

PENTADIC ANALYSIS OF A WYOMING TV SHOW: THE RHETORIC OF SCENE AND
AGENCY AND ITS IMPACT ON NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Kenneth Burke's Pentadic ratios are used to analyze the rhetorical choices of characters from the Cheyenne Reservation and the Sheriff's department in the television show *Longmire*. The ratios reveal scene as the focus of Native American rhetoric and agency as the focus of the Sheriff's rhetoric. The rhetorical choices paradoxically give the Cheyenne's independence from the local white culture, while simultaneously victimizing them as products of their environment. In contrast, the Anglo deflection from scene speaks to the local law prioritizing their interventions on the reservation over Native jurisdiction. The rhetorical choices suggest the underlying value systems that cause conflicts between Native and Anglo communities and account for the patterns each culture pursues for justice. The show gives value to those narratives that deflect from land to designate jurisprudence, and depicts the disempowerment of those Native communities that rely on the legal boundaries of their reservation for their autonomy.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the depiction of the West in modern television drama, and specifically the conflicts between Native American reservations and local communities. A rhetorical analysis of the television series *Longmire* reveals how the characters rhetorically navigate the two worlds and, in turn, how the show frames and reflects our cultural attitudes regarding Western and Native American cultures.

Longmire is a Wyoming based television series which aired in 2012 on A&E and has run for six seasons. The series is a modern American Western crime drama based on the Walt Longmire Mysteries series by Wyoming author Craig Johnson. The show's main character, Walt Longmire, is sheriff of fictional Absaroka County in Wyoming. He investigates major crimes within his jurisdiction. Walt works through some major personal issues related to his wife's recent death as well as the constant jurisdictional conflicts between the county and the local reservation. This show builds on a rich history of Western lore that has been built up through American film. It also wrestles with the inherent conflicts brought on by stereotypes of Native Americans and Westerners.

In the first section of my thesis, I will provide historical background on Native tribal reservations and their legal status in the US. I will also look at some modern cultural movements that have drawn the attention of the media in recent years regarding tribal policy. And lastly, I will look at the image of the Native Americans as represented in television and film and how those imagined narratives have shaped public perception. These will provide context and justification for the need to analyze current questions of power and jurisprudence in Native American communities. Ultimately, the rhetoric in the show allocates agency to local white law enforcement, and in contrast, the Native community is given very little agency in finding and

asserting their own solutions to justice. Such portrayals are limiting as they train the viewership to look for only one kind of solution, and neglect the possibility of locating justice in Native values.

Not many modern television shows are set in the West or written by someone native to the West, so this show provides an important insight into perceptions of Western culture. But more importantly, the show explores the current status of reservation life and its interactions with local government entities. The show is located in the heart of Indian Territory as it exists in the American imagination. While conflict with Native American Indians has occurred all over the US, the image that survives in most Western film and literature is the stereotypical Plains Indian. It is significant that *Longmire* meets this stereotype on the turf of its inception.

The show mirrors aspects of other modern crime shows but has its quirks. The show deliberately exaggerates the community as ‘backwards’ by emphasizing the sheriff’s stubborn refusal to buy a cell phone, and the secretary keeps a typewriter “just in case.” The show goes out of its way to distance itself from the urban drama that American audiences are used to. But more than the Western vs. Eastern mentality, it also represents twenty-first century issues in and around reservation life. The rhetorical choices of the show’s characters are symbolic of America’s current race relations with Native Americans.

I will use episodes from the show that highlight tensions between the reservation life and the local community. These tensions concern four major areas. First, the legal jurisdiction between the sheriff’s office and the reservation is a source of conflict and the catalyst for the resurrection of a rogue mythical character named Hector who delivers a sort of vigilante justice when the conflict between the two legal entities in the area fails. The second area of tension in the show is the integration of Native spirituality that is comingled between cultures. Thirdly, the

colliding cultures operate in different economic systems involving drugs, the black market, and casinos. Lastly, and perhaps the most redemptive theme of the series, are the personal relationships between cultures, most notably between Sheriff Walt and his childhood friend, Henry, a member of the Cheyenne tribe. These areas provide a platform from which to analyze the show's use of rhetoric to navigate the tensions between these two colliding cultures.

I will use Burke's Pentadic criticism to analyze the television show. Burke's theories focus not only on the logic of texts, but also the social context of language and its power to move people to action. He believed that the study of language could help us to better understand the origin of conflict, the benefits and pitfalls of cooperation, and the potential for cooperation.

Burke suggests that human symbolic action involves acts, agents, agency, scenes, and purpose—elements of language-use he called the Pentad. For Burke, imbalances in these Pentadic elements—ratios in which, for example, agency is foregrounded over scene—reveal the text's underlying motivations and allow us to discern which attitudes a text wants its audience to assume toward its subject matter. Looking at the Burkean ratios will allow me to better identify the motivations behind the character's actions that control cultural attitudes about Native Americans. I will analyze how each character uses rhetoric strategically to adjust the ratios in order to find absolution in their own actions. We clearly see Longmire's perspective; however, the Native American perspective is harder to create – only by piecing together the comments of many Native characters can I begin to analyze their ratios---which is in and of itself as revelatory as it is limited-- but important in capturing the perspective of the Anglo American audience looking at the Native American cultures.

Burkean pentad assumes people can have ambiguous, conflicting, and complex reasons for acting which pretty much sums up the complexity of Walt Longmire's life, not to mention the

role of the show in the larger scope of modern television. Ultimately, Burke sees language as symbolic of human action, so the question is what real action is the television series *Longmire* symbolizing? Popular culture can frame the attitudes of its viewers as it trains people how to see the world around them and influence our culture's actions. This show is both reflective of our culture's values as its creators use their experiences to write script, but also predictive as they shape how and what the viewers see of race relations in America. Ultimately, many of the good intentions of Walt Longmire's community act to undermine the reservation's autonomy and reinforce white cultural norms rather than producing a sense of agency and autonomy surrounding Native culture and reservation life.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND WHY IT MATTERS

In order to contextualize the significance of the show, it is useful to look at the historical background of Native tribal reservations and their differing legal status. The Removal Act (1830) systematized the forcible moving of Natives westward away from European settlements which led to the development of reservations most notably through the Indian Appropriations Act. Most reservations were managed by a federally recognized Native American tribe under the US Bureau of Indian Affairs rather than state control (a few Eastern reservations were created by state legislation, but most operate under federal jurisdiction). From the beginning, reservations were the scene of political corruption and unrest. In an effort towards peace, Ulysses S. Grant implemented a peace policy with the Indians in tandem with Reconstruction in the South by reorganizing the Indian Service. He attempted to replace corrupt officials in Indian affairs with religious men. Grant said: "A system which looks to the extinction of a race is too abhorrent for a Nation to indulge in without entailing upon the wrath of all Christendom, and without engendering in the Citizen a disregard for human life, and the rights of others, dangerous to society. I see no remedy for this except in placing all the Indians on large reservations...and giving them absolute protection there" (Waugh 133). Under his policy, assimilation was attempted on the reservations and Natives were allowed to become U.S. citizens if they chose to leave the reservation. Despite some of the altruistic intentions, this period of time became one of the bloodiest between Indians and settlers ("President Grant Advances").

In 1934, Congress and Indian Commissioner John Collier began the Indian New Deal which reversed assimilation policy and instead promoted the preservation of Native cultures (Smith 4). Yet again in the 1950s, Congress reverted back to assimilation practices and started a timeline to terminate all reservations; however, Natives protested and were able to preserve their

reservation rights. Continuing in the 1960's resurgence of cultural pride initiated advancement in greater self-determination and tribal sovereignty for Natives (Smith 4).

The existence of reservations, the administration of, and their continuance has been and continues to be a political and social quagmire. Their existence was a gross violation of human rights, but the termination of reservations would pose ethical dilemmas in a multi-generational landscape with competing narratives of value and justice.

State rights remain a huge point of conflict with tribal sovereignty. Many states want control over the reservations, often due to natural resource potential. For example, in Alaska, Ted Stevens (R-AK) tried to turn law enforcement, judicial obligations and housing responsibilities for reservations over to the state of Alaska which was seen as an improvement by some and autocratic by others (Oswalt 482). Despite the conflict between state and reservation authorities, there are some examples of working relationships between tribes and state governments. For example, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy hold non-voting seats in the state house in Maine (Oswalt 483).

Presently, Natives control the regulation of some land, are allowed some taxation rights and have limited judicial authority over their respective reservations. However, the federal government has influence on any major economic decision aimed at developing reservations. There are also different policies relating to land of enrolled tribal members and land held in trust for tribes, which creates conflict on both sides. They may not make treaties with foreign powers (as they did during WWII) and they often have no jurisdiction over major crimes that might occur on reservation lands. The federal regulations also limit Natives' ability to deal with non-Indians who work or live on reservations (Oswalt 481). Public law 280 (1953) ceded federal law enforcement authority within certain nations to state governments. Some states have more power

of jurisdiction within reservation boundaries than others. In states where the act is not applied, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) respond to major crimes although murder or kidnappings usually combine BIA and FBI resources (Oswalt 481). However, it's a complicated matrix of jurisdiction. For example, officers of the BIA do not have legal power over major crimes committed on the reservation by non-Indians (Oswalt 483). Some proposed solutions include cross deputizing the BIA, county and state officers. However, this is seen as a loss of sovereignty and generally opposed by tribal councils (Oswalt 483).

Some of the recent legislation reveals that there is no clear history when and where power was accrued by the federal and state government. For example, the question is unclear when and how the federal government gained control over issues involving its agents' actions on reservations? And secondly, do tribal courts have jurisdiction over minor crimes committed on reservations by non-Indians? (Oswalt 484).

Beyond the boundaries of the reservation, there have been modern cultural movements that have drawn the attention of the media in recent years regarding tribal policy. There has been a surge of interest in Native Americans in general. Census reports show that there is an increase in Americans self-identifying as 'American Indian.' In 1960 only 523,591 were recorded, in 1970, it had increased to 792,730 and in 1980 the number had risen to 1,418,195. Joanne Nagel attributes this major upswing to an Indigenous revitalization of ethnic pride motivated by "federal Indian policies, ethnic politics, and American Indian activism" (Nagel 961). During the 1960s, activist work by such groups as the American Indian Movement (AIM) and Red Power movement drew media attention to Native Peoples (Tahmhakera 326). On a global scale, after working on it for 30 years, the UN adopted Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. There were 143 countries for the declaration and 4 against. Notably, the U.S., Canada, New

Zealand, and Australia voted against the declaration (Oswalt 484). Despite the activism, there are still 130 tribes in the U.S. that remain unrecognized by the federal government representing roughly 130,000 people (Oswalt 474).

While the reality of Natives on and off reservations remains a quandary of jurisdictional issues, there is an important parallel world in film that Natives have played an important part in. Natives started migrating to Los Angeles in the first half of 20th century responding to the market in the film industry for actors, stunt persons and technical advisors (Rosenthal 330). They were often recruited from Wild West Shows and reservations (Rosenthal 332). In the early decades of the twentieth century, many Native peoples suffered from extreme poverty. Many of them, children and adults alike, were pressured to leave their Native cultures in order to assimilate even though life in the outside world often meant being victims of racism, society, and economics (Rosenthal 332).

In sharp contrast to their life on the reservation, shooting pictures in Hollywood at least allowed Natives to travel, earn money, and exhibit "Indian" ways of life. As one author put it: "in many ways Hollywood supported and validated Indian identity for Indian actors and performers. This was remarkable considering how brutally heavy-handed American life often was when it came to demanding the subjugation and assimilation of Indian people" (Rosenthal 332).

Despite the initial economic advantages of the film industry for Natives, they are often depicted in extremes in the media: either noble red man or blood thirsty savage (Scotch 58-62; Stedman 248-50; Wilson 41). Celebrated Native author Luther Standing Bear worked in the film industry because he saw it as freedom from the confines of reservation life. However, he fought with directors who thought that Indians were incapable of "serious acting" (Rosenthal 339). Indians were often paid lower wages and were constantly vying for jobs from non-Indian actors,

many of them Aryan, Syrian, Swedes and Latins (Rosenthal 339). Natives had little control over the content of Westerns and often chose to work in them for financial reasons despite the cultural stereotypes (Rosenthal 331). But Natives faced battles off the set as well.

Indian reform made some headway in bargaining for better contracts. There is a body of evidence of Natives fighting for their rights in the industry. In 1926, Native actors formed War Paint Club to protect the rights of Native actors and establish a pool of authentic Indians for the industry (Rosenthal 340). In 1932, the National League for Justice for the American Indians was established whose purpose was “securing unrestricted citizenship for Native American and encouraging Native arts” (Rosenthal 345). Also, American Indian Registry or the performing arts (AIRPA) opened in 1983 (Rosenthal 350).

Some scholars identify the positive aspects of the film industry as facilitating positive outcomes for tribes: “simultaneous to natives taking less than flattering roles in Hollywood, and even as popular culture was embracing the New Age myth of Indians as the innocent children of nature, tribal politics and the federal government were collaborating to develop a concept of tribal sovereignty that increased exponentially the power of Indian tribes and guaranteed tribal authority over reservation communities” (Rollins). While some look at the depiction of Natives in film as exploitive and destructive to authentic cultural representation, others look at it more positively as does Rollins. Yet, despite the spin either positive or negative, it is important to note the difference between the world that Natives inhabited in the film world and in their reservation life. It is also important to see how each influenced the other, blending authentic tribal life with the film industry’s stereotyped version of it, only to come out with a hodgepodge of customs and stereotypes and a variety of Native stories—some empowered by the film industry, and some subjugated to it. Native writer Sherman Alexie notes in his works the irony of growing up on

reservation life learning ‘how to be an Indian’ by watching non-native actors in Hollywood films. The film industry played a major role in recreating many of the realities of Native life as well as altering the outsider’s perception of what it means to be Native.

Representations of Natives in film and television obviously hold many paradoxes and contradictions. Americans have seen skewed representations of Native Americans since the early silent films to modern allusions of Indian cultures in sitcoms. As Chief Leonard George said, “In hindsight we can easily see that the Native people of North America were oppressed by three major forces: these were the government, religion and Hollywood.” Not only were the Native tribes themselves impacted by Hollywood, the image of the Native in the public imagination through film has been pivotal in shaping the bigger picture of American identity. As Elliott West says, “Stories [...] inevitably influence how inhabitants treat and respond to their immediate world [...] Imagined narrative and human action fade into one another” (West 65). These stories of Native cultures have been and still are an important part in American identity.

Since the Boston Tea Party, the image of the Native has been co-opted to help create a national American identity separate from its European roots. Sometimes this was accomplished by aligning themselves with Native imagery—as wild, and untamed—everything antithetical to European tradition. As Deloria writes, “As England became a them for colonists, Indians became an us” (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 22). Other times, Americans used the image of the Native to contrast with themselves: “Savage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self” (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 3; Wiethaus 190; Shohat and Stam 366). We see this same story of binaries playing out in modern films: *Avatar* (Cameron) and *Cowboys and Aliens* (Favreau). Film has often depicted the dual desire to exterminate and glorify the Native—all in homage to America’s quest for identity.

While it began as whites dressing as Indians in rebellion against Europe during the Boston Tea Party, as time went by, Indians themselves began participating in “white people’s Indian play” and in so doing were “assisting, confirming, co-opting, challenging, and legitimizing a performative tradition of aboriginal American identity” (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 8). Later, Wild West shows hired Natives and in turn cultivated the image of the Native commercially. Deloria points out in *Playing Indian* how there are two manifestations of Indians in the United States: the literal tribes that Europeans interacted with over centuries, and the imagined Indians who are “a collection of mental images, stereotypes, and imaginings based only loosely on those material people Americans have called Indians” (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 20). This tension between Natives and their image continues through American history moving into the twenty-first century sitcoms and films.

The image of the Native has been commercialized and used as a political tool throughout American history. The Wild West Show was one of the first commercial enterprises capitalizing on the image of the Native, but film and television eventually replaced the role of the Wild West Show. The Lone Ranger was a melodrama whose depiction of Natives ‘tamed’ the Indians for the viewers (Fitzgerald 49). During the first half of the 1900s, the depiction of Natives altered as politics changed. Henry Ford’s work in the film industry in particular “created a mythic multicultural America in order to persuade a somewhat reluctant populace to unite in the war against the Axis” (Hoffman 45). Also, the spread of fascism, altered the way America was willing to look at the displacement and killing of minorities. Such historical representations of Natives became less palatable to the film industry, so screenwriters had to re-create a multicultural America to unite against Axis powers. They could not viably promote Natives as savages while actively recruiting them to do their patriotic duty for America. After the Lone

Ranger and its more simplistic representation of Natives came *Broken Arrow* (1956) which is considered the first of the sympathetic Westerns to challenge the manifest destiny message in earlier films (Baird 1197). The show's backers claimed it was more historically accurate in some ways becoming "a public-relations vehicle for the U.S. government; it provided Euro-Americans with an honorific simulacrum of history" (Fitzgerald 50). However, as Fitzgerald points out, in reality it disguised the real treatment that Natives experienced during the Cold War Era (50).

In early films, scientists, entrepreneurs and politicians struggled with whether or not to depict Natives in film as "historically co-present (coeval) with White society" or "timeless (allochronic)" (Griffiths 80). Historian Sherry Smith writes that many early writers and adventurers such as Walter McClintock mistakenly believed that they were preserving a dying race (Smith). The problem with depicting them as a doomed race reinforced that past as a somehow more "authentic" version of Native culture. This romanticizing of the Native past also diminished the human agency and modern experiences of Native Americans in white cultures (Griffiths 82).

For early film makers, an allochronic depiction had huge political implications. Such a film is a powerful tool for assuaging white guilt. There is not much impetus in making amends when the American public is led to believe from the film industry that there is nobody left to ask for forgiveness. Filmmakers, attempting to depict Natives as a dying race, therefore, were in a dilemma. The presence of Native actors in a film projecting the demise of their race is clearly in conflict with the politically motivated narrative that would benefit from a quiet elimination of Natives as a contender for power and rights. Such a narrative is obviously contradicted by a healthy, thriving population of Native actors. Susan Applegate Krouse drolly points out how this contradiction played out on the film set when filmmakers struggled with Native actors to take

'playing dead' seriously (qtd. in Griffiths 84). Such annoyances on the film set were indicative of the continual tensions between "authenticity" and patriotism, politics, and commercial interests for Native actors. Because of these contradictory interests, Native involvement in the filmmaking business has understandably been seen as victimizing and empowering (Moses 196).

A closer look at thematic elements in film and television is also important to consider as they alternately victimize and empower the Native community. "Going Native" is one such theme that has always fascinated Americans. In such films, the original inhabitants or Native Americans are portrayed as the "true Americans" and audiences should therefore emulate those traits (Baird 196). This manifested in the Sympathetic Western of the 1950s and more modern films such as *Dances with Wolves*. This bringing together of cultures in film is manifestation of Levi Strauss' assessment that myths and narratives "reconcile cultural contradictions and bring opposing forces and values together" (qtd. Baird 196-7). We see this in other themes: from films that overlay Garden of Eden narratives with Native culture, to white claims of Indian ancestry which, as Freud puts it, generations use to break with their pasts and to create fantasies of more noble parents (Baird 198). Yet the common denominator that bridges all the interactions between the cultures in film is violence. We see this often in the early Western where the massacre becomes a way of regeneration through violence (Slotkin). The films alternate between depicting whites and Natives as good guys or bad guys, always trying to address "White historical fear and guilt within the same narrative, providing a way in which a fiction can remain simultaneously true to contradictory emotional responses to history" (Baird 202).

Various critical lenses have been used to analyze Native performance-- from film, to dance, to costume design. For example, the Native as Subaltern looks at the Indians themselves as a means to reveal new narratives of Native American experience particularly about meanings

of subaltern resistance. In this approach, looking at ethnic performance can help gain a more nuanced understanding of power relations between performer and viewer-- A relationship that could empower people of color as “arenas for resistance to dominant culture” (Rosenthal 332) or reflect a relationship with implicit limitations catering to the expectations of an Anglo-American audience (Rosenthal 332). Philip Deloria also studies the power of ethnic performance, pointing out that performance of dance ceremonies were originally for Indian audiences, but quickly became expected as part of diplomacy negotiations in encounters with non-Natives (Deloria 57). His work suggests that even a performance that on the surface remains authentic to its Native roots, is deeply changed by the audience that views it in a different context from a different culture.

Props/scenes are another area of criticism in ethnic performances. Props can be seen as “visually recycled” American Indian art. They are used to satisfy the expectations of the audience regarding Native authenticity but are given no respect for cultural property rights or cultural significance. Many props are exaggerated merely to be recognized by audiences and are not authentic to any specific tribe. “Mapping and reading the syntax and vocabulary of props in film thus offers a visible measure of the processes of de- and re-colonization” (Wiethaus 192). The props create a collective presence sending messages to the American populace about Indian identity. Props can be used in film to create sense of Native primitivism and European sophistication (McGowan and Melnitz).

The varied depictions of Native culture have a huge impact on Native and Anglo-viewership: stereotypes of Native Americans in film over time “contribute to a mainstream televisual landscape that encourages audiences to engage in colonized viewing” (Tahmahkera 326). These Anglo viewers who “simply watch the programming, do not question what is said or

not said, do not situate the representations of red face within their larger historical and social contexts, and do not try to interpret or formulate a way of reading the televisual content that can move them toward decolonizing their minds” (Tahmahkera 326). Tahmahkera calls for us to perform “Decolonized viewing” anytime we consume media with Native roles in it (326). Tahmahkera also suggests that critics should be censured for their lack of sensitivity to Native themes in many television shows. Many shows are escapist or simplistic, glossing over the significant and damaging effect that these “fantasy” escapism shows do to the Native audience (Tahmahkera 326).

There is controversy within the Native community as to their portrayal in film. While there are many criticisms of the wrongness of films such as *Pocahontas*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Broken Arrow*, *Little Big Man*, what is the correct portrayal? Some American Indians turn stereotypes into profit, whereas some see this as selling out. Some argue that “progress comes when Indian actors are cast in generic roles, without any reference to their ethnicity. Others say that doing this erases the real cultural identity of Indians-- certainly they are individuals who are not solely defined by their ethnicity, but at the same time, their cultural identity is a crucial element of who they are” (Bird 7). Some Native authors agree saying the next step is to articulate a Native voice. Native author Louis Owen (Choctaw-Cherokee) said that Native Americans could use language of colonization to articulate their own words and find ourselves whole” (Rosenthal 351).

In light of all of conflicting representations and interpretations of Native cultures, moving into the twenty-first century, we still see this tension between Native cultures and the image of the Native. Science, politics, and commerce have narrated the role of Natives inside and outside the film industry. However, what this literature does not cover is a close analysis of the rhetorical

choices in the dialogue between Native and white characters; rather than focusing on outside influences such as politics, economics, and science, this analysis focuses on words that people craft to make meaning of their communities. The dialogue in the show models the way people negotiate meaning and thus reveals their motives both intentional and subliminal. A popular culture fictional drama does not capture facts like a history seeks, rather it delivers the essence of a worldview by revealing what its creators think has happened, what they want to happen, and what they choose to believe happens. By studying the dialogue exchanges between characters in this show, we see ground zero of how people choose to see others.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT IS PENTADIC CRITICISM?

Kenneth Burke's Pentadic criticism provides a heuristic for analyzing the fictional dialogue within *Longmire*. Key components of Burke's theory include identification, consubstantiation, dramatism and the pentad.

Identification: Identification builds on the classical principles of persuasion. Fundamentally, to Burke, human relations are hierarchical, and so division exists between people. Additionally, because of the symbolic nature of language, there is great room for dissension among peoples' interpretations of their reality. To bridge that division, we attempt to identify with one another to assuage the "guilt" (a Burkean term that includes tension, anxiety, etc. we feel for our difference). As Burke writes, "identification is compensatory to division" (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 22). Simply speaking, Burke points out that these differences are a natural catalyst for people seeking common ground (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*). People would have no reason to make a show of finding commonality if there weren't differences on some level. This forms the basis for the idea of identification--the drive that pushes people to find commonality—something with which they can identify in another person. Burke writes that "identification is the common ground that exists between speaker and audience, without which there would be no, true persuasion" (qtd. In Griffin et al.). Language is a symbolic way of prompting cooperation and the tool for identifying with another.

For example, In the *Longmire* series, state and reservation law enforcement are forced to identify with each other on some level as they both try to combat crime. They identify with the need to protect their people and deliver justice. This identification, however, is also necessarily predicated on the conflict of difference between the reservation's values and the state law enforcement of the sheriff's office.

Another important aspect of Identification is that it moves beyond classical rhetoric--- intentional rhetorical choices that a rhetor might deploy to persuade his audience. Instead, identification also encompasses the unconscious factors that influence others and ourselves (Golden et al. 250). Burke wrote that “The individual person, striving to form himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society, is by the same token concerned with the rhetoric of identification” (*Rhetoric of Motives* 39). A good example of this is how individuals internalize dominant ideas from our culture and thus identify with those ideas. For example, in *Longmire*, within the tribal reservation, we see intergenerational conflict and the rhetorical choices that young and old alike make seeking to identify with something that will bring stability to their lives. In this instance, there are two cultures influencing the youth on the reservation: white and Native. Both offer different forms of identity for the Cheyenne youth, but are often in conflict.

Consubstantiation: Burke further develops the process of identification with the notion of consubstantiation. It is not enough that we are persuaded to see similarities between ourselves and others; we are prompted to become consubstantial with them through our use of language, common images, ideas and attitudes. By acting together, we become similar to them, but are still separate organisms. For example, Person A might feel like charities that market themselves as finding cures of disabilities such as Autism are damaging because they are labeling autism as bad. Person B might identify with Person A’s assessment that charities should not problematize disabilities and should in fact serve the needs of people with autism. However, Person B might also see value in these charities as providing resources for families. In this manner, person B shares an attitude with person A, but simultaneously maintains a different stance on the role of charities—thus Person A and B are consubstantial (Allison).

Burke believed that individuals could agree with each other through recognizing a common purpose. Whereas normally, two people or groups would be enemies, sometimes finding a common purpose can unite them if only to fight a common enemy (Burke, *Grammar of motives*). Burke writes that “A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B. Or he may identify himself with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 20). We see this happening sporadically through *Longmire*. For example, Anglo characters often embrace reservation spiritual traditions as they face challenges in their own lives outside of the reservation. Sometimes characters achieve consubstantiation with each other, and other times fail.

These two ideas of identification and consubstantiation are the basis for dramatic critical analysis. We each have a symbolic understanding of ourselves and each other and we share this knowledge by aligning our personal symbol-systems with the systems of others. There is much at stake if we don't use identification as a tool to improve our society. As Burke writes: “If a social or occupational class is not too exacting in the scrutiny of identifications that flatter its interests, its very life is a profitable malingering (profitable at least until its inaccuracies catch up with it)—and as such, it is open to attack or analysis” (Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives* 36).

Dramatism: Burke created a heuristic for determining the motives behind peoples' actions. He called it dramatism, and saw it is a way to measure the symbolic interactions of humans. The theory suggests that, much like in theater and literature, all human interaction can be read as a kind of drama, in which symbolic expressions that are meant to induce cooperation, division, or other symbolic acts from others are constituted by elements of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. Dramatism, according to Burke, is “a framework for the manner in which

people apply meaning by identifying and analyzing the act” (Muniz 27), and its goal is to discern the motives of symbolic actions.

Often the word ‘motive’ is used to suggest an anticipatory mindset that is the catalyst of action. However, Burke claims the opposite: motives are the words that are constructed as an after effect of rhetorical action. Another way of putting it: “Language frequently is used to label behavior after it has been enacted. Language fits and adjusts behavior to a symbolically created world” (Hawes 48). Burke wrote that all language is man’s attempt to justify his actions.

Motives, therefore, are the way that individuals understand events and the necessary choices they make in their response. And to Burke, a Pentadic framework for symbolic actions can help us discern motives in language by analyzing imbalances in the ratios in which Pentadic elements occur in language.

Pentadic ratios: To Burke, all human communication involves elements of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Act is something that takes place through thought or act. The Scene is a situation or context when and where an act occurred. The Agent is the person or thing that performed the action or thought. The Agency is the way in which the thought or action was delivered. Purpose is the intention for the action or thought. These five elements form the heuristic for determining how language influences behavior. Each element of the pentad interacts with the others uniquely. For example, if someone yells “fire” noting the scene of a building on fire, the corresponding act would be for people to run away (Rountree).

But symbolic expressions don’t feature each of these elements in equal weight. Pentadic criticism looks at the ratios between these elements as they occur in rhetoric. For example, when using Pentadic ratios, a critic could look at the scene-act ratio, or in another instance compare the agent-act ratio. There are a potential twenty combinations or ratios to use to analyze any given

discourse. When using Pentadic ratios for analysis, the dominant ratio (on the left) can be compared to the submissive element to potentially reveal contradictions or more broadly, reveal the motives between what the rhetor states and what the rhetorical evidence suggests. Ling discusses how different schools of thought focus on different aspects of the pentad. For example, the materialist school uses wording that focuses on the scene as the most important element of any situation. In contrast, the idealist school, he says, views the agent as the most important of the pentadic elements (Ling 82). Such differing views create different narrative explanations for culpability. For example, a drunk driver defending himself in court might emphasize the bend in the road, the slippery icy conditions, the low visibility in his narrative to the court, in so doing casting the scene as the primary focus of the ensuing accident, whereas the prosecutor would focus on the drunk driver as the agent culpable for the wreck.

In addition to showing how the Pentadic ratio foremost in a rhetor's use of language demonstrates world view, Ling secondly shows the limitations that each situation has depending on what worldview. As Ling says, "The speaker who finds the agent to be the victim of the scene not only reflects a materialist philosophy but will propose solutions that attempt to limit the actions of the agent or to remove the agent completely." And inversely, "the speaker who finds the agent to be the victim of the scene not only reflects a materialistic philosophy but will propose solutions that would change the scene" (Ling 82). Someone who sees a problem with an agent, will see self-help as the solution to environmental concerns. The same person who sees a man as a victim of the environment will propose that the environment itself is the problem and the scene needs to be changed. As Ling writes, "The way in which a speaker describes a situation reflects his perception of reality and indicates what choices of action are available to him" (82). By identifying the ratios of various characters in any situation, it quickly reveals the justification

for assigning guilt and innocence as well as predicts that limited narrative choices left to characters given their worldview. What rhetors choose to give significance in the ratios can be revelatory about their priorities and motivations.

In *Longmire*, Sheriff Walt Longmire might choose to narrate his actions focusing on Act and Purpose and ignore the scene—in this case the reservation. For instance, if a suspect is on reservation land, Walt will ignore the scene as being important and focus on the act that was committed (the crime) and getting justice (purpose). In so doing, his narrative justifies him overstepping reservation boundaries. In contrast, Hector, a Native American mercenary hired to deliver justice when the law fails, also focuses on act (justice) and purpose (justice) and disregards who administers that justice (agent) as long as it is delivered. The two worlds collide as their narratives give emphasis to differing aspects of the pentad. The conflict that the audience feels when viewing these scenarios is an important revelation of the discord between law and justice in our current dealings with Native American communities.

The ratios allow us to examine how the event under discussion is framed in rhetoric. As Burke writes: “If a critic can establish which element is dominant, then the critic can examine the philosophical terminology that underlies the conscious or unconscious authorial world view in any given artifact (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*).

At its core, Burke’s theories are developed as ways to overcome the division and estrangement that separates people. At the beginning of his book *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he wrote that “books should be written for tolerance and contemplation” (*Rhetoric of Motives*). He sought to explain how members of a group promote social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another (*Rhetoric of Motives*). Television is a primary way our culture rhetorically acts on one another. Therefore, Burke’s dramatism is an excellent way to approach a

popular culture text. As he said, dramatism is not intended to study “actual human behavior;” rather, it is a tool to focus on “descriptions of behavior” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1296). A fictitious television show not only describes human behavior; it does it through the lens of its author, and so reveals how humans want their behavior to be perceived. Fiction carries no accountability to truth and thus distills the motivations of its author in a slightly different way, but no less important way than nonfiction.

Combining the social learning theories of Albert Bandura and the scholarship by Brummett on popular culture further demonstrates how popular culture television shows like *Longmire* are microcosms for rhetorically training the American population. Bandura’s learning theory centers on the power of observation as a learning mechanism divorced from any reward or punishment system. Television is the perfect example of an environment where viewers are removed from any culpability for the behaviors they witness on the screen. Yet, it still has an impact on future behavior based on three factors: 1) Characteristics of the person being observed 2) characteristics of the observer and 3) characteristics of the behavior (Bandura 4). Or consider the scholarship of Barry Brummett. He argues that we should include popular culture as an important location of rhetorical analysis because popular culture is more than just a reflection of reality, but the site of struggle: “I endorse the position that culture is the site of struggle in its own right and not a reflection or superstructural symptom of real conflicts occurring elsewhere” (Brummett, *Rhetorical Dimensions*XIX). This correlates with Burke’s ideas that texts both critical and “imaginative” reveal “answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose” (*Language as Symbolic Action*). Brummett encourages people to see popular culture as more than just “innocent enjoyment” and that “popular culture is also participation in rhetorical struggles over how society will be ordered.” He argues that “People need to see their

engagement with popular culture as participation in rhetorical struggles over who they are and how the world will be made, rather than as simply sitting in front of the "tube." Dramatism offers just the tool to deconstruct a text thoroughly to see the motivations of these rhetorical struggles.

Further discouraging passive consumption of culture, Brummet sees popular culture's potential as a place of empowerment for subjugated communities if we take the time to retrain viewers to recognize patterns in popular culture and to create new patterns. He says that popular culture can be used "to empower those who are disadvantaged by rhetorical influences of which they have been unaware because those influences hide in seemingly innocuous artifacts of culture" (Brummett, *Rhetorical Dimensions* XIII). He argues that "the business of rhetorical scholars is to teach people how to expand their repertoires for making experience and to show that the awareness that expanded repertoires must entail is subversive" (Brummett, *Rhetorical Dimensions* XXIII). As Brummet says, popular culture is a location of rhetorical struggle that shapes meaning of our world around us and therefore an important place of teaching patterns of thought. Training audiences to be more adaptable or flexing to different thought patterns is critical in influencing participation in highly subversive acts.

Brummet's last point about change encapsulates the point of my research. All popular culture attempts to build identification and thereby consubstantiation with its audiences. It is a method of building cohesion. Popular culture is both descriptive and prescriptive in that it describes what is in the world now, but also prescribes for audiences how future communication might occur. Brummet states that pop culture texts are analyzed so that the audience can determine how these signs, words, and images, that pop culture artifacts are made of work, and how those signs interact with each other to create motivation within themselves that are then available for the audience in confronting real-life problems (Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular*

Culture). So firstly, the venue of this artifact, namely television, is a useful place to analyze race relations of Native Americans and white America because it is a highly influential part of our world, yet as part of a fictitious world lacks the same level of legal repercussions that Native Rights Activists might face in current issues affecting tribes such as oil pipelines through Standing Rock, or development of the ANWR, or lesser known issues like criminal violence against Native American women who face two and a half times the rate of violence as women of other races in America, and twice the rate of rape or sexual assault (Keeler 13). Redirecting audiences to critically view shows like *Longmire* might in turn affect how we create Television shows and so make lasting change for a disenfranchised people.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

Western films hold a special place in the American imagination, yet they frequently carry the stigma of destructive stereotypes. To make a modern television show that captures what audiences love of the old West while navigating those stereotypes is not easy. At first glance, it is easy to brush off *Longmire* as a reiteration of old and damaging stereotypes. The strong, silent, and white hero saving the day with his trusty, Native American sidekick smacks of the same storyline found in *The Lone Ranger*. The Sheriff's values--rugged individualism and distrust of big government—and his beer drinking, gun loving, truck driving, technology-hating lifestyle, replicate the stereotypical Western cowboy. Yet there are aspects of the show that capture something new about law enforcement in the West today. The show was created in a culture that regularly sees police shootings in the media, where the role of ICE and border patrol are daily questioned—in other words, in a culture with an evolving sense of what law enforcement is and should be.

The unique geography of the West influenced this genre, and it is location that continues to play an integral part in shaping the modern narrative of law enforcement in *Longmire*. Looking closely at the show using the Pentadic ratios reveals some interesting ways location or scene impacts our perception of justice and cultural borders in our country. It demarcates distinctly different ways that the Native community and the Walt's community in the show justify their actions based on their relationship with the land.

The pilot episode offers evidence of conflicting emphasis on scene and agency respectively, and the differing value systems that they represent between Anglo and Native communities. It also reveals how the characters navigate these differences by identifying with the other or by acceding to the other.

In the pilot episode, while pursuing a lead on a suspect, Walt recklessly drives onto the reservation and is quickly surrounded by reservation cop cars. A ruckus ensues when the interim reservation police chief walks up and punches Walt in the face. We find out that Walt has been warned off of the reservation previously, yet he unhesitatingly crosses the border and seems to see no harm in his doing so. The reservation police take offense to Walt crossing into their jurisdiction and attack him. In this opening scene, the following Pentadic elements can be identified:

- Scene: Absaroka county/reservation¹
- Act: Walt crossing onto reservation land
- Agent: Walt
- Agency: Driving a Sheriff's vehicle across the border
- Purpose: Justice/solving murder case

If we analyze this scenario from Walt's perspective, he, the agent, feels fully justified in crossing the border. We can see this in his dogged pursuit of a lead on his case despite the scene² that bars him from acting as sheriff on the reservation. His purpose in finding justice is the most

¹ The scene is the boundary between the reservation and the county where Sheriff Walt Longmire has jurisdiction. Scene in Burke's dramatic pentad is the context in which an act is carried out. Those using rhetoric that emphasizes scene often come from materialistic philosophy that reduces all facts of the universe as explainable in physical terms (Burke, *Grammar of Motives* 131). The reservation in this context is marked by a physical boundary, but symbolically represents the separation of two cultures bound by a history of violence. It's important to note here that scene can refer to the context of a situation both as physical and symbolic context, which includes abstract and backgrounded ideas, norms, and assumptions that have bearing on actions. Scene can include such things as society, environment, eras, historical epochs, cultural movements, and social institutions (Rountree). The antagonism between the reservation and the white community, the legal battles, and corruption all inform the actions in this particular episode.

² Several legal battles in the 19th century sent precedent for federal jurisdiction over Indian affairs. The Cherokee *Nation v. Georgia* (1831) stated the political autonomy of Native tribes was reliant on the federal government, thus tribes were blocked from being able to sue the U.S. In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) the court ruled that the federal gov., not states had rights to impose regulation on Indian land. These cases make Indian Nations simultaneously independent from state control and dependent on federal gov. (*The Native American Sourcebook* 168).

important element that affects him as agent to cross the border. Walt uses his agency as a sheriff to access the reservation.

However, Mathias, the reservation police chief, has a much different perspective on Walt's actions. To Mathias, who represents the reservation in this opening episode, the scene of the reservation and the agency it affords Reservation police³ is the primary concern that should dictate how justice is pursued. To Mathias, Walt's act has underpinnings of a much more nefarious purpose than justice: it is an undermining of reservation authority and sovereignty. It is indicative of past and future violations of treaties and agreements between the sovereign Cheyenne nation and the US government. To Mathias, the reservation boundaries should dictate which agent should be given the agency to carry out the act for the purpose of justice.

This pilot episode clearly focuses on the reservation boundary as a critical place of dissention in administering justice in the West. The emphasis on the reservation scene first acts to highlight the legal rights of Native Americans. We see this by the show of force from the Native Police when they surround Walt's vehicle, effectively cutting his access off to the reservation. Mathias proceeds to punch Walt in the face. The legal rights of the Native police are further emphasized by Walt's compliance: He stops his deputy from attacking the reservation police and calmly compliments the police chief on his consistency: "He said he was going to knock me out the next time he saw me. You really keep your word, don't you Mathias." We further see white law enforcement backing down to the Native police when the reservation police chief gets his sarcastic quip in about white guilt: "you don't get it, you have no authority here, those are the treaty rules, and I know how important treaties are to you whites." Highlighting the

³ Most police departments in Indian Country are organized under the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 which grants tribes the option of establishing their own police force by contracting with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (*Tribal Law and Policy Institute*)

white guilt that handicaps any actions taken by Anglo culture, it strengthens the appearance of legal rights of the Native community.

However, while on the surface the scene of the reservation lends legality and authority to the Native police and emphasizes white guilt, there are other aspects of the rhetoric in this episode that show much more complex power dynamics. Eventually Mathias has to admit that the reservation police's legal authority is insufficient in bringing justice to their people, and the Native community accedes to Anglo intervention. We see this first when the reservation police chief realizes the pragmatics of joining forces with Walt. He says they would operate "Kind of like a joint taskforce." In dealing with the exigency of the crimes in front of them, they all choose to ignore the bigger cultural differences between them. In so doing, the police deflect to the agency of Walt's white community.

We also see this when Walt undermines the seriousness of his crossing the reservation line when he trivializes Mathias's anger: "I know you are pissed at me, but this is serious." The implication is that Mathias's anger is childish and that Walt's pursuit of justice is more important than the sovereignty of their nation and the boundary lines that demarcate that separation.

Walt's refusal to even acknowledge the boundary as he drives across it is the ultimate marker of white dominance in the pilot episode. He is a character who can afford to ignore boundaries because of his position's unassailable dominance. We see the power the position holds reinforced in the show by the competition that Walt faces for his job. For example, business men try to manipulate the sheriff for special favors, and even one of his deputies tries to usurp Walt's position.

In contrast, Mathias alludes to the disempowerment of reservation police when he says "We're kind of shorthanded around here... we lost our chief, Chief." He is alluding to earlier

events where Walt had revealed corruption in the reservation police and had the chief removed from office. The fact that Mathias refers to Walt as “Chief,” albeit snidely, speaks once again to the dominance of white culture over the sovereignty of the reservation. Mathias clearly hates it, but feels compelled to capitulate. He grudgingly promises Walt to pursue the case and “look into it for, you.”

However, Mathias’s capitulation is not enough for Walt. He wants justice first and foremost more than respecting boundary lines. Even his initial compliance towards Mathias disintegrates as the narrative unfolds. We see this when Walt later sneaks onto the reservation in the back of his friend’s pickup truck. It is questionable whether Walt ever had any intention of respecting the reservation boundaries at all.

But the ultimate undermining of Native legal authority comes from the conflicting messages from within the Native community. On the one hand, Mathias forbids Walt to cross onto the reservation land, but a few hours later, a Cheyenne friend smuggles Walt onto the very land he was expelled from. Moreover, he is welcomed by the victim of the crime on the reservation with the accusation, “Well, what the hell took you so long! She’s been missing for three months!” Clearly, the reservation community itself expected white intervention from the very beginning. These conflicting messages reinforce 1) the Cheyenne community’s pride and defensiveness towards their land rights: Mathias runs Walt off the reservation; 2) the lack of agency in the Native Community: the victim’s mother had been waiting for three months for somebody to find her missing daughter; 3) the defaulting to Anglo agency to fight crime: they secretly welcomed Walt onto the reservation, and 4) the need for white agents to find alternative means to help people on the reservation: Walt used his connections and friendship with the Cheyenne to sneak onto the reservation despite it being illegal.

Walt eventually closes the case but only with the help of his Cheyenne friend of thirty-seven years, Henry Standing Bear. It is, in fact, a Cheyenne man who committed the murder. It was regarding a sixteen year old half white, half Cheyenne girl caught up in a prostitution ring. The story progresses with Walt as the agent in charge with the agency of the law behind him; however, he only succeeds in closing the case with the aid of Henry who jokingly proposes using an “OIT” also known as “Old Indian Trick” to track down the murderer. The narrative emphasizes the importance of the relationship, showing how Walt could not have solved the case without a friendship with a Cheyenne man. In one revealing scene in his Sheriff’s truck driving down the road, Walt questions Henry: “Have I lost a step? I just had to ask you about the state of the sex trade in my own county.” Henry proceeds to advise Walt, and give him some perspective. He praises Walt saying “You’re an optimist, you don’t like thinking of the depravity of mankind.” But Henry also subtly reminds Walt that “just because a man tries to make up for his mistakes in one day, doesn’t mean the world is going to be so quick to forgive him.” Even though Walt has the agency of the law behind him, Henry, a Cheyenne man, is the voice that narrates Walt’s conscience.

While Walt’s agency dominates the narrative after the altercation with Mathias, the friendship Walt has with Henry Standing Bear is a reminder of the Native community’s interests. The voice that the show gives to Henry is an alternative agency that allows both communities to work together to find justice. Henry’s voice is not dictated by his relationship with the scene of the reservation. In fact, the bar he owns is outside the reservation border. He rides alongside Walt in his Sheriff’s truck as they search for answers to the murder. While the Native police force is depicted as useless, Walt’s friendship with Henry facilitates mutual justice for the communities. Mathias’s agency is tied to the scene, but Henry’s agency comes from his

willingness to identify with the other, capitalizing on their shared history together, rather than their respective jurisdictions.

These differing ratios are important because they account for the many clashes we see between the two cultures as they wrestle to solve murders that cross jurisdictional lines. While the Native and white communities both have good intentions, the manner in which they go about finding justice are informed by very different values. In particular, the emphasis on the boundaries of their reservation by the Native American culture, as well as the de-emphasis on location by the Anglo community is revealing. Location demarcates the boundaries of the law and therefore can facilitate or impede justice.

For the Native American community, the scene of the reservation paradoxically gives them their independence from white culture, while simultaneously victimizing them as products of their environment. The more emphasis Native characters put on location in the narrative, the less they are seen as agents of their own. The effect is that the audience sees the Native community in stasis. They are stuck expending their resources defending a land that was originally intended to imprison them, while lacking any real agents or agency to find justice for their community.

In contrast, the Anglo deflection from all things scene-related is equally telling. In the show, the Anglo community members try just about every aspect other than scene to justify their actions.1) They build friendships, adopt Native spiritual practices, provide medical and legal services to the reservation, and build thriving business between the communities. For example, we not only see Walt and Henry's friendship, we hear of his now deceased wife's work on the reservation offering aid in any way she could. We repeatedly see Walt participate in Native spiritual practices, and we see both the failure and success of legal and medical interventions

from the recounting of a fraudulent foster care system and forced sterilizations, to free legal and medical aid clinics. All of these white interventions speak of a culture grappling with its guilt over a past predicated on domination of the landscape. These acts of good will work to obscure the boundary lines of the reservation and in so doing, destroy that last stronghold of Native autonomy, reinforcing white cultural norms. The show is a deluge of white agency acting on the reservation people, never the reverse. The narrative choices show the Anglo community to be the primary agents of change.

So for both cultures, location plays an important role: For the Native community, the reservation legitimizes their actions while de-emphasizing their own agency. For the Anglo community, the scene is something of a moot point because it sees its aid as more important than its lack of jurisdictional rights on the reservation, and because to emphasize scene would be to dredge up our bloody past fighting over the land. The reservation boundaries are a physical reminder put between the cultures to try to end conflict, and to emphasize those boundaries is uncomfortable to an audience that would rather forget the past.

This jurisdictional conflict develops in the pilot episode, but the tensions and dramatic imbalances continue throughout the rest of the series. For example, in a later episode we see again how the Native police have to accede to white agency and are helpless to find justice on their own reservation. In one episode, the reservation police stage a crime scene and secretly move a murder victim's body from reservation land to Walt's jurisdiction. They know that if Walt were to find the body, he would be compelled to find justice, whereas, the complicated politics on the reservation prevent the police chief from upholding the law.

In another situation, we again see the internal conflict caused by the boundaries set on the reservation when the Tribal Council decides to change the blood quantum requirements for tribal

affiliation which has the effect of cutting out former tribe members from casino distributions. Not only are people losing money they counted on for survival, their identity as Cheyenne is stripped from them. The Cheyenne turn on one another as they vie for the privilege to call themselves Cheyenne. Marriages are broken, men are suicidal and homicidal, and children are disinherited. One livid Cheyenne yells at the tribal member responsible for the new blood quantum: “you ruined my marriage. My life has no worth anymore. When I find you, you will wish that you were already dead” (Season 1 episode 6 “Dogs, Horses, and Indians”).

Or another example, a Cheyenne mother voices the same distrust of the law after her daughter is raped by a strange white man: “It’s not surprising the girl ran away. She knows she’s not going to see any justice.” And later: “At least my daughter had the good luck to get raped by a white guy” alluding to the fact that there might be some payoff money for the mother from the rich white guy if her daughter kept silent (season 4 episode 6 “The Calling Back”). Such cynicism is indicative of the contrary impulse to protect their culture while realizing the limited protection their reservation offers them.

Another tribal elder points out the helplessness the Native community feels when he mentions a court case from 1978 that stripped the tribe of its rights to arrest and prosecute non-Indians who commit crimes on the reservation. Although recent laws were passed to allow prosecution in cases of domestic violence, the law does not cover crimes committed by a white stranger on the reservation. The elder says: “When a white man hands you law, you have to pay attention to the loopholes. They figured if a white man was stupid enough to date or marry an Indian girl, he has to suffer the consequences, but all other non-natives are still protected” (season 4 episode 6 “The Calling Back”). Repeatedly, the legal rights they are afforded as a

sovereign nation seem inadequate to the task of actually giving them agency to police their own community.

In the absence of agency from within the reservation boundaries, we see the local community seeking out ways to move into that vacuum. Most vividly we see this through Walt's thirty-seven year friendship with Henry. First, Henry's reputation lends Walt additional credibility. Henry is the default role model for fatherless Native children and repeatedly and quietly behind the scenes lends a helping hand to the reservation population. This friendship, despite cultural barriers and historic abuses, punctuates Walt's actions with the authority of good intention and the forgiveness that a strong relationship necessitates. It also seems to suggest that on a grander scale, this friendship is the solution to larger community cultural clashes. Henry has contacts on the reservation that Walt wouldn't normally have access to and Walt goes to Henry when he admits his failings and needs perspective on his life.

It is important to show Native acceptance of this help from Walt's community since they lack the legal right to interfere. To accomplish this support, the narrative repeatedly shows Henry as the voice of reason, the calm rational friend, and Walt's champion. As the show develops, there are hints that Walt somewhere in his past might have committed murder. The only one privy to Walt's internal angst over his situation is his friend Henry who sticks up for Walt: "you cannot confess to a crime you did not commit." To which Walt replies, "I'm not talking about confessing. I need to set things straight with the world and myself. ... I've been selfish. I have to make a sacrifice. ... I need Eagle feathers. I need your blessing to do something a white man is not supposed to do." Henry's friendship is the only thing that sustains Walt as he navigates the gray areas in life that the law cannot account for. Their friendship depicts the Native community's need for an outside agency to facilitate justice, while white agency needs guidance

beyond what the law affords them. Friendship offers a voluntary conflict-resolution mechanism in the plot that works when the law fails.

Yet despite the advantages their friendship offers, it does not escape censor from other characters. Henry's friendship is perceived by some as cavorting with the enemy and a capitulation to an assimilation mentality. Once critic says, "Maybe I should follow your example and pretend not to be Indian at all. Red on the outside and white on the inside." This paradoxical needing white agency while simultaneously rejecting it and affirming their independence is a vicious cycle throughout the series.

The conflict initiated in the pilot episode and continued through the series articulates the challenge of upholding a physical boundary between two cultures which fails to account for the shared resources that require a more permeable border. It is about a paradox between preserving cultural autonomy and needing to assimilate to survive. A Pentadic analysis of the pilot episode identifies the complex interplay between the white character's motivations and the Native character's motivations. Because white agency conflicts with the scene of Native power, namely the reservation, both parties have to negotiate the situation by identifying with the other and shifting their narrative to accommodate. The Native characters struggle with the choice to neutralize their land as being paramount in his decision-making processes while Walt must find an alternative agency to legitimize his pursuit of justice. They must emphasize the common enemy of murder rather than the conflicted past of the two communities. The characters who rely on Native land rights to justify their actions are immobilized by its ineffectiveness; they become victims of their environment and lack the agency to protect their communities, whereas those who adjust their narratives find new agencies that allow them to pursue justice.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As a recap, the pilot episode reveals two conflicting ratios: Walt relies on his authority as a lawman to authorize his pursuit of justice in both his county and on the reservation. Mathias's rhetoric challenges Walt's authority and focuses on scene as being important for establishing authority. This begins a precarious tension between the two communities which the characters attempt to reconcile by exploring supplemental agencies to leverage and legitimize their actions. Friendship is used by characters to facilitate restoration between the communities while maintaining a sense of legality. This new agency moves away from the impersonality of the law and focuses on the power of the individual to choose to do right despite the law, despite the scene, despite the circumstances, and history.

However, while friendship helps the characters find resolution for each episode, there are some important aspects to consider. The agency is ultimately framed as strictly tools of the Walt's white community. The adequacy of this agency, ultimately, is measured by the legal expectations of an American audience. So the agent and his agency reinforce white cultural values, neglecting the possibility of justice centered on Native values. By focusing on agency rather than other legitimizing factors such as land rights, it conditions attitudes in the American audience that reparations between cultures revolve strictly around relationships. In so doing the show deflects from potential solutions that might stem from Native American land rights and the autonomy it affords them.

The creators of *Longmire* missed the opportunity to use the reservation scene to highlight tribal sovereignty and legal structure, rather than focusing strictly on assimilation mentality. The favorite characters in the show are those who downplay tribal boundaries on the reservation. And those Native characters who seek to advocate for tribal sovereignty are often depicted as corrupt.

Putting corruption of tribal officials in front of the audience reinforces the colonial power structure of outside authority. Instead of offering Walt and his lone wolf mentality as the sole means of justice, the show could more accurately depict the reality of legal jurisdiction between reservation police and law enforcement. Where Walt does everything in his power to criticize federal agents, the FBI often intervenes successfully in the major crimes on reservations. The FBI works on nearly 200 Indian reservations in conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (FBI.gov). The Safe Trails Task Forces was designed specifically “to unite the FBI with other federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in a collaborative effort to combat the growth of crime in Indian Country (FBI.gov). The show, in contrast, depicts the FBI as incompetent city folk, and leaves the audience believing Walt to be the only solution to injustice for the Native community. While law enforcement has and still is failing Native Communities in many ways, it is doubtful that the solution is going to be found through one man. To reinforce that perspective is a result of naïve idealism coming from the mythos of rugged individualism in the West. For television to continue fostering this perspective is as irresponsible as the interdepartmental turf wars over jurisdiction.

It is significant that the main characters down play the scene of the reservation considering its historic significance and the emotional impact on the characters. As Burke suggests, scene often operates in tandem with agent as a scene is not simply the physical aspects, but is colored by the ideas with which we imbue the physical scene. Land has historically been important in early encounters with Native communities and has been shaped by the ideas of Manifest Destiny. Land is what drew pioneers west and dictated legislation that disenfranchised Native Americans. The early rhetoric of the pioneers describing the land as a desert and wilderness served to justify white settlement while erasing the memory of centuries of Native

occupation. Later rhetoric emphasizing the economic value of land in white agrarian culture justified moving Natives to reservations, and then it was the Dawes Act, and then the Indian Reorganization Act, and so on, all aiming at reshaping Native American values regarding land ownership and use. So much legislation regarding Natives and the rhetoric to mobilize this legislation was predicated on land. Yet this show diminishes the scene of the reservation and any positive aspects of that boundary between communities. Instead it focuses on white agency facilitated by close friendships between the two cultures. In so doing, the show conditions the audience to downplay the role of scene in decision making regarding Native American policy in America today. It is as if the reservation land can no longer be manipulated in good conscience by a white man, so it has become a non-entity in the show. Where the land was once the center of the conflict, it is now portrayed as a ball and chain for the Native community that clings to it.

These rhetorical choices in the show reflect the cultural clashes already in existence in our world as well as reference the historical narratives that inform our current situation on reservation lands; scene and the physical resources it encompasses is at the center of a lot of Native American issues whether it be environmental racism at Standing Rock or the drilling in the ANWR, or Native gambling casinos, or unreported crimes against Native American women on the reservation. The pattern this show initiates for future interaction and how we might find agency in future conflicts with Native communities diminishes scene as a means of justifying our actions and seems, rather, to focus on less tangible measurements of friendship to form solidarity between communities. Real life Mathiases center their arguments on the independence that the reservation land gives them, but this show suggests that this dependence on the land is disempowering in the sense that it depicts Natives as products of their environment and not

agents in control of their own future. In such a narrative, the land is more of a prison than a haven.

On the surface, de-emphasizing scene might seem to be a more peaceful resolution to conflict between communities. It puts the focus from a world built on ownership of physical property to a world concerned with relationships. Maybe it is a natural progression from a nation whose identity was built on the existence of the physical frontier to shift to whatever abstract manifestation of that is available, that these new agencies are in fact new frontiers. By emphasizing white agents, it supports the idealism of the mythos of the western man. However, on some level, the physical resources that land provides are integral to the identity of the people who occupy it. To forget the role of the reservation in conversations between Native American communities and their neighboring communities is to vastly underestimate its importance. As Elliott West wrote, “the imagined West is not so different today from a century and a half ago. The persistence of that imagined West, furthermore, has had a profound, continuing influence on the West of reality. In the end, we cannot separate those two geographies—the Western State of Mind and the actual western states” (West 65). America as a growing nation put so much emphasis on land it is impossible to escape the effects of that narrative now, and would be impossible to forget as we face land use issues today.

It is this irreconcilable relationship to the land that perhaps keeps the ongoing tension within the show as men like Mathias find themselves unable to separate their identity from the land that defines them. The rhetoric in this show should inform the way we continue to look at law enforcement in our country in relation to minority groups. Nor should we take the assumptions of our relationship with the land for granted as it has such dramatic and differing effects on how we find equity in the world.

While this show gives narrative voice to characters from the Cheyenne reservation, there are limitations to how the Native Americans are portrayed. The white sheriff is given all of the agency, and the rhetoric favors the agent as the sole means to justice in the show. What would happen if television shows reversed the paradigm and gave the agency to the Native characters and showed Native communities creating their own solutions? What if instead of placing the Natives as victims of their environment, they were portrayed as agents in control of their own destinies? It would encourage a different perspective on what sovereignty means both to the Native Community and the American public.

What if the reservation itself were given more significance in the show in a way that reinforced the sovereignty of Native communities? While the general American audience has been trained to associate Native communities with nature, the average person has no working knowledge of what physical realities sovereignty gives the Native Communities. As a result, Americans trivialize its significance. What if television shows chose, rather, to build respect for jurisdictional lines? Burke says rhetoric is humans making sense of our actions in hindsight; however, television as a vehicle of fiction also has the power to create narratives that influence future actions. By choosing rhetoric that favors different ratios, it would create multi-dimensional landscape of the Native Community and perhaps improve how the general American populace perceives and interacts with the Native communities.

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