remembers every single kilometer he traveled: “*Atravesarlo sin papeles es muy duro, Los cinco mil kilómetros que recorrí.*”<sup>9</sup> Even though he spoke the same language and had the same phenotypes as the people in Guatemala and Mexico, he was discriminated against and labeled as an *extranjero*.<sup>10</sup> Once he got through Mexico, the immigrant tells us how strategically placed border fences forced him to walk through the desert in Arizona—a very dangerous route. The story then tells us about the difficulties and dangers of the journey, which lead the immigrant near death in the process. The absence of details in how he almost died is purposeful here. The listener must imagine the many dangers that someone can face in a desert. Through this ambiguity, a listener is left to think that the immigrant could have been dying of dehydration, a snake bite, an injury, abuse by the coyote,<sup>11</sup> or any other danger someone might encounter in the desert. The absence of specificity guides the listener into a state of reflection, encouraging empathy for the immigrant experience. In this song and many others, LTDN show us how societal factors like policy and transportation make an immigrant's journey traumatic. Their musical rendition allows the audience to easily adopt a sociological imagination and see how larger social contexts affect

<sup>9</sup> English translation: Without papers it is very hard to go through the five thousand kilometers I traveled through.

<sup>10</sup> English translation: Foreigner

<sup>11</sup> Name given to the human smuggler that guide immigrants across the border.

an individual's life.

The stress does not end when the immigrant makes it to the U.S. In fact, once immigrants arrive to the new country, they experience stress in many new ways. For example, an undocumented status prevents them from obtaining legal work, pushing them to find labor in the underground market—usually doing physically risky and intensive jobs. In the song *De Paisano a Paisano*, LTDN tells us the American economy depends on Latinx labor in fields such as agriculture, construction, cleaning, and others. These jobs often cause stress on the immigrant's mental health and body because of how physically demanding they are. Some songs also mention the stress that comes from manual labor that immigrants have to do in their daily lives.

In *Por Ser Sinaloense* (*For Being Sinaloense*), the protagonist is an immigrant who says, “*Yo trabajé como burro*,”<sup>12</sup> comparing himself to a donkey.<sup>13</sup> Each farm, especially lower-class isolated farms, will usually depend on a donkey as a means of transportation and as a “tractor” that can plow the soil or move wagons. Considering that donkeys are relatively cheap to acquire, in comparison to a tractor, and have incredible stamina, it comes as no surprise that the immigrant would compare himself to one. Even though the donkey is extremely important in the economic success of a farmer, it does not get the recognition or prestige that other animals do, such as a horse. The idea that Latinx immigrants are forced to work like animals for their money is repeated in many of the songs. The harsh working conditions, the instability of these jobs, and the uncertainty of receiving their next paycheck make an immigrant's life in the U.S. susceptible to

<sup>12</sup> English translation: I worked like a donkey.

<sup>13</sup> In many Latinx countries, donkeys and mules symbolize hard work and sacrifice. To “work like a donkey” is a common Latinx euphemism comparable to the English idiom “break one's back.”

prolonged and intense stress.

Another cause of stress is that they have to be constantly hiding their identity from people. Their immigratory status cannot be uncovered because deportation can make them lose the money spent on the trip into the U.S. and everything they have worked for. In the song *El Centroamericano* (*The Central American*), the Tigres tell the story of an immigrant who has to constantly deny his origin both in the U.S. and then in Mexico after he is deported: “*Tenemos que fingir, Que no somos de allá*.”<sup>14</sup> In other songs like *Vivan Los Mojados* (*Long Live the Wetbacks*), LTDN tell us that immigrants experience a lot of pressure from being constantly chased by the law. The Tigres pay special attention to the way that undocumented immigration has been criminalized over the years. This criminality and many other societal factors cause undue stress that LTDN associate with the immigrant experience.

## A Pan-American Identity

The last reoccurring theme that I will explore in my analysis involves the Latinx immigrant's identity as Pan-American.<sup>15</sup> This is done through various contexts, the major ones being political history, cultural similarities, and an appeal to higher morality. The historical relationship between Latin America and the U.S., and especially Mexico and the U.S., remains complex and often deemed unimportant. LTDN remind us in many of their songs of how the U.S. acquired Mexican land. In the song *Somos Más Americanos* (*We Are More American*), LTDN tell us the story of an immigrant who is told to go back to his land. To which he responds: “*Yo no crucé la frontera, la frontera me cruzó*.”<sup>16</sup> This comment re-

<sup>14</sup> English translation: We have to pretend we are not from over there [Central America].

<sup>15</sup> *Pan* is a prefix that means “all.” It is used in this context to include all American nations and ethnicities into a single one.

<sup>16</sup> English translation: I did not cross the border the border



minds the listener of important history and the brutal way that the U.S. acquired the land that now makes up eight of its states. Through their music, LTDN try to set the record straight by telling their audience unadulterated U.S. history and not the misleading history that is told in many public schools. This clarification of U.S. history is something that Gloria Anzaldúa does in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*:

With the victory of the U.S. forces over the Mexican in the U.S.-Mexican War, *los norteamericanos* pushed the Texas border down 100 miles, from *el río Nueces to el río Grande*. South Texas ceased to be part of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. Separated from Mexico, the Native Mexican-Texan no longer looked toward Mexico as home; the Southwest became our homeland once more. The border fence that divides the Mexican people was born on February 2, 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. It left 100,000 Mexican citizens on this side, annexed by conquest along with the land. The land established by the treaty as belonging to Mexicans was soon swindled away from its owners. The treaty was never honored and restitution, to this day, had never been made. (2012, p. 29)

Anzaldúa is able to say in this paragraph what Los Tigres are trying to say through the immigrant in such lyrics as “*Yo no crucé la frontera, la frontera me cruzó.*” Both of them educate their audience and assert ancestral claims to the land. They both say that the natives and their mestizo offspring are the rightful owners of the land. The establishment of this Pan-American identity is closely associated with the idea of mestizaje.<sup>17</sup> Unlike

crossed me.

<sup>17</sup> Mestizaje/mestizo is the word used to describe an

American culture where there was a clear distinction between races, the Spanish intermixed with the Native population, creating what they called *mestizos* (Tatar, 2004). Therefore, the Pan-American identity is supported by historical facts and the intermixing of all Europeans and Natives, creating a new and singular Pan-American identity. When LTDN quote history in their songs, they are setting the story straight, as well as encouraging all Latinx people to see themselves as part of a Pan-American identity who have shared experiences and history. The lyrics of LTDN make the Latinx immigrant feel that they belong to a community in a country that often tells them “to go back to their land.”

The Pan-American identity is also supported by cultural similarities in the Tigre’s music. In the song *America*, LTDN tell us, “*Los del norte dicen que soy latino, no me quieren decir Americano.*”<sup>18</sup> This song is making the argument that all people born in the American continent are “Americans.” They are, of course, aware that the word *Americans* is associated with the U.S., but it is this exact wordplay that establishes the Pan-American identity. Their playful ignorance calls into questions the status quo and what we associate with the word *American*. This song is a call to action and forces the listener to ask himself what it means to be American. In other songs like *El Otro México* and *Mis Dos Patrias*, the Pan-American identity is also supported with cultural similarities and key words like referring to all Latinx people as *hermanos* or brothers. They establish common ground between all Latinx countries like the skin color, the language, and the mestizaje tradition that unite them into one American identity.

One of the things that help LTDN

individual of European and Indigenous descent.

<sup>18</sup> English translation: The people from the north say I am latino, they do not want to call me American.

promote the Pan-American identity is their community's shared experiences. Unfortunately, these shared experiences are not always positive. Golash-Boza (2006) looks at the idea of cultural similarities and establishes a different perspective. She analyzes the effect that discrimination has on a Latinx self-identity within the U.S. In her essay, she argues that the word *American* has an implicit whiteness attached to it, which is why many minority groups might self-identify with a hyphenated American label, such as Mexican-American or African-American. She also finds that Latinx individuals who have experienced some sort of discrimination in the U.S. are less likely to identify themselves as "American" and more likely to identify as a "hyphenated American" or use their nationality in substitution for racial identification. Both the subtle and explicit discrimination of Latinx people show them that they are not equal and therefore un-American. Similar to LTDN, Golash-Boza (2006) explores how a new Pan-American identity has been created by shared cultural experiences and how "both political and cultural leaders encourage Hispanics to see themselves as part of a larger political and cultural community, composed of immigrants from all countries in Latin America" (p. 52).

The final way in which the Pan-American identity is supported in LTDN music is through higher morality. For example, in the lyrics "*Arriba no está dividido como el suelo Que la maldad de algunos hombres dividio*"<sup>19</sup> from the song *Sin Fronteras* (*Without Borders*), the group promotes the Pan-American identity by making the case that morality is on their side. They say that borders and the bureaucratic process that made them are not inherently natural. Once again, they offer the listener a critical analysis of govern-

ment and what it is and is not allowed to do. LTDN corridos often make references to God to push the idea that all Latinx immigrants come from the same spiritual father, supporting the singular American identity. This Pan-American ideology does not only encompass identity but is also used as a way to argue against the limitation of ideas, both in the individual's mind and in society. Their departure from mainstream culture is the pinnacle of Anzaldúa's border theory because LTDN advocate for a hybrid identity that does not choose a side but encompasses all of them. The Pan-American identity does not encourage anarchism or the destruction of the government. Instead, it inspires listeners to be more tolerant of each other in an attempt to humanize Latinx immigrants and incorporate them into mainstream American culture.

### Future Research

It is important to note that there are certain limitations to this study. The first limitation is that I only analyzed LTDN music, when, in reality, there are hundreds of other artists who sing about the topic. Further, this study would benefit from methodological triangulation utilizing in-depth interviews or a survey. Using mixed methods would strengthen the results by exploring how listeners interpret the music of LTDN and how the music of LTDN relates to their experiences. Moreover, this topic should be further researched in the future by other academic fields such as anthropology, psychology, and culture scholars. Future studies should consider additional ways for analyzing lyrical data, including collaborative sense-making of the music between researchers and participants. Doing so has the potential to advance our understanding of LTDN's music and the power music has on trauma, healing, and identity formation.

<sup>19</sup> English translation: The heavens are not divided like the ground; it is the evil man who has divided it.



## Conclusion

The influx of Latinx immigrants into the United States has caused a major shift in U.S. demographics that will have major impacts on the political system, economy, and life as we know it. This is why it is important for U.S. leaders of business, government, and academia, as well as the general American public, to start familiarizing themselves with the Latinx community by studying its values, norms, and unique cultural expressions. The goal of this study was to explore the way in which Los Tigres Del Norte's music depicted the Latinx immigrant experience. To do this, I analyzed thirty-two individual songs from different albums of LTDN that made explicit or implicit connections to the immigrant topic. I was able to find three popular themes on what being a Latinx immigrant is like according to the sample. The three themes were: (1) the depiction of the Latinx Immigrant experience as unjust and painful; (2) the immigrant experience as stressful; (3) and the portrayal of a Latinx immigrant identity as Pan-American.

The immigrant experience is stressful and continues to terrorize immigrants even after they have made it into the U.S. The fear of being deported because of their undocumented status is anxiety-inducing. This anxiety is exploited by individuals who use immigrants for free labor or for much more heinous things in other unfortunate cases. Victimization, cultural similarities, and a shared history of colonization also make the Pan-American Identity integral to Latinx immigrants. Ultimately, the Latinx immigrant experience is a complex one that makes it almost impossible to encompass in only a number of pages. Nonetheless, I hope to have effectively captured the major patterns in the Latinx immigrant experience as depicted by Los Tigres Del Norte, a band that has given justice to the stories of its people.

# VIVA LA RAZA

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# NICARAGUA AND A NEW GLOBAL ORDER: HOW *NICARAGUA* V. *UNITED STATES* SHIFTED INTERNATIONAL LAW

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This paper is a case study concerning the International Court of Justice case *Nicaragua v. United States*, detailing what precedents and clarifications the case established for the ever-dynamic field of international law. In 1984, after the United States financially supported military and paramilitary groups in Nicaragua to overthrow the Nicaraguan FSLN government (which was installed by the United States in the early 1970s), the Nicaraguan government filed an appeal with the International Court of Justice. Overall, *Nicaragua v. United States* advanced the implementation of international law by effectively clarifying the implications and accountability of international law and establishing a universal definition of collective self-defense.



THE International Court of Justice (ICJ, or the court) has significantly contributed to the development of international law (IL) since its conception in 1945. This paper will review changes made to the ICJ through the case study of *Nicaragua v. United States*. The analysis of the case, opened in 1984, reveals important innovations in international law regarding the court's jurisdiction over states who deny said jurisdiction, states'

**If the United States supports a violent political group abroad, can they be sure that the funds they supply will not be used to enact violence?**

accountability for the military and paramilitary groups they financially support abroad, and the question of self-defense when that force is seemingly unsolicited. The United States violated international law by threatening Nicaragua's sovereignty through its financial support of military and paramilitary contra groups in the country. Nicaragua brought the U.S. to court, arguing the United States' intent of intervention was to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. The U.S. proceeded to make things difficult— withdrawing compulsory consent, misusing the concept of collective self-defense, denying accusations, then failing to accept the reparations it owed Nicaragua following Nicaragua's victory in the ICJ. This paper will explore the ways in which the United States' violation of international law in Nicaragua led to dra-

matic changes in the ICJ.

The case first reveals the International Court of Justice's jurisdiction when not all parties consent to a hearing. The ICJ is—for the most part—unable to act as a mediator without the consent of jurisdiction by both parties. However, in this particular case, the United States withdrew consent after the case's preliminary stage when the ICJ found that it did in fact have jurisdiction over the matter. Thus, by the merits stage of the case, the United States was out. This pullout challenged whether the initial compulsory consent of the United States granted the ICJ sufficient jurisdiction or if consent must be continual throughout court proceedings.

The case's next issue regards the accountability tied to funding the military and paramilitary activities in a foreign state. If the United States supports a violent political group abroad, can they be sure that the funds they supply will not be used to enact violence? If it cannot be proven that the United States knew violence would occur due to their monetary contributions, their sequential guilt cannot be determined. While the use of force in self-defense is legal under international law, the use of unsolicited force without authorization from the UN Security Council (UNSC) is not. The issue of military and paramilitary funding is essentially a question of plausible deniability. However, the United States aimed to justify their use of force in Nicaragua through El Salvador's collective self-defense. The argument was thin from the get-go, and without El Salvador's corroboration, the claim became a non-starter.

Although the case itself did not formulate until 1984, the brunt of the conflict began five years earlier. In the summer of 1979, The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, or FSLN, government

rose to power in Nicaragua. In the wake of the FSLN's succession, supporters of the former president, Anastasion Somoza, and former National Guard members formed an opposition to the new government. Initially, the United States acted in support of the FSLN. However, upon the U.S.' discovery that the Nicaraguan government provided logistical support to El Salvadoran guerrillas by transporting arms and advisors from the U.S.S.R. and Cuba, the U.S. began undertaking armed activities against the FSLN due to the perceived threat of communism (U.S. State Department, 1985).

The U.S.' unsolicited activities against the official Nicaraguan government included the support of the Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense, or FDN, and the support of the Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática, or ARDE, with both monetary funds and U.S. military intelligence support. These two groups worked along the Honduran and Costa Rican borders of Nicaragua, respectively, coalescing against the current FSLN government. U.S. support of these contras, or Nicaraguan organized oppositions, was kept hidden; the U.S. did not acknowledge its involvement until 1983 (Rostow, 1986). Through the U.S.' covert and subsequently violent oppositions towards the FSLN, utilizing the FDN and ARDE contras, Nicaragua alleged to the ICJ that the U.S. acted with the intent to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, infringing on numerous levels on the state's sovereignty. This is illegal under international law. In addition to U.S. support of the contras, Nicaragua claimed the U.S. mined multiple Nicaraguan ports while sabotaging other harbors, oil installations, and a naval base

through various violent actions, all in the name of collective self-defense (Rostow, 1986). The U.S. mining of Nicaraguan ports was particularly contentious due to the U.S. government's lack of official warning before or after the placing of the mines (*Nicaragua v. United States*, 1986).

This example of direct violence against Nicaragua is illegal under the UN Charter, which explicitly forbids the use or threat of force by states against other states' territorial integrity or political independence, except when in self-defense or with UNSC authorization (United Nations, 1983). On April 9, 1984, Nicaragua applied for proceedings against the U.S., requesting the implementation of provisional measures for the U.S. to cease and refrain from any further violent action, and for the U.S. to reopen Nicaraguan ports (*Nicaragua v. U.S.*, 1984). The FSLN wanted to rule the country it had fought for, and they wanted to engage in trade without interference from the United States.

The U.S. remained insouciant to Nicaragua's claims, refusing to appear before the ICJ during the merits stage while arguing steadily against the ICJ's claim of jurisdiction in the face of its non-consent. However, the United States had granted compulsory jurisdiction to the ICJ in 1946, making its withdrawal of consent significant regarding the history of jurisdiction within the ICJ (U.S. State Department, 1985). The U.S. argued that, despite giving compulsory jurisdiction in 1946, which allowed the ICJ automatic jurisdiction whenever a case opened against the U.S., the U.S. should be entitled to revoke that consent whenever it suited its interests. The U.S. also argued that because Nicaragua did not give the

**The issue of military and paramilitary funding is essentially a question of plausible deniability.**



ICJ compulsory jurisdiction, as the U.S. did in 1946, entertaining this case misrepresented the basic principle of reciprocity. The U.S.' refusal to engage in a trial raises the question of court jurisdiction when not all parties accept ICJ intervention. Yet, the ICJ responded affirmatively in its decision to pursue the case without the U.S (U.S. State Department, 1985). By pursuing the case with only U.S. compulsory jurisdiction, the ICJ began sowing the seeds for a new facet of justice. Convinced by Nicaragua's claims against the U.S., the ICJ determined that with compulsory consent in the bag, withdrawal of consent was not enough to cease intervention in a case.

The U.S. also insisted that its actions were grounded in the inherent right of collective self-defense guaranteed in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and the Rio Treaty, citing Nicaragua's involvement with guerrilla warfare in El Salvador for justification. According to Article 51, individual or collective self-defense is allowed if an armed attack occurs against a UNSC member (Rostow, 1986). The U.S. claimed that every action taken in light of this case was "in defense of the vital national security interests of the United States and in support of the peace and security of the hemisphere" (U.S. State Department, 1985).

By breaking down the case, the United States' violations of international law become clear. Per Nicaragua's arguments, the ICJ held that the U.S. violated international law by 1) intervening in another state's affairs when the U.S.

financially and administratively supported contra activities against the FSLN, 2) when it used force against Nicaragua when it engaged in direct attacks in 1983 and 1984, 3) when the U.S. violated Nicaragua's sovereignty through its use of intimidating aircraft activity, and 4) when the U.S. failed to uphold Nicaragua's sovereignty by mining Nicaraguan ports in Nicaragua's internal and territorial waters.

The ICJ decided that the U.S. was unable to rely on collective self-defense as its justification of attacks on Nicaragua

**The U.S. did not fulfill the criteria for collective self-defense: armed attack, necessity, and proportionality.**

due to the inequality of the threats imposed by Nicaragua to the U.S. and El Salvador compared to the U.S.' violent response. Plus, Nicaraguan interference and arms supply in El Salvador occurred primarily in 1981 and 1982, not when the U.S. admitted to attacking Nicaragua in 1983 (Lewis, 1986). This indicates that the U.S. did not fulfill the criteria for collective

self-defense: armed attack, necessity, and proportionality (Green, 2017). Nicaragua selling arms to support insurrectionists in El Salvador while working with Communists from Cuba was not proportional to the U.S. financially supporting violent groups and directly committing violent acts with the intent of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government. On top of this, Nicaragua denies its intervention in El Salvador altogether anyway (Rostow, 1986). However, despite U.S. funding and support of military and paramilitary operations through the Nicaraguan contras, which was a definite violation of international law and the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation

of 1956, the ICJ decided that the U.S. would not be held directly accountable for the contras' actions (*Nicaragua v. U.S.*, 1984). This particular decision would become known as the 'effective control' test because it rendered a paramilitary organization legally separate from its operating state. The Treaty of Friendship (1956) defined a relationship between the U.S. and Nicaragua existing with mutual amity, unrestricted commerce, and port safety. While the treaty focuses primarily on the unaffected trade between the two states, which the U.S. threatened through the mining of Nicaraguan ports, the U.S. also breached mutual amity by supporting organized government opposition groups like FDN and ARDE.

The court's response to the U.S.' hearing in 1984 did not so much provide comprehensive clarification, but narrowed the circumstances in which collective self-defense was applicable as a justification for violent retaliation or the imposition of trade restrictions. Now, the application of collective self-defense demanded that the presumed "victim" state—in this case, El Salvador—must declare itself to be the victim of an armed attack and request military aid in response (Green, 2017). El Salvador's failure to provide these declarations nullified the U.S.' claim that collective self-defense was an acceptable justification of its action against Nicaragua. This substantially weakened any argument the U.S. made for its case, including both the ICJ's jurisdiction and the accountability the U.S. should express in light of its support of the contras.

Military and paramilitary accountability and the 'effective control' test affected international law in future cases as well. One significant example is *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*, which opened in 1993 and closed with a decision in 2007. Serbia and Montene-

gro recruited, trained, armed, equipped, financed, and encouraged military and paramilitary actions in and against Bosnia and Herzegovina, employed numerous military and paramilitary organizations, and violated its charter and treaty obligations to Bosnia and Herzegovina under Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter, as well as its obligations under general and customary international law. While the ICJ did not extend a definitive ruling against the U.S. for its accountability for funding military and paramilitary organizations in 1984, the court decided in 2007 that Serbia and Montenegro were knowledgeable in its pursuit of violence through these organizations and so prosecuted the states under the assumption that, despite outward appearances, these groups were "*de facto* organs" of the Serbian and Montenegrin government. So, the actions of these military and paramilitary groups, specifically the massacres committed at Srebrenica, would be attributable to Serbia and Montenegro as if they had been organs of that state under international law ("Application of the Convention on Prevention and Punishment," 2007).

Furthermore, this case highlighted the discrepancies between the U.S.' agreements in international law and the U.S.' actions as a state. By intervening in Nicaragua's affairs, infringing on its sovereignty, and interrupting peaceful maritime commerce, the U.S. violated both international law and the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation of 1956. Subsequently, the U.S. was to provide reparations in the wake of its injury toward Nicaragua due to its breaches of both the 1956 treaty and the UN Charter (*Nicaragua v. U.S.*, 1984). This aspect of the case is significant due to the ICJ's assurance that states should be held accountable for violating international law—especially when using force in foreign states—demanding a level of consis-



tency for states' future actions. By calling for reparations from the U.S., arguably the most powerful and influential state on the planet, even after the U.S.' withdrawal of consent, the ICJ also boasted its might and increased the weight of ICJ hearings across the board. However, the ICJ's strength was short-lived. The U.S. did not ever pay Nicaragua the reparations it owed. When the ICJ acted through the United Nations Security Council to enforce U.S. compliance, the U.S. simply vetoed the action, as is its power as a permanent member of the UNSC (Tanzi, 1995).

Despite the questionable accountability assigned to the U.S. for its military and paramilitary actions in Nicaragua, the financial and military support of organized opposition, such as contras, was determined a violation of state sovereignty. A decided weakness of this case was the failure to address which circumstances, in particular, would have determined U.S. accountability. Which specific actions of the contra groups warranted reparations? The ICJ also should have detailed the extent to which necessary monetary support—"necessary," meaning the opposition groups would not have been able to function without this support—warrants blame and responsibility. However, the court's decision against Serbia and Montenegro, which builds upon the foundation of *Nicaragua v. United States*, does aid in the clarification of such accountability by demanding proof of the violating state's knowledge of the actions and violations that military and paramilitary groups commit with their support. The court's decision cemented the illegality of direct attacks on foreign states without the justification of self-defense.

In conclusion, the U.S. violated the principle of proportionality and directly threatened Nicaragua's sovereignty. The accountability of illegal military and

paramilitary activity was significantly affected through the development of the 'effective control' test, which is still in use to this day. Finally, the ICJ held that jurisdiction is still applicable in cases where compulsory consent is withdrawn after the preliminary stages of a case, an outlier in the face of customary international law. Overall, *Nicaragua v. United States* advanced the implementation of international law by effectively clarifying the implications and accountability of IL and establishing a universal definition of collective self-defense.

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# QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTHCARE THROUGH LEAN SIX SIGMA

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Implementation of Lean Six Sigma has become common practice in many levels of business, and it produces efficient and positive outcomes. Over the past two decades, many healthcare systems have been adopting adequate business strategies and implementing them into their respective healthcare facilities. While common and effective for most other industries, Lean Six Sigma has only recently taken over healthcare. Lean Six Sigma has remarkably amended the healthcare system by improving the quality of care for patients and providing healthcare facilities with several cost-effective solutions. Examples of implementing Lean Six Sigma on an entire healthcare system as well as on a departmental level are highlighted in this paper.

## Introduction

LEAN Six Sigma, from its conception, has most commonly been seen in the manufacturing industry. Within the last twenty years or so, we have seen it put into practice in other sectors. Specifically, it has been offering substantial benefits to healthcare facilities that consist mainly of healthcare providers and receivers (Aboelmaged, 2015). Healthcare systems are constructed of a complex service delivery system in order to facilitate the delivery of care to patients. Effectively executing of all the processes and easing the complexity behind them require the involvement of several stake-

holders, or anyone with an invested interest that contributes to the processing of the system (Vest & Gamm, 2009). Implementation of Lean Six Sigma in the healthcare service delivery system aims to achieve high quality data by reducing medical errors. This aids in achieving effective outcomes by increasing patient safety and generating advanced quality of care for patients and healthcare providers.

The healthcare service delivery system is constantly under immense pressure to produce positive outcomes that are efficient and effective for patients. This pressure exists because of globally

increasing financial crises, growing populations, continuously advancing technology, and amending operational

management (Stumpf, 2012). Successful outcomes achieved from the implementation of Lean Six Sigma in the health care system can clearly be seen in the areas of medicine diagnostics, laboratory sciences, clinical medicine, and administration (Vendrame Takao et al., 2017). It works to reduce and eliminate medical and administrative errors, as well as to disregard waste created during and after clinical medicine and administrative record keeping.

Lean Six Sigma is an enhancement concept introduced by Motorola engineers in the late 1980s that focuses on the management within a pre-existing or new system. Lean Six Sigma minimizes errors that occur in a process and maximizes the involvement of stakeholders (Ha et al., 2016). It originated from the theories of manufacturing industries but was eventually implemented in the healthcare service delivery system around the year 2000 as an innovative mechanism to enhance management criteria for the departments of finances, logistics, and administration (Amaratunga & Dobranowski, 2016). The aim of incorporating Lean Six Sigma into healthcare was to achieve an effective way to reduce cost, improve service delivery duration, introduce methods to receive efficient qualitative changes, and increase patient satisfaction (DiPiero, 2016). Lean Six Sigma is considered productive and effective because it joins the technological advancements, equipment, and all the individuals involved in successful functioning of a process.

## **Two Manufacturing Theories: Lean and Six Sigma**

**Overall, these amendments improve the quality of a pre-existing system by incorporating variations in every step of the process.**



The American Society for Quality (ASQ) encourages the use of Lean Six Sigma and elaborates on its ef-

fectiveness, stating,

Lean Six Sigma is a fact-based, data-driven philosophy of improvement that values defect prevention over defect detection. It drives customer satisfaction and bottom-line results by reducing variation, waste, and cycle time, while promoting the use of work standardization and flow, thereby creating a competitive advantage. It applies anywhere variation and waste exist, and every employee should be involved. (Kubiak & Benbow, 2016, as cited in ASQ, 2012)

Lean Six Sigma combines the approaches of two theories common in the manufacturing industry, “Lean” and “Six Sigma.” The Lean principles help to reduce or eliminate the waste produced in the targeted process of a system (Amaratunga & Dobranowski, 2016). The practices under Lean principles incorporate physical and behavioral changes to minimize waste production, which occurs in all steps of the process (Kovach & Borikar, 2018). Therefore, incorporating waste management techniques reduces waste production at each level of the process cycle. The Six Sigma principles focus on supporting the targeted process by measuring its effectiveness and efficiency, while improving quality for the process’s stakeholders (Stumpf, 2012). Six Sigma is an approach to minimize steps in a process in order to reduce complications and shorten the total time of the process (Glasgow et al., 2010). Paired together, these processes become Lean Six Sigma. Together, they result in minimized processing time, increased satisfaction of



customers/clients, increased efficiency and effectiveness, and improved financial outcomes through increased profits and specified budgets. Overall, these amendments improve the quality of a pre-existing system by incorporating variations in every step of the process.

As just described, Lean Six Sigma is actually the combination of two management techniques that work in tandem to reduce waste and improve quality. Based on the Toyota production line model that centers around continuous improvement, Lean is a set of principles focused on reducing waste, whether that be in the form of patient wait times or administrative functions related to patient care (Lawal et al., 2014). The methods developed by the Toyota production processes are strongly rooted in the Japanese kaizen model, which is the origin of continuous improvement. The kaizen model allows employees on all levels of a process to provide input and make incremental improvements. Implementation of Lean concepts aims to change the thinking and perspective of an organization in order to provide long-lasting improvements to a process and the organization's culture (Lawal et al., 2014). As described in the McLaughlin text (2012), the approach that Lean uses to reduce waste is based on the kaizen philosophy and uses the following steps:

1. **Specify value:** Identify activities that provide value from the customer's perspective
2. **Map and improve the value stream:** Determine the sequence of activities or the current state

of the process and the desired future state. Eliminate non-value-added steps and other waste

3. **Flow:** Enable the process to flow as smoothly and quickly as possible
4. **Pull:** Enable the customer to pull products or services
5. **Perfection:** Repeat the cycle to ensure a focus on continuous improvement (pp. 300-301)

**Successfully removing all the artificial variance, continuously reducing waste, and focusing on creating value for customers is the ultimate outcome of an effective Lean Six Sigma system.**

With Lean also comes some effective implementation tools that aid in defining and understanding processes to be corrected. A few of these that are useful in the healthcare setting include stream mapping, takt time, and standardized work. Stream mapping is used to define the process and determine where waste is occurring (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012). Takt time measures the time needed for the process based on customer demand and can

be used to synchronize flow in a process. This measurement is represented by available time divided by demand (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012). Standardized work is a way to ensure things are done efficiently and that outcomes are consistent; this could include written documentation describing the way in which every step of a process should be performed (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012).

Six Sigma is best used when the goal of a process improvement project is to improve quality and reduce the variability in outcomes (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012). Six Sigma ensures quality through an ongoing measurement of process output characteristics known as "statistical process control," which help

identify problem situations before an error occurs (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012, p. 215). This includes measuring process capability, which determines whether a process is actually capable of producing the desired output, and then benchmarking it against similar processes in other organizations. The primary function of Six Sigma is to eliminate sources of variance in processes and systems, whether it be natural variance or artificial variance (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012). Six Sigma interventions identify, eliminate, and remove those sources of artificial variance that can be changed by people within the system. Six Sigma is focused on making a process effective within a range of 99.99966 % defect-free (Niñerola et al., 2019, p. 1). Combining the methods of Lean and Six Sigma leads to lower rates of error in a production cycle, estimated in the United States to be an astonishing 3.4 defects per million operational activities (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012, p. 221). Successfully removing all the artificial variance, continuously reducing waste, and focusing on creating value for customers is the ultimate outcome of an effective Lean Six Sigma system (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012).

### DMAIC Framework

The DMAIC method (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) of Lean Six Sigma focuses on improving existing processes but can be applied to new processes as well. The DMAIC problem-solving process, and its derivatives like DMAIIC, follow a five-stage design (Vendrame Takao et al., 2017, pp. 2-3):

1. **Define:** Defining production problems within the context of healthcare is important to implementing Lean Six Sigma. Appropriate incorporation of Lean Six Sigma facilitates the ability of healthcare managers and professionals to identify a problem,

define it, and describe the objectives that need to be achieved in addressing it. Development of a process map prior to the incorporation of a Lean Six Sigma process allows for an organization to clearly understand and describe the process they are trying to correct. As explained in the McLaughlin text (2012), a process that cannot be defined or mapped cannot be understood or corrected. Effectively defining a process supports implementing changes. If the process to be improved were reducing waiting time for patients, a clear definition would provide a baseline so that further steps can be taken. For example, advancing software to automatically update health records or improving access to health insurance information could be implemented and tested for effectiveness.

2. **Measure:** The measurement step checks the effectiveness of pre-existing data gathering techniques and the processing time in each stage of the process. Measurement also aids in locating any bottlenecks, or points where the process is slowing, where actions are required. Processing data that are gathered and issued within the healthcare system are analyzed in the next step.
3. **Analyze:** Data analysis is part of every processing tool. Analysis is where the data collected in each step of the production cycle is evaluated, and elements that need to be eliminated or streamlined in order to improve the process are identified. Lean Six Sigma analyzes data that the manager collected in previous



steps of this cycle and then targets the elements that are preventing effective completion of the production cycle. This methodology ensures that all these issues are highlighted and eliminated during the implementation of Lean Six Sigma. In-depth analysis also identifies and eliminates the root cause of bottlenecks from the production cycle. It is a complex procedure and requires thorough investigation by the managers of a given organization. Tools of data analysis derived from the Six Sigma process include fishbone (Ishikawa) diagrams, check sheets, histograms, Pareto charts, flowcharts, scatter plots, and run charts (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012).

4. **Improve:** After measuring and analyzing problems that arise in the healthcare delivery system, Lean Six Sigma helps develop suitable solutions. Managing emergencies or time-sensitive issues within a system is based on priority. Process simulations can be run before permanent improvement steps are taken, which is less expensive and time-saving. Simulations create and run through hypothetical scenarios to evaluate what-if situations. This method is sometimes preferred as it does not change the real system while still evaluating the effects of implementing amendments (McLaughlin & Olson, 2012). This method of process improvement can be greatly valuable to organizations uninterested in implementing changes with no known benefits. A simulation includes prototyping the solution for the target-

ed healthcare delivery problem and the amendments required to improve it. Assessments at this stage provide evidence for the effectiveness of the solution in place.

5. **Control:** The final step aims to ensure the procedure stays on course by continually monitoring and recording each improvement following its implementation. This step of the Lean Six Sigma methodology supports the real-time implementation of proper tools and application within the system. It holds managers and the organization accountable for ensuring the targeted problem does not reappear. Lean Six Sigma encourages managers to keep continuous documentation of each step of the cycle. This documentation is usually compiled into control charts that track the effectiveness of the new process over time. The implemented change and chances of reoccurrence of the problem are subsequently dealt with. The end result of properly implementing Lean Six Sigma is an efficient system that supports the goals identified in the beginning of the process, such as providing timely treatments to the patient population by reducing the number of cancellations of appointments within the healthcare facility (ASQ, 2012).

### Lean Six Sigma in Healthcare

Lean Six Sigma principles, when used correctly, can greatly reduce waste, minimize variation in a system, and improve quality in a system. This approach to improvement applies greatly to healthcare, as it can reduce defects and medical

errors that can result in improper patient care or even death (DiPiero, 2016). John Hopkins estimates that medical errors contribute to roughly 100,000 deaths per year in the United States and cost the healthcare industry almost \$20 billion each year. The Joint Commission and many other federal agencies have tried addressing medical errors and attempt to prevent them as much as possible through

**Focusing on issues in healthcare that present the greatest time delays would offer the greatest opportunity for improvement in cost, quality, capital, and lead time.**

legislation and regulations (Rodziewicz et al., 2021, “Extent of the Challenge”). Healthcare organizations could take initiative in targeting medical errors on their own by utilizing Lean Six Sigma principles, ultimately avoiding non-compliance of the stringent list of Joint Commission regulations (Rodziewicz et al., 2021).

Lean Six Sigma, in healthcare organizations specifically, can improve quality and efficiency in many areas. With the inherent improvements in efficiency, implementing Lean Six Sigma principles can greatly reduce financial waste and improve revenue flow as well (Vendrame Takao et al., 2017). Lean Six Sigma also improves an organization’s competitive advantages and ability to offer care and services more efficiently than competing providers (Kovach & Borikar, 2018).

In chapter 9 of *Lean Six Sigma Ap-*

*proaches in Manufacturing, Services, and Production*, Lean Six Sigma is described as being able to mitigate activities that cause a customer critical-to-quality issues and create extended service delays (Aboelmaged, 2015). Focusing on issues in healthcare that present the greatest time delays would offer the greatest opportunity for improvement in cost, quality, capital, and lead time. The author goes on to explain how Lean Six Sigma principles aid in the improvement of healthcare systems, stating,

Although the guiding theories of Lean and Six Sigma methodologies are different, they are complementary in nature since both seek to improve the process. Lean philosophy establishes the standards of eliminating waste and reducing cycle time in processes with little impact on process variation, while Six Sigma shows how these standards can be achieved with minimum variation through applying a problem-solving approach using statistical tools and techniques. In addition, lean standards cover the entire organization value chain, while Six Sigma concentrates more attentively on certain projects or processes within an organization. Such integration between Lean and Six Sigma as an improvement methodology brings many benefits to the organization including maximizing shareholder value and improve their satisfaction and cost, quality, and speed of processes. (Aboelmaged, 2015, p. 233)

Over the past two decades, several examples of the implementing of Lean Six Sigma into healthcare-related settings have been observed. A few of the most effective innovations to recently come from the healthcare field have a strong correlation to Lean Six Sigma Principles



## **Management of Finances in Healthcare**

The Healthcare Financial Management Association urges organizations to make quality their top priority (Kaltwasser, 2016). In his discussion with Mark Chassin, president and CEO of the Joint Commission, Kaltwasser (2016) explains how the Joint Commission has been working with healthcare organizations to increase reliability and eliminate errors and failures that impact patient outcomes. In the article, it is clear that Chassin and other Joint Commission officials understand just how significant Lean Six Sigma principles are to process improvement. They continually seek ways to encourage healthcare organizations to implement these principles. To make quality a top priority and excel, performance improvement methodologies like Lean and Six Sigma should be used and applied to long-term goals (Kaltwasser, 2016).

### **Laboratory Execution**

In an article by Chris Stumpf (2012), the successful implementation of an Electronic Laboratory Notebook is analyzed among two top ten pharmaceutical companies. Electronic Laboratory Notebooks are used by researchers to gather information electronically, a modern version of the outdated paper worktop journal. In the first case study, a top ten pharmaceutical company replaced over one thousand paper logbooks with Electronic Laboratory Notebooks, eliminating legibility issues and transcription errors, and improving log retrieval times (para. 3). Stumpf (2012) noted a time savings of 75% in documenting standard preparations, 80% in verifying weight balances, 33% in creating an instrument work list for the Chromatography Data System, and a savings of approximately \$500,000 for the year just from this project (para. 4).

In a second study, another top

ten pharmaceutical company eliminated waste and variability by focusing on updating lab procedures through the use of Electronic Laboratory Notebooks. After updating their information sharing systems, the company realized a cost savings of \$3 million per year by implementing an information hub and exchange vehicle (Stumpf, 2012, para. 6-7). In both cases, Lean Six Sigma workflow analysis was crucial in helping both businesses identify critical waste areas and streamline their processes.

### **Improved Management Supply Chain**

In an article by DiPiero (2016), the improvements in the supply chain management of a healthcare service delivery system enhanced the capability of the overall system. Lean Six Sigma implementation reduced annual costs, eliminated waste production, reduced burden on the healthcare service providers, and improved quality care for patients. Quality of service at the Aquarian Healthcare Solutions improved significantly after they incorporated Lean Six Sigma practices. Effectiveness in their cost-saving solutions towards healthcare enhanced their service delivery. Gagliardi, the founder and president of Aquarian Healthcare Solutions, has a degree in finance as well as a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (DiPiero, 2016). This “Black Belt” certification represents mastery in Lean and cost control quality improvement through Lean Six Sigma principles. Advancements in technology helped Gagliardi assist her staff with setting up procurement software, efficiently analyzing facility data, and assisting facilities in collaborating with the correct group purchasing organization through stakeholder analysis (DiPiero, 2016).

### **Continued Implementation in Healthcare**

In order to work efficiently with an ever-increasing patient population, healthcare facilities must continually search for appropriate methods to reduce cost and increase quality of care for the patient population (Kaltwasser, 2016). Additionally, the method chosen to attain these improvements must continuously achieve their objectives with limited resources (Zhu et al., 2018). The application of Lean Six Sigma across American healthcare institutions, at all levels, can reduce the processing time and increase productivity of the healthcare facility. The tools used to incorporate Lean Six Sigma within the production cycle of a healthcare facility are from the DMAIC (Vendrame Takao et al., 2017, pp. 2-3). Upon the implementation of Lean Six Sigma, every healthcare facility defines the problem, measures the process, analyzes the supporting data, and implements a series of solutions resulting in increased customer satisfaction. In addition, strategies are implemented to control the process improvements (Yaduvanshi & Sharma, 2017). The outcomes achieved from implementing Lean Six Sigma provide evidence of where corrective action was primarily required.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, appropriate incorporation of Lean Six Sigma provides immense benefits to the healthcare system. Lean Six Sigma embeds itself within the culture of healthcare by adding efficiency to the system, achieving high-quality care for the patient population while reducing complications for healthcare providers. Lean Six Sigma promotes technological advancements in order to reduce waste and unwanted steps in a process. Incorporating Lean Six Sigma is possible through a range of various healthcare departments and levels of care. By doing so effectively, the overall functioning of the healthcare system can improve, allowing

for more timely and effective care for the patient. Moreover, Lean Six Sigma significantly reduces costs, increases efficiency of health service providers, advances effectiveness of the outcomes, and improves deliverables.



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# LITERARY THEORY IN RELATION TO THE **CANCEL CULTURE PHENOMENON**

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This paper seeks to analyze the relationship between cancel culture and the literary concept of authorial intent. In recent years, questions regarding “cancel culture’s” effects on the public’s ability to enjoy a “problematic” author’s work have been discussed. By analyzing two different literary theories, ‘art for art’s sake’ and New Criticism, which both relate to literature’s autonomy and connection to an author, readers are better able to understand the distinction between removing an author from the public’s favor and completely canceling their oeuvre.

## **Introduction**

WITH the explosion of the reach and power of the Internet over the past few years, “cancel culture” has become a hot topic across various fields. “Canceling” refers to the act of publicly withdrawing one’s support for an artist, creator, celebrity, or other notable people. Canceling has become a mainstay in large pockets of internet websites and is slowly leaking into other realms as well. In 2021, Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, in a bid to keep the public updated on this phenomenon, included an article on this term that defined it as the following: “Cancel is getting a new use. Canceling

and cancel culture have to do with the removing of support for public figures in response to their objectionable behavior or opinions. This can include boycotts or refusal to promote their work” (“What it Means to Get ‘Canceled,’” 2021).

The act of canceling can largely be seen through different mediums wherein the “canceling” is being done towards someone with influence through their public persona. This phenomenon has been known to occur with celebrities, authors, and a myriad of other professions. A few prominent examples of how cancel culture can affect an artist’s or entertainer’s past and future works in-



clude the publicized allegations and outrage against actor Bill Cosby, singer and songwriter R. Kelly, and beauty-guru and entertainer Jeffree Star. Within all of these cases, a clear withdrawal of support occurred within the celebrities' personal and professional lives.

### **Examples of Cancel Culture: Jeffree Star**

#### **Star's Origins**

When looking at a titan of business like Jeffree Star, who created Jeffree Star Cosmetics in 2014, the power of cancel culture is evident. During the height of his popularity, Jeffree Star was receiving millions of views on the video-sharing website YouTube, where he published makeup-tutorials and reviews. In addition to reviewing other companies' products, Star released his own product lines, including eyeshadow palettes, setting powders, concealers, and lipsticks. One of his most popular products, his "Blood Sugar" eyeshadow palette, was revealed to have made Star more than \$20 million. Reporter Lindsay Dodgson from news publication Insider told readers:

In the second episode, "The Secrets of the Beauty World," which was released last Friday, Dawson asked Star how much he made from his most popular palette. Star totaled up the numbers for his famous Blood Sugar palette on his iPhone calculator and showed Dawson the number. Clearly in shock, Dawson looked at the camera and asked cameraman Andrew Siwicki whether he was filming the screen that read "20,800,000." (Dodgson, 2019)

This staggering amount truly reveals the popularity of Star within the industry before his fall from grace.

#### **Star's Controversies**

Due to Star's long history on the Inter-

net, a trail of controversial and divisive artifacts from his past was discovered. Reporting on this situation, *Centennial Beauty*, a news publication that largely focuses on beauty and Internet culture, explained:

Amongst many accusations against the beauty mogul, some have been calling for his 'cancellation' after old photos resurfaced of Jeffree causing self-harm (which he posted himself) and posing with a confederate flag. There is also a screenshot circulating from a social media profile page of Jeffree's called Lipstick Nazi—which has led many to believe he had a beauty brand prior to Jeffree Star Cosmetics with this name. (Centennial Beauty, 2020)

#### **Results of Star's Public Cancellation**

Eventually, Jeffree Star's beauty products were removed from stores and promotions due to outcries centered around Star's controversial past. Cosmetics brand Morphe, one of Star's most long-standing professional relationships, severed their relationship once multiple allegations of racism began surfacing. The brand tweeted the following:

Today we've made the decision to cease all commercial activity related to Jeffree Star and affiliated products. We expect this to conclude within the coming weeks. As we look to the future, we will continue to share updates on what lies ahead for the Morphe brand. (@Morphe, 2020)

This announcement truly helps showcase the power of cancel culture and how public outcry could change even the most well-established relationships and opinions of supporters.

#### **Authors and Cancel Culture**

The sheer power of cancel culture's effects on the business and reputation of

a celebrity, entrepreneur, or artist cannot be understated. With the prominence of celebrities and other high-profile personalities losing their influence and the respect of the public, thus resulting in the loss of professional and business gains, questions have been raised regarding how this applies to authors, who have also started to face criticisms for their personal lives and controversies. What happens when a poet or author is removed from the public's favor, and what does that mean for their works, more specifically? If the public cancels an author, do they also have to cancel the author's work? If an author has been canceled, does this mean their works are tainted, losing their enjoyability for the reader? The question arises regarding whether or not an author's work is innately tied to their own persona and what it means to separate one from the other.

### Sylvia Plath and Cancel Culture

This question has largely been prevalent with authors who are world-renowned and have contributed much to their respective genres, such as Sylvia Plath, H.P. Lovecraft, and J.K. Rowling. Each of these authors has crafted works, such as *The Collected Poems*, "The Call of Cthulhu," and the *Harry Potter* series, respectively. These works have consistently been highly regarded, with each work arguably offering significant influence on their genres. But, when considering the reception of each author's works after controversies due to their personal lives and beliefs, the public opinions are conflicting. For instance, *The Collected Poems*, despite its public success and reception of the first posthumous Pulitzer Prize in 1982, has garnered negative attention due to Plath's personal beliefs and

controversies surrounding accusations of racism and antisemitism. Many readers have taken issue with her use of the Holocaust as a metaphor for her poor relationships and mental health issues in her poem "Daddy." Throughout this poem, an extended metaphor is utilized in order to draw a comparison between the pain felt by those affected by the Holocaust and her struggles with mental health. Parts of Plath's poem read:

**Although critics have often attempted to view these poems through various literary lenses in order to defend Plath's artistic use of such a controversial topic, many readers have called for her removal from the public's — — — — — favor.**

An engine, an engine  
Chuffing me off like a Jew.  
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.  
I began to talk like a Jew.  
I think I may well be a Jew. (Plath, 2018, pp. 35-39)

This poem has often been cited as the reason why Sylvia Plath's works must be canceled. Literary critics, though, have argued for years that this poem does not represent her antisemitism, but instead utilizes the Holocaust in an attempt to show her damaged state of mind when writing this confessional poetry. Al Strangeways (1996) discusses this point further:

The problem of Plath's utilization of the Holocaust can be broadly divided into two parts: the motives behind her use of such material, and the actual appearance of it in her poetry...her motives were responsible, and the often unsettling appearance of the Holocaust in her later poems stems from a complex of reasons concerning her divided view about the uses of poetry and the related



conflict she explores between history and myth... (p. 371)

This defense relies on the idea that Plath herself is not racist or antisemitic; rather, she is utilizing these comparisons in her art in order to highlight the immense pain and suffering the speaker is facing.

### **Social Media Criticisms and Calls for Cancellation of Plath**

Although critics have often attempted to view these poems through various literary lenses in order to defend Plath's artistic use of such a controversial topic, many readers have called for her removal from the public's favor. An example of the personal disappointment readers felt for these allegations is shown through the Tweet, "never mind, sylvia plath is no longer a favorite. she was a racist antisemite [sic]" (@mattnatcios, 2020). Other readers called for the public to cut their support for the author entirely: "Wasn't Sylvia Plath a major racist and antisemite? Maybe go read something else?" (@StephenWhoreking, 2019). These two reactions from both the literary community and the general public represent two ends of the spectrum of ideas regarding canceling authors and their works.

### **Schools of Literature**

After looking at authors who have recently fallen out of favor with the public, it is necessary to research the background behind differing schools of literary criticism and interpretations of the relationship between a work's identity in relation to its author. In order to accurately explore the possible answers to these questions, an in-depth dive into the world of literary criticism is required. While the study of literary criticism is complex, with many different ties and subtleties within each school or theory, there are a few major lenses that focus primarily on the author's relationship (or

lack thereof) with their text. Firstly, one of the major philosophical theories which can help answer these questions is the idea of "art for art's sake," which discusses the separation of art, such as literature, from what someone might conceive as its purpose. The two major theories which offer distinct, clear views of ideas of authorial intent are New Criticism and psychoanalytic criticism, with the former being significantly more respected within the literary criticism community. Both "art for art's sake" and New Criticism help support literature's freedom from being held to moral criticisms against their authors, thus resulting in being canceled and removed from the public's favor.

### **Art for Art's Sake**

The first theory which provides literature with protection from being removed from the public's favor due to their questionable authors is the theory of 'art for art's sake.' This slogan, translated from "*l'art pour l'art*," was originally conceived by French philosopher Victor Cousin during the 19th century. This slogan has evolved to represent the idea that art exists merely to exist, without any specific need to justify its existence. The Britannica Encyclopedia explains, "The phrase expresses the belief held by many writers and artists, especially those associated with Aestheticism, that art needs no justification, that it need serve no political, didactic, or other end" ("Art for Art's Sake," 2015). The idea of 'art for art's sake' was popularized in response to the ever-growing sentiment from Marxists during the 19th century that it was necessary for art to have a purpose. This notion was often paired with the literary theory of Aestheticism, in which art, including literature, only needed to exist, providing its own beauty and use for those who sought it. These ideas, like so many theories within the community surrounding literary criticism, drew admi-

ration and ire from various places. Gene Bell-Villada (1986), in an article discussing these ideas, dismissed the practicality of ‘art for art’s sake’: “The noble ideal of Art for Art’s Sake became the consolation prize for those poets who were dissatisfied with prose but couldn’t write verse for money. Few were in a position to think otherwise” (p. 439). Even though some critics sought to dismiss this theory, other proponents of its use regularly employed it to analyze works by philosophers and authors. With this theory, artists and authors have been able to find their footing by creating works that are arguably masterpieces, although they do not have a set justification or purpose for their existence.

### New Criticism

The next most useful school in determining authorial intent is the school of New Criticism. New Criticism is defined as the “... school of Anglo-American literary critical theory that insisted on the intrinsic value of a work of art and focused attention on the individual work alone as an independent unit of meaning” (“New Criticism,” 2018). This school was arguably the first to truly separate an author’s work from any historical and biographical information that may influence the reader’s mindset. This movement was a proponent of closed-readings, which emphasized that all of the knowledge necessary to understand the work came from within the text itself. W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, two major New Critics, proposed several different ideas within this school, such as the “intentional fallacy”, “affective fallacy”, and “ambiguity” through their analyses of literary criticism (“Intentional Fallacy,” 2016). Their

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widely discussed essay, “The Intentional Fallacy,” published in 1946, discussed the common idea that an author’s word should be taken as the basis for how to view the ideas presented in a text and subsequently critiqued this phenomenon:

Our view is yet different. The poem is not the critic’s own and not the author’s (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it). The poem belongs to the public. It is embodied in language, the peculiar possession of the public, and it is about the human being, an object of public knowledge. What is said about the poem is subject to the same scrutiny as any statement

in linguistics or in the general science of psychology. (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946, p. 470)

Wimsatt and Beardsley’s essay was quickly criticized, dissected, and elaborated on by other major voices within the literary community. While some were unconvinced that a work could gain complete autonomy from the historical and biographical factors, others readily accepted the notion

that a text could be its own entity, thus unable to be criticized by anything unrelated to the text presented.

### Psychoanalytic Theory

Contrarily, the psychoanalytic theory attempts to form a connection between an author’s thoughts and their work, cementing them as interlaced. This theory seems to present itself to the antithesis as what New Criticism presented in terms of the significance of an author to their work. Psychoanalytic theories delve into the monumental explorations established by Sigmund Freud. In 1908,



Freud published a short essay titled “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming.” This essay established a framework for what would become the modern theory of psychoanalysis. Freud muses throughout this essay about how an author’s childhood development and psyche can go on to contribute to their writing. Freud utilizes an extended metaphor in order to compare a creative writer with one who daydreams about their own life, way of thinking, and fantasies. Authors, according to Freud, self-identify with the protagonists of their own stories, weaving themselves into the narrative:

We will keep to the latter kind, and, for the purpose so far for comparison, we will choose not the writers most highly esteemed by the critics, but the less pretentious authors of novels, romances and short stories, who nevertheless have the widest and most eager circle of readers of both sexes. One feature above all cannot fail to strike us about the creations of these story-writers: each of them has a hero who is the centre of interest, for whom the writer tries to win our sympathy by every possible means and whom he seems to place under the protection of a special Providence. (Freud, 1908, p. 425)

### ***Criticisms of Psychoanalytic Theory***

With this, it is presumed that through the lens of psychoanalysis, an author would be unable to be removed from his or her novels, as they are an extension of his or her psyche. Others within the literary criticism community largely dismissed Freud’s ideas concerning the ties between an author’s internal thoughts and their writings, including Peter Brooks (1987) in a journal article titled “The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism”:

Psychoanalytic literary criticism has always been something of an em-

barrassment. One resists labeling as a ‘psychoanalytic critic’ because the kind of criticism evoked by the term mostly deserves the bad name it largely has made for itself... And in general, I think we need to worry about the legitimacy and force that psychoanalysis may claim when imported into the study of literary texts. (Brooks, 1987, p. 334)

Critics have largely supported opinions such as Brooks’s, criticizing the lack of pure, scientific data to help Freud’s seemingly unfounded claims: “Freud is a live issue for the cultural and literary commentators, and they – we – are bitterly divided. Some – including some distinguished ex-Freudian critics – now agree with the scientists that Freud was wrong, and add that Freud was not merely wrong, but wicked” (Jackson, 2014, pp. 1–3). This sentiment was backed throughout both the scientific and literary communities as each field began to dismiss the ideas that Freud laid out.

### **Applications of Literary Theories and Cancel Culture**

So, it goes to follow if one believes in the ‘art for art’s sake’ theory and New Critic’s assertions regarding the autonomy of art and literature from the author, there would seem to be no reason to completely “cancel” a work of literature due to the author falling out of favor with the public. On the other hand, if one were to believe the weak, often-dismissed psychoanalytic viewpoint regarding literature and the author’s relationship, an author’s views cannot be separated from their works. Psychoanalytic theories, which convey the idea that a book is directly impacted by the author’s dreams, background, biases, etc. are the often-cited reasoning for why a controversial author’s works must be cancelled. This ties directly into why cancel culture would affect an author’s published works. If an

author is accused of being racist or sexist, for example, one following the aforementioned lines of logic could assume that there would be related, controversial undertones within the text. Looking at Plath's problematic writing calls into question whether her works were written with overt or subtle antisemitic messages, creating an ethical dilemma for readers. Detangling these unpalatable views from an otherwise well-written novel could pose as an issue, thus requiring the entire oeuvre to be removed from the public's viewing. But, by using solid foundations of literary theory through the philosophy of 'art for art's sake' and New Criticism, there is a clear argument against retroactively canceling or disregarding a novel due to its author's personal history. A strong case can be made against canceling a novel due to their author's controversies due to the postulations that works are capable of having an autonomous existence with no real purpose aside from what the consumer of these arts assigns to them, combined with the idea that literature is completely autonomous from the author's background and biographical data.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, cancel culture is a major, widespread cultural phenomenon that has only grown with the ever-increasing reliance on the Internet. As consumers and onlookers begin to take a thorough look at the personal lives and mindsets of entertainers, creators, and writers, the distinction can be made between these criticisms and the works of the person who is in the limelight. But, when considering artwork such as literature, there are prevalent theories that can help support the argument against canceling the literary works of a "problematic" author. The philosophies behind the theories of 'art for art's sake' and New Criticism vehemently oppose condemning novels due to external factors such as the author's

background, the supposed "purpose" of a novel, and views that are dependent on the individual reader's thoughts and opinions. As the number of past and present authors and artists facing personal controversies grows, it is important for readers and consumers of the arts to retain knowledge on how literary and philosophical theories can help protect works from the controversies of its creator.

**By using solid foundations of literary theory through the philosophy of 'art for art's sake' and New Criticism, there is a clear argument against retroactively canceling or disregarding a novel due to its author's personal history.**



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