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ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC AND AN ECOLOGY OF TRANSCENDENCE:

A RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF *AWAKE, A DREAM FROM STANDING ROCK*

By

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Bachelor of Arts – Communication Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2019

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts – Communication Studies

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2021

Thesis Approval

The Graduate College
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

July 1, 2021

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Environmental Rhetoric and an Ecology of Transcendence: A Rhetorical Criticism of *Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock*

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Abstract

My project blends Burkean theory with Indigenous rhetoric to argue that the counter-story of *Awake* proposes an ecology of transcendence to make sense of human-nature relationships. I wanted to analyze *Awake A Dream From Standing Rock*. The documentary is explicitly about Indigenous peoples. This documentary tells the story of the peaceful protests and resistance led by Native people at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation or Lakota Tribe in North Dakota. The activists were protecting the water otherwise known as water protectors/warriors from the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The assembly of DAPL is intended to carry perforated oil through independent (indigenous) land and go under the Missouri River. However, the problem is, the Missouri River is used as a water source for the Lakota Tribe (Standing Rock) and 18 million other people living in the United States. The documentary includes interviews with protestors and follows the controversy surrounding the pipeline. Moreover, this project operates under environmental rhetoric because of the symbols and frames used to speak about the environment. I link Burkean terminology to Indigenous concepts to gain a better understanding of how we come to know and care about the environment through our symbolic choices, terministic screens, and representations of human-nature relationships. I argue that the documentary invites viewers to feel eco-guilt, to environmental loss and pollution, but offers an ecology of transcendence as a route to redemption. In my analysis I focused on two different metaphors that were pervasive and important rhetorical features: the metaphors of war and the dream. In examining these metaphors, I pay attention to how the film selects and deflects aspects of Western and Indigenous ideologies to promote new understandings for the audience.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Emma Frances Bloomfield for taking me on as her advisee. There are not enough words in this world to describe the gratitude, appreciation, and indebtedness I feel towards you. I feel beyond lucky to have gotten the opportunity to work with you.

Thank you to my advisory committee for their helpful feedback, advice, and support. This became a stronger project because of all of you.

Shoutout to the dudes!! I could not have even gotten through grad school without all of you. You all have such a special space in my heart, and I have mad love for each of you.

Lastly, none of this would have been possible without the love and support of my parents (Bill and Dani), brother (Matt) and two best friends (Lizzie and Megan). Thank you for picking me up when I couldn't do it for myself, being patient with me, being my cheerleaders, and overall getting me across the finish line. This degree is in honor of all of you because you all helped me get here.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Congresswoman Deb Haaland is the first Native American woman to serve in a presidential cabinet. This step towards Indigenous representation points to the long history of not including Indigenous voices in positions of political office and power. Now with Haaland as Interior Secretary, "Indigenous people will for the first time see a Native American at the table where the highest decisions are made," in particular a position in charge of tribal relations and national lands (Knickmeyer, 2020). Indigenous people are often viewed as the original environmentalists because of their interrelationships to the land (Simpson, 2017). However, Indigenous folk are often silenced, unheard, and their land is seized and exploited.

For example, there was a plan to build the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) under the Missouri River, through Indigenous lands. This pipeline would have transported fracked oil to 18 million other people in the US, but also through the water source of the Standing Rock tribe. In February of 2016, the Trump administration approved the building of the pipeline despite the act of the Standing Rock protest and many violations of their Indigenous treaties. However, in March of 2020, DAPL was shutdown pending a full environmental review. Mike Faith a member of the Standing Rock tribe said, "Today is a historic day for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the many people who have supported us in the fight against the pipeline…This pipeline should have never been built here. We told them that from the beginning" (Zniber, 2020). The DAPL is a type of *extractivismo*, or extractive capitalism, which exploits Indigenous lands for capital gain and resource extraction (Gómez-Barris, 2017).

The DAPL and Indigenous resistance to its construction are the subjects of the film, *Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock* (2017). In collaboration with local tribes, the documentary shares the stories of the Standing Rock tribe fighting for the rights to their sacred land and

peacefully resisting the establishment of the DAPL. *Awake*, as an environmental documentary, is one (discursive / rhetorical) channel through which Indigenous people and their voices can be heard instead of ignored or silenced. Therefore, I analyze this documentary because of its intersection with environmental justice and the importance of highlighting the voices of Indigenous communities. In the case of *Awake*, I explore how amplifying the voices that are usually deflected or silenced motivates an audience to occupy different visions and ways of seeing in order to feel, think, and act differently regarding human-nature relationships.

This project is comprised of a rhetorical analysis of the documentary *Awake* and the subsequent protests at Standing Rock by blending rhetorical concepts from Kenneth Burke with Indigenous approaches to rhetoric. I argue that the Indigenous "cosmovision," human-nature interrelationships, and inversions of Western perspectives promoted in *Awake* offers an ecology of transcendence to empower audiences to become more environmentally active. Specifically, I combine Burkean concepts of guilt and terministic screens to analyze how *Awake* encourages an ethos of responsibility toward and interconnectedness with the Earth.

To support my argument about *Awake*, I explore how the film selects and deflects aspects of Western and Indigenous perspectives, what metaphors guide the expression of these perspectives, and the implications of these metaphors for audiences' feelings of eco-guilt and motivate audiences to adopt an ethos of responsibility toward the environment. Eco-guilt is an important rhetorical feature of environmental documentaries and is defined as guilt brought upon by recognizing nonhuman life that "we have harmed or whose integrity, stability, and beauty we have failed to protect" (Jensen, 2019, p. 147). Engaging with eco-guilt can motivate audiences to act or think differently in relation to the environment. Unlike individualized guilt brought about

through scapegoating, an ecology of transcendence calls for collective and systemic changes to reimagine human-nature relationships.

There is a powerful connection between rhetoric and environmental studies. Phaedra Pezzullo (2016) states that "rhetorical studies has a great deal to offer environmental matters, particularly embracing increased reflexivity regarding the persuasive and constitutive power of stories and arguments to shape our values and beliefs" (p. 26). Rhetorical criticism is thus an appropriate and insightful tool to exploring the environmental messages within *Awake* and how they function to promote Indigenous perspectives on the environment. Pezzullo (2001) also states, "By examining the inventional resources communities possess, I conclude, rhetorical scholars more fully may appreciate the ways in which citizen groups are able to interrupt and/or reframe discursive practices that sustain oppressive environmental conditions" (p. 3). The stories being told in *Awake* are uniquely Indigenous and thus challenge Western terminisitic screens and hierarchies by prioritizing Indigenous language, perspectives, and actions.

Awake shows those interruptions and reframings of human-nature relationships by centering Indigenous voices aspiring to disrupt those Western understandings that are dominated by colonialism and capitalism. Furthermore, Pezzullo (2001) argues that spaces where people speak up, or "rhetorical forums", "are potentially powerful for environmental and social change because they offer vital spaces for critiquing dominant narratives" (Pezzullo, 2001, p. 6). Instead of groups being created in these settings, *Awake* creates on in the public sphere. First, I expand on theories of environmental rhetoric and give a brief overview of studies that analyze environmental documentaries. Then, I outline my methodology by discussing Burkean and Indigenous concepts and how they can be productively put into conversation with each other to

challenge Western-centered rhetorical perspectives. Finally, I contextualize and describe the artifact of *Awake* and the key arguments in my analysis.

Environmental Rhetoric

The impacts of environmental injustices have become so severe that disciplines outside of ecology and other sciences have studied environmental topics as an interdisciplinary endeavor (Cagle & Tillery, 2015). For example, communication scholars have used their interests in rhetoric, symbolism, and metaphors to enhance environmental research into how the ways we frame the environment affects how we treat it (de Onís, 2012; Lakoff, 2010). Moreover, Danielle Endres (2020) invites scholars to think of the importance of this research by stating, "Environmental communication scholars are invested in knowledge production that addresses the relationship between humans and the environment" (p. 2). Therefore, scholars in communication think of "environmental criticism [as] a subarea within environmental communication that engages with the role of symbolic and material forms of rhetoric in deconstructing, mediating, and composing relationships between humans and the environment" (Endres, 2020, p. 3). Endres's conceptualization of environmental criticism centers environmental communication research around the symbols and frames used to speak about and how we know the environment.

Pezzullo and Robert Cox (2017) echo this focus on symbols by arguing that "the discipline of environmental communication examines 'the pragmatic and constitutive modes of expression -- the name, shaping, orienting, and negotiating -- of our ecological relationships in the world, including those with nonhuman systems, elements, and species'" (p. 13). Naming and shaping are important in environmental communication because dominant ways of seeing establish what George Lakoff (2010) would describe as potentially exploitative nature-culture relationships. Lakoff states,

> Let us begin with the very concept of the "environment." The Environment Frame sees the environment as separate from, and around, us. Yet, we are not separate from Nature. We are an inseparable part of Nature. Yet we separate self from other, and conceptualize Nature as other. This separation is so deep in our conceptual system that we cannot simply wipe it from our brains. It is a terribly false frame that will not go away." (pp. 76-77)

Pushing back against these binaries, scholars have conceptualized other modes of thinking and adopt "lexical intertwinings" to change how we speak about the environment (Milstein, 2011, p. 21). For example, the compound terms "humanature" (Milstein, 2011), "womanature" (Bloomfield, 2020b) and "naturecultures" (Merrick, 2017) seek to "explod[e] dualisms" between the human and more-than-human world (Merrick, 2017, p. 105).

These binaries are often harmful, not only because they create inaccurate separations, but also because they create and reinforce hierarchies of power. Tema Milstein (2011) argues that our language separates people from other humans, nonhuman animals, and nature (p. 27), which, in turn frames the nonhuman part of the binary as subordinated others. This othering impacts nonhuman animals, nature, and even women, rendering them as systematically oppressed and exploited by dominant frames of thinking. The linking of the exploitation of women and nonhuman nature is espoused by ecofeminists and climate justice advocates, who oppose othering non-dominant groups such as nonhuman animal and plant life and marginalized populations, and challenge hegemonic structures (e.g., de Onís, 2012; Gaard, 2015; Mellor, 1997; Milstein & Dickinson, 2012). This othering justifies exploitive views and practices and divorces humans from the knowledge that they are, in fact, animals and part of nature themselves.

Language, symbols, and frames play integral roles in environmental attitudes and representations of the environment. The ways we talk about the environment shape our attitudes toward them, functioning as filters that "direct the attention into some channels rather than others" (Burke, 1966, p. 45). Kenneth Burke calls these various symbolic choices "terministic screens" and notes that they are important "not only for what they highlight, emphasize, and "select," but also for what they "deflect" from consideration (Burke, 1966, p. 45). Terministic screens center how the language we use necessarily highlights and emphasizes some things and undermines and hides others. Without our sight or attention to these screens we do not consider it, value it, attend to it, or include it in our decision-making and/or communication.

The metaphor of the screen is linked to Burke's focus on orientation and sight as embodied senses (Poole, 2020). This project extends the metaphor of sight to think about ways of intentionally seeing and valuing the environment as linked to our language and as making certain perspectives and insights possible. Consequently, people may only see one thing in focus, ignoring everything that surrounds them. This is a similar process in education, when learning to do something, one might "unlearn" to do something else or only learn one way among many others, which Burke refers to as a trained incapacity. One way of seeing the environment, therefore, may lead to a "blindness"[1] toward other ways of seeing. Our terministic screens change how we perceive the world and are deeply connected to what we are interested in and, consequently, our interests reflect how we see the world.

Emphasizing how terministic screens inform our behaviors, Sonja Foss (2018) argues that "our particular vocabularies constitute a selection and deflection of reality, providing clues to our

[1] I use the term "blindness" in quotation marks to note its common usage when discussing terministic screens and frames, but also that its usage is ableist. If I do use the term, it is reflexive of this application and its deployment in the metaphor of sight that appears in Kenneth Burke's theories and also in sayings such as "ways of seeing" and perspective, which are related to sight.

motives or why we do what we do" (p. 368). Similar to Lakoff's (2010) framing concept, Foss (2018) links choice in words not only as a natural function of language but also one of strategy to communicate one's message (p. 73). Both framing and terministic screens involve selecting and emphasizing certain symbols, while deflecting and de-emphasizing others. Therefore, they both function to restrict one's understanding and increase attention to certain aspects of the environment at the expense of others.

Similarly, Emma Frances Bloomfield (2019) argued that language choices, specifically metaphors, function as terministic screens in terms of how we think of contexts such as the economy and the environment. In her analysis of metaphors of energy and economics, Bloomfield (2019) notes that metaphors can work as "rhetorical vehicles" through which dominant and oppressive ideologies "substitute, deflect, and reduce the 'public' in public deliberation and the 'environment' in environmental communication" (p. 324). Therefore, a metaphor analysis is important because metaphors also select and deflect. Terministic screens operate above metaphors and dictate what metaphors we might choose and what the interpretations of them might be. Metaphors can thus open us to new perspectives and ways of seeing but they can also be constraining. Lakoff (2010) argues that these constraints function at the neural level, affecting the ways that our brains process and make sense of information:

> All of our knowledge makes use of frames, and every word is defined through the frames it neurally activates. All thinking and talking involves 'framing' and since frames come in systems, a single word typically activates not only its defining frame, but also much of the system its defining frame is in. (pp. 71-72)

In this sense, we understand that framing can be analyzed down to the level of individual words and symbols, and how pervasive framing is in our conceptions of reality. In considering framing

and terministic screens as part of environmental communication, we can be reflexive about our symbolic choices that constrain and direct how we come to know and care about the environment.

I analyzed *Awake* in order to examine the role environmental media play in the ways that people frame and make sense of the environment. Mediated images of the environment are incredibly influential, from news media to entertainment media, in shaping public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Doyle, 2011). For example, Vincent Campbell (2014) explored how natural disasters in entertainment television affect people's perceptions of environmental risk. Kylie Caraway and Brett Caraway (2020) examined children's films and how they foster environmental attitudes in children. Films have been a prominent area of study for environmental messages, but many of this research focuses on fictional entertainment films (e.g., Bloomfield, 2020b; Caraway & Caraway, 2020; Moore, 2016, Von Burg, 2016). Our media consumption choices also function as terministic screens to direct our attention to certain stories and voices over others. While some stories are fiction, others are presented as factual, such as documentaries, which can also shape the degree to which we connect with and care about the portrayed characters and their situation. In the next section, I further discuss why environmental documentaries are particularly powerful environmental messages.

Environmental Documentaries

Of the variety of environmental media I could analyze for messages about the environment, why documentaries? Compared to fictional entertainment films, environmental documentaries, in representing real people and places, function as both informative and entertaining forms of rhetoric. For example, Nadeau (2011) states, "Documentary films have been growing in popularity in recent years and have been used as a way of informing the public

about a variety of topics" (as quoted in Males & Val Aelst, 2020, p. 2). Environmental documentaries also set agendas for what people talk about by raising awareness about silenced stories and voices. Loretta Rowley and Kevin Johnson (2016) say,

> We are reminded that those stories will be told by human values, symbols, and sensations. As humans tell such stories, anthropomorphic anthropocentrism is a tool whereby environmental communication scholars are able to ponder what those stories tell about ourselves, while also thinking through the paradoxes of the ecological and environmental frameworks. (p. 13)

Their case study on the film *Blackfish* becomes more than just a film about orcas, but also about human existence and what makes it meaningful. Additionally, documentaries typically contain calls to action that encourage conversations on these topics and for audiences to take action.

In their analysis of environmental documentaries, Florian Arendt and Jörg Matthes (2016) studied how documentaries can encourage those with a strong connection to nature to donate to an environmental non-profit. Arendt and Matthes (2016) call this our "connectedness to nature" (p. 454), which sheds light on an individual's perception about the magnitude to which they are a part of nature (Arendt & Matthes, 2016, p. 454). Essentially, their argument is that if individuals see themselves as a part of nature, they will not harm it, but instead contribute to its sustenance, therefore, research has found that self-nature associations are malleable. Jennifer Males and Peter Van Aelst (2020) similarly argue that environmental documentaries carry a power over audiences. They state,

> Knowing the extent to which it set the agenda for the issue of plastic pollution is important since it indicates the potential powerful role documentaries can have in setting the agenda for the issues they advocate as well as the possibility of prompting them as a

> viable media source to increase public saliency on certain issues. (Males & Van Aelst, 2020, p. 1)

Documentaries can contribute to public discourse around a central topic by representing viewpoints not typically heard or amplified by dominant vehicles and interests, or by raising awareness about important social topics and movements. Representation in documentaries can lead to more conversations and communication about their topics because audiences are focusing on the new information, at least within the terministic screen of the filmmaker.

My artifact for analysis is *Awake,* so I am particularly concerned with deflected and silenced voices of indigenous peoples. Documentaries are a way to share stories that are otherwise untold and elevate the voices of "people denied a seat at the table" (Opel, 2007, p. 111, emphasis removed). For example, Sharada Orihuela and Andrew Hageman (2011) examine two films and write about ecological identity by means of racialized and gendered labor in the maquiladora industry along the US/Mexico border. Orihuela and Hageman (2011) state,

> Within an ecotone approach, the ecological implications of human-machine interfaces are a critical component for analyzing these films and their representations of the US/Mexico border, especially given the context of industrial/post industrial capitalism and the "technological divides" these interfaces are capable of creating, reinforcing, and also deconstructing. (p. 174)

This research uncovers the exploitation of the maquiladora industry shown in the documentaries which would otherwise be silenced or untold. In a similar vein, *Awake* (2017) also points out the importance of the Standing Rock protest and Indigenous activism to elevate their voices. By focusing on often silenced voices, the terministic screen of the audience is altered from dominant ways of seeing to attending to Indigenous perspectives.

In addition to being informative, environmental documentaries can be persuasive in their calls for change and challenging existing systems of power. Specifically, Andy Opel (2007) analyzes two documentary films that draw attention to environmental change, as well as focus on neoliberal policies that impact people and places (p. 111). He writes about the importance of challenging power structure through documentary, noting:

> As long as environmentalists, human rights advocates, labor organizers and other representatives of civil society are closed out of the process, the consolidation of class power will continue, and with that consolidation comes the homogenization of global culture and the widening gyre of environmental destruction. (Opel, 2007, p. 117)

Environmental destruction is carried about by dominant perspectives, which are situated as the norm, and deflect from marginalized perspectives. As Bloomfield (2019) argued, one of the most "troubling features" of dominant ideologies are their "invisibility," which enables them to be uncritiqued and unchallenged (p. 324). Without methods or outlets for correcting these deflections, such as through documentaries, oppressive power structures such as capitalism and *extractivismo* will continue to function unchecked. Documentaries can push boundaries and strive for activism because they draw attention to the need for environmental justice. Documentaries are part of our media resources for constructing environmental knowledge; without those stories being told, activism and alternatives to our current system are silenced, untold, and forgotten.

Examples of common themes in these documentary criticisms include (but are not limited to): voice, access, and attention; who can speak, who has access to spaces to speak, and who is heard. Activists, environmentalists, and Indigenous communities are being left out of the conversation and are being silenced. The documentaries work against this silencing and

deflection to emphasize different perspectives and thereby empower environmental voices, including Indigenous ones. In line with this paper's focus on perception and orientation, environmental documentaries have a visual component that provides a rich source of non-verbal rhetorical influence. In other words, both discourse and images in environmental documentaries are sources of environmental symbols and framing. Documentaries provide a visual framework to the stories being told and provide an emotional depiction to them.

Environmental documentary films draw on emotions and captivate audiences mentally and psychologically. Melissa Moore and Janet Yang (2020) created two studies testing whether themes of environmental video games enhance and enact environmental behavior and desire to participate in environmental behavior in the future (p. 522). The authors examine emotional responses to the game, specifically guilt, during and after gameplay to see if their attitudes and behaviors toward the environment have changed (Moore & Yang, 2020, p. 523). Furthermore, the authors write, "guilt, as a moral emotion, can be an effective trigger for future environmental behaviors" (Moore & Yang, 2020, p. 531). Just like video games, documentaries invite audiences to feel guilt through sharing untold stories and giving voice to silenced groups to motivate action.

To dive deeper into these framings, silencings, and deflections the environmental rhetoric of nature documentaries, I turn to Burke as a foundational theorist of orientation and framing (e.g., Poole 2020). Therefore, I use Burkean theory to understand ways of seeing and unseeing apparent in nature documentaries in order to make sense of human-nature relationships writ large. In this next section, I expand on how Burkean concepts can help illuminate important rhetorical aspects of environmental rhetoric, such as *Awake*, and how my approach to rhetorical criticism on *Awake* should be tempered with Indigenous theories.

Burke, Indigeneity, and the Environment

In taking a rhetorical approach to understanding the environment, I use Burke's concepts of terministic screens, guilt, and transcendence. Acknowledging Burke's Western, patriarchal perspectives on rhetoric theory, it is important to extend his theories in new, productive, and generative ways alongside Indigenous concepts. Drawing on Condit's (1992) arguments that Burke does not fully capture issues of race, gender, and identity in his theories, I move into a "post-Burkean" analysis by combining dramatism with Indigenous scholarship. To reflect the documentary's focus about Indigenous voices and the relationship between environmentalism and indigeneity, the analysis is informed by theories of colonialism, ethos of responsibility, and cosmovision. This combined perspective of Burkean ecocriticism proposes that *Awake* fosters an ecology of transcendence for audiences to adopt and enact.

Burke's Concepts

In this section, I introduce the Burkean concepts of guilt, terministic screens, and transcendence. In the guilt-redemption cycle, Burke argues that when the normalized "order" of society has been violated, symbolic pollution is created. People seek to restore the order by purifying the guilt. In this sense, Burke claims that guilt is the ultimate motivator for discourse. Although people want to follow the order, they ultimately violate them and feel guilty in failing to uphold the order. Transgressions against the order are a condition of creating rules; "no one can be part of hierarchies without violating them from time to time" (Brummett, 1981, p. 255). This cycle of creating order, violating the order, and purging the corresponding guilt makes up the guilt-redemption cycle. Barry Brummett (1981) noted that senses of order can be established through "capitalism" and "expansion" and other hierarchies that work to control "difference, strangeness, and alienation between people" (p. 255). Consequently, "Guilt is a powerful motive

because it threatens a lapse into uncontrolled mystery" (Brummett, 1981, p. 255). Seeing hierarchies as an ingrained part of language centers Burke within a Western tradition, as opposed to a more cyclical, communal, and collective perspective offered by Indigenous rhetorics (Kimmerer, 2013; Lake, 1991; Simpson, 2007).

By applying this cycle, and the concept of guilt more generally, I analyze *Awake* in terms of where blame is laid and the corresponding actions prescribed to restore the order. In the case of the environment, the pollution is both literal and figurative – the Earth is being harmed by exploitative behaviors. The hierarchies of capitalism and colonialism support an order that justifies exploiting the Earth, damaging the environment, and dismissing the concerns of Indigenous people. In expressing a different hierarchy and challenging the need for hierarchies at all, environmental documentaries may then turn to guilt and blame as rhetorical resources to engage audiences in reflections on their own environmental behaviors. This reflection may be spurred by visual and discursive presentations of the pollution and the polluted, and what and who are being harmed by current practices of *extractivismo*. Calling this particular type of guilt "eco-guilt," I examine how eco-guilt is deployed in *Awake* as a way to challenge existing hierarchies.

Eco-guilt can be viewed through the tragic frame which inform whether scapegoating, mortification, or transcendence are appropriate paths to purge the guilt. Bloomfield (2020a) provides definitions of these terms:

> scapegoating, the act of placing the guilt onto another and then, figuratively or literally, killing them; mortification, the act of placing the guilt onto oneself and then, figuratively or literally, sacrificing oneself; or transcendence, the act of recasting the guilt into something trivial or beneficial. (pp. 197-198)

A tragic frame views eco-guilt through what Casey Schmitt (2019) calls "scapegoat ecology," where the blame for an environmental transgression is focused "on a single person for being particularly harmful to the environment" (p. 152). Alternatively, an ecological transcendence may purge eco-guilt through inviting guilty parties to correct their behavior, rather than through sacrifice or ridicule (Schmitt, 2019).

When all of humanity is implicated in eco-guilt, transcendence is performed, "whereby guilt becomes the burden of society at large" (Bloomfield, 2020a, p. 200). Purging eco-guilt performs transcendence, therefore, we can collectively begin to align our thinking and actions to create a new order. This approach to eco-guilt performs a type of ecological transcendence, where the moral element of society can be redeemed for their mistakes through universal acknowledgement of collective guilt. Subsequently, an ecology of transcendence offers people the ability to complete remedial actions to rid themselves of guilt for prior mistakes, such as environmental transgressions or apathy.

Brummett (1981) noted that transcendence was originally conceptualized by Burke as an act of avoidance: "This avoidance of guilt puts the sin into a perspective which redefines it as 'not-a-sin,' as a virtue or as the requirement of some higher and nobler hierarchy" (p. 256). However, transcendence can also be a positive engagement with guilt when it considers "factors or nuances in what is often a systemic problem rather than the fault of a single actor" (Schmitt, 2019, p. 160). Transcendence makes us question the ability of single actors to be to blame for complex issues such as climate change, "no matter how horrible that actor may or may not be" (Schmitt, 2019, p. 160). Instead, transcendence points toward how systems and overarching hierarchies are at fault and how individual actors may be able to pool their efforts towards ameliorating the system.

Scapegoating and transcendence orient us to different environmental solutions that we are capable of seeing. I conceptualize the main difference between them to be that scapegoating illustrates a Western ideology, where individual transgressors can be purged while the orders of capitalism and colonialism are left untouched. Alternatively, transcendence performs a more ecocentric, Indigenous perspective whereby the interconnections of life reject the opportunity for individual scapegoating. By comparing these two forms of purging guilt, I analyze how eco-guilt emerges in *Awake* and the differing perspectives it offers to correct for environmental damages.

Lili Pâquet (2020) argues that a decolonial approach to rhetoric shifts away from persuasion and instead focuses on "rhetorical exchanges" of ideas and meaning. Drawing from Burke's concepts of identification and consubstantiality and applying them to climate change, Pâquet (2020) calls for rhetoric to be viewed as a means for "facilitating empathy" as opposed to a means to achieve persuasion (p. 269). Instead of overt persuasion regarding the DAPL, *Awake* facilitates empathy for an Indigenous perspective that offers a shift away from a Western way of viewing the environment. In line with this approach, I now explain how the Burkean concepts I have described relate to Indigenous concepts I use in my analysis of *Awake*.

Indigenous Concepts

In this section, I discuss the concepts of colonialism, cosmovisions, ethos of responsibility, and environmental justice and how they can be productively incorporated into Burkean theory. Indigenous communities have been repeated targets of settler colonialism and extractive colonialism. In the case of the former, non-Indigenous communities steal land to settle in it, thereby displacing Indigenous communities from their land. Jen Preston (2017) links settler colonialism to neoliberalism and free-market capitalism, which anchor "settle claims to Indigenous lands in the rhetoric of individualism, private property, and capital power that is

state-supported" (p. 353). Extractive colonialism is also fueled by capitalism and the exploitation of land, but for natural resource extraction instead of occupation (Gómez-Barris, 2017). Fueled by the same logics, settler and extractive colonization undermine Indigenous sovereignty and recast exploitation as appropriate and normal under Western perspectives. Current estimates are that there are more than 370 million Indigenous people worldwide and many of them face similar struggles in terms of land occupation, lack of self-rule and autonomy, forced migration, and stealing of natural resources (Coulson-Drasner, 2018).

Cosmovisions, or worldviews, are an Indigenous terministic screen that deflects Western perspectives and instead sees all life as interconnected (Pezzi, n.d.). An Indigenous cosmovision fosters respect for all life, "local and global balance," and the sacredness of the Earth (Pezzi, n.d.). Cosmovision is thus "incompatible with the extractive model" of Western worldviews that prioritizes "profit-seeking" over human and nonhuman life (Pezzi, n.d.). Furthermore, an Indigenous worldview evokes a response of responsibility for all life, called an "ethos of responsibility." Elizabeth Archuleta (2006) proposed the term as a way to conceptualize the authority and credibility through which Indigenous peoples dwell as part of their worldviews. An Indigenous "ethos of responsibility compels [people] to share their stories and personal pain" as a method for healing (p. 98). Meredith Privott (2019) applied the term to the DAPL protests, noting that evoking an ethos of responsibility means "to speak with authority through their [Indigenous] identity" that acknowledges "the interconnectedness of life and the sanctity in that holism" (p. 76). In other words, an Indigenous perspective evokes the need to protect nature as an integral part of life's interrelationships. Instead of unilateral, exploitative relationships centered in capitalist views of the world, Indigenous perspectives embrace a leveling of human and nonhuman life and our collective responsibility toward the two. A focus on cosmovisions

and ethos of responsibility in *Awake* deepens my analysis of how terministic screens and guilt emerge in the stories of the Standing Rock protestors and what actions are encouraged for audiences through watching the documentary.

My Burkean criticism also involves a consideration of environmental justice, which is concerned with the disproportionate effects that climate change has on marginalized communities (de Onís, 2012; Holifield, Chakraborty, & Walker, 2018). One of these marginalized communities is Indigenous populations, whose ways of life are threatened not only by climate change, but also by "occupation, genocide, cultural erasure and the stealing and exploitation of land and water" that are justified through colonial systems (Slow Factory Foundation, 2020). Colonial systems function materially, as is the case through *extractivismo* and displacement (Gómez-Barris, 2017; Slow Factory Foundation, 2020), and symbolically. Endres (2015) quoted Stuckey and Murphy (2001) when describing the term "rhetorical colonialism." They state,

> As an instrumental force, rhetorical colonialism undermines the political and cultural influence of Native Americans and asserts control over their lands and resources.... Analyses of rhetorical colonialism focus on the ways that dominant non-American Indian discourse perpetuates and justifies a racist, hegemonic, and colonial mindset. (Stuckey & Murphy, 2001, as cited in Endres, 2015, p. 655)

Instead of focusing on hegemonic voices, this study analyzes the marginalized and oppressed groups and how they advocate for change against material and rhetorical colonialism. The artifact of *Awake* is an example of environmental media challenging dominant systems and making space for alternative ways of viewing the environment, namely Indigenous ones.

Combining Burkean concepts with Indigenous perspectives reiterates the importance of framing and worldviews in influencing our understanding of nature, and how human-nature relationships are constructed through our language and symbols use. Specifically, I hope to explore how eco-guilt can be conceptualized as part of an ecology of transcendence that evokes an Indigenous cosmovision and ethos of responsibility in terms of how to direct environmental attention. Now, I will introduce my artifact which I analyze in the thesis.

Awake, A Dream from Standing Rock

In August of 2017, *Awake a Dream From Standing Rock* (2017) was released. This documentary tells the story of the peaceful protests and resistance led by Native people at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation (Lakota Tribe) in North Dakota. This film is especially important because while other documentaries have been made about the protest, this appears to be the only full-length feature that is not a short film.[2] The documentary goes into extensive detail about the background of the protest and centers Indigenous voices. Activists came from all over the world to stand in solidarity with the resisters. The activists who were protecting the water from the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) were referred to throughout *Awake* as Water Protectors and Water Warriors because the assembly of DAPL was planned to carry perforated oil through independent, Indigenous lands and go under the Missouri River. The Missouri River is used as a water source for the Lakota Tribe and 18 million other people living in the United States. Concerns about the risks of the pipeline to both the land and people prompted protests, which were captured in *Awake*. In Chapter 2, I further explore the metaphor of war as communicated through water "protectors" and "warriors" as inverting audience

[2] Because the film was released online as opposed to in theaters, I could not locate any viewership numbers or profits to report the reach of the film. The website does list, however, festivals and events where it is playing, which at the time of writing listing both domestic and international screenings, indicating a potentially large, global reach of the film's content.

expectations of Indigenous protesters and the DAPL police forces. The film was a direct call to action in the fight for clean water, environmental determinants, and indigenous jurisdiction (Tribal Trust Foundation, 2017).

Awake was directed by Josh Fox, a white activist, Oscar-nominated documentarian, and environmentalist, who filmed the protests on the front lines of Standing Rock. Fox (2017) is known for being an environmental activist, involving himself in many movements and protests. He explains that a reason for developing these films into a documentary is to show the trauma that is occurring to Indigenous folks and discover a way for others to experience it. However, because Fox (2017) is not Indigenous, there was a need to include Indigenous voices into the storytelling to communicate the struggles, trauma, and hardships the Lakota people faced. Myron Dewey (2017) spoke about this process in an interview he gave in the documentary. He states, "Our traditional food source is gone. Our water quit running through. And when we got here, it was something that I've seen was lacking. Filming was lacking from an indigenous perspective. And our story wasn't being told correctly" (2017, 54:03-54:08). There is an inherent difficulty in sharing Indigenous stories authentically because of the lack of representation within media spaces. As an alternative, therefore, non-Indigenous filmmakers and producers can work collaboratively to ensure voices are being represented fairly and to not substitute an authentic representation with an exploitative one that only serves the non-Indigenous perspective. Such a collaboration is not unlike my methodological combining of Burkean theory with Indigenous concepts.

After his arrival to Standing Rock, Dewey approached Fox because he realized Indigenous voices were still being silenced and wanted to incorporate Indigenous people in telling the story of Standing Rock. Therefore, a team was made and the film was created through

a "collaboration between Indigenous filmmakers, Director Myron Dewey, Executive Producer Doug Good Feather and environmental Academy Award nominated filmmakers and activists Josh Fox and James Spione (Tribal Trust Foundation, 2017). *Awake* includes many interviews with Indigenous people, images, and videos from the frontlines of the protest, and has a Lakota tribe member narrating the film. The narration, done by Floris White Bull (2017), tells the story of her people in a calm yet distressed voice. In telling this story, White Bull (2017) states "I am blessed to be awake during this dream... will you wake up and dream with us? Will you join our dream? Will you join us?" (2017, 29:38).

In Chapter 3, I further explore the metaphor of a dream as an important terministic screen that frames thinking about the environment differently through sharing a dream of a future that values both human and nonhuman life. The metaphor sets the tone for the film, creating a symbolic significance toward the metaphor of a spiritual dream. Instead of only seeing "dream" as a period of sleep, *Awake* also uses dream in the sense of a spiritual journey to enlightenment and dreams as sacred visions. For the current dream state of capitalism and *exctractivismo*, we need to wake up, and disrupt a hierarchical system in order to act or create real change. Waking up from a dream can thus be liberatory in recognizing the power and information dreams might communicate to us, as opposed to being meaningless distractions from the "real world." This echoes my project's focus on the silencing of marginalized groups, power structures, and colonizing of their land. Together, the metaphor of war and the metaphor of the dream work together to challenge audience expectations and understandings of the protests and foster new perspectives on human-nature relationships. By leveraging eco-guilt in a way that creates opportunities for transcendence, growth, and activism, *Awake* invites viewers to act in line with an Indigenous cosmovision.

To analyze *Awake*, I looked for specific features in the documentary that evoke eco-guilt, an Indigenous perspective on the environment, and metaphors that function as terministic screens. I first analyze the documentary's metaphor of "war" and how it is inverted to produce different perspectives of war to highlight the peaceful protest strategies of the Standing Rock community. I then analyze the metaphor of the "dream" as an Indigenous way of seeing. I use Burke's (1966) terministic screen as a way to show the selections and deflections of both metaphors and how they challenge Western perspectives. I also use transcendence to highlight the Indigenous voices through assigning guilt on systems instead of individuals and calling for collective eco-guilt that invites everyone to change their mistaken behaviors instead of being sacrificed as scapegoats.

These concepts and their productive interactions in my analysis reveal how this documentary functions as environmental rhetoric that centers indigeneity and challenges the dominant forces that support building pipelines through Indigenous lands. Furthermore, my analysis informs rhetorical theory about how our ways of seeing the environment are constrained by our dominant worldviews, which for rhetorical theory are primarily Western, white, and patriarchal. I consider this project to be part of the current shifts in rhetoric to recognize marginalized voices and center their perspectives and rhetorical concepts, including Indigenous ones (Flores, 2016; Na'puti, 2019; Soto Vega & Chávez, 2018). As a case study, *Awake* models stepping outside a particular worldview that privileges colonization and capitalism to experience with new eyes Indigenous cosmovisions of human-nature interrelationships. This thesis illuminates how *Awake* raises awareness about an important topic and engages the metaphor of a "dream" as a cosmovision for not only understanding human-nature relationships, but also to invite audiences to engage in meaningful environmental activism. Additionally, my

methodological blend of Burkean theory and Indigenous rhetorical concepts contributes new ways of understanding and playing with our rhetorical “canon” for the benefit of the field’s inclusivity and striving toward being a force for social justice.

Chapter 2: Metaphors of War

Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock is a 2017 documentary tracking the peaceful protests by Indigenous tribes against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) in North Dakota. Instead of silencing the voices of the Indigenous tribes or deflecting them from consideration, the creators collaborated with and brought on board Indigenous producers and filmmakers. In sharing the story of the protest, the film inherently elevates Indigenous voices. Additionally, the film centers Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing not limited to Western perspectives. Informed by Burkean theory and Indigenous concepts, I argue that *Awake* provides an alternative terministic screen to make sense of the protests that decenters capitalism, extraction, and the pipeline itself and instead focuses on the peaceful actions of the protestors.

On its website, *Awake* (n.d.) is described as documenting how the "Water Protectors at Standing Rock captured world attention through their peaceful resistance." The inversion of Western terministic screens emerges in one sense in the adoption of war terminology. The use of it demonstrates a type of irony, or what Burke (1984) would call "perspective by incongruity." By putting two things together that do not on the surface belong together, we create new understandings of each and their relationship. In the case of *Awake*, pairing metaphors of war with the peaceful actions of the protesters fosters new ways to think about war, peace, and the Standing Rock Protest. Before examining key interviews, quotations, and scenes in *Awake*, I will first describe theories of metaphor that help me analyze the repeated motif of war.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue that "Metaphorical concepts provide ways of understanding one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience" (p. 486). The type of experience we are learning more about is the tenor and the new frame for understanding is the vehicle. Just like terministic screens, metaphors can emphasize and deflect

from consideration. Elaborating on the concept of metaphors, Leah Ceccarelli (2004) speaks about when using metaphors not only is our understanding of the tenor modified, but the vehicle may be as well. She notes,

> The vehicle (that is, the metaphorical term) has a set of commonplaces that are typically brought to mind when it is used; likewise, the tenor (or the subject you seek to describe with the metaphorical term) has its own set of commonplaces. When the two are combined in a metaphor, a set of associated commonplaces are evoked that not only changes our understanding of the tenor but also of the vehicle. (Ceccarelli, 2004, p. 94)

Invoking metaphors, therefore, can be strategic ways to not only make sense of tenors, but to also change the way that people come to know and think about vehicles. For example, Ceccarelli (2018) argues that in comparing CRISPR to a tool versus comparing CRISPR to an agent changes not only people's understandings of CRISPR but also the process of science as well. This doubling of perspective through comparison is where *Awake* performs the rhetorical work of introducing new cosmovisions and Indigenous perspectives to the story of Standing Rock. First, I will review the Water protectors/warriors, their protection of the pipeline, and how eco-guilt and terministic screens can be induced by them. Second, I will discuss the use of the term "war" in the metaphor and the irony of it. Lastly, I will analyze how this metaphor of war offers an ecology of transcendence to make sense of human-nature relationships and invites audiences to become more environmentally active.

War Metaphors in *Awake*

Throughout the film, the protesters were referred to as the protectors of water and "Water Warriors." The activists at Standing Rock were given this name because they protected the water from the oil pipeline. However, the irony of the title "warrior" or metaphor of "war" is the

Standing Rock Nation and most Indigenous folk believe in peace and non-violence. Additionally, the protests themselves were peaceful, protestors had no weapons, and mostly involved chanting, occupying land, and praying. An interviewee said,

> We must remain peaceful and prayerful in everything that we do. Otherwise … we've seen the results of small incidents that have happened, and it dilutes our message. We are here to stop a pipeline. We are here to protect water for 18 million people downstream. (46:58)

If peace is the goal and the protesters are acting peacefully, why do the Indigenous tribes and the film adopt the metaphor of "war?" The war metaphor encourages people to open their eyes to the truth behind Indigenous trauma and the colonization of their land by comparing what Western society may normally consider to be "war" and "warlike" to the actual peaceful actions of the protesters. Pushing back against stereotypes of the "Indian savage" who is war-hungry and belligerent (Kemper, 2014), the adoption of the metaphor of war becomes a tactic of defense to reinscribe the Native identity with one of peace.

Furthermore, the metaphor highlights how Indigenous communities choose to protect their land when trying to preserve it instead of responding with violence. The war metaphor catches attention and elevates why protesting against DAPL matters: it is a worthy fight or just war, even if the tactics used by both parties are not the same. Calling peaceful protesters "Water Warriors" reconfigures our ideas about war – from violence under colonialist Western patriarchy, to responsibilities of guardianship and protectorship. Demonstrating this shift, one interviewee stated,

> Remember, we're standing for something that is greater than our pride. It's greater than our ego. It concerns the people of this world. The planet. The Earth is our mother and the

> way we treat her is very important…but if we come together in unity and start changing our behavior, in the way we think, the way we treat her, we become coherent. We become one with her again. In becoming Water Warriors, in protecting the water, we're protecting each other and our future generations. (37:07-37:53)

This interviewee links being a warrior to being a protector, not only of the water but also of nature, who is referred to as a mother, a family member to the Indigenous tribes. Just as one would fervently defend one's mother or family member, so do the Standing Rock protestors defend nature and the water. The interviewee's idea of "defense" is not launching a war or taking up violence, but to "start changing our behavior" toward a more ideal future and relationship with the planet.

Not only is this call for change peaceful but it is also collective. Instead of individualistic, capitalistic greed, the interviewee prioritizes an environmental piety that rebalances the industry-environment scales (Bloomfield, 2019). By defending the water, an Indigenous cosmovision that equally values the Earth is evoked. Additionally, the film demonstrates an ethos of responsibility of humanity collectively toward protecting the Earth in order to be fully united and "coherent" as a planet. An ethos of responsibility communicates the interconnectedness of life and highlights the unique relationship the local tribes have to the Earth, and as a part of their Indigenous identity how they are compelled to protect their land. The Water Warriors serve as a united front, guardians of their land, becoming advocates and speakers for the water against those who do not recognize its familial relationship, hear its voice, or defend it.

Moreover, the water becomes a character in the film. It not only is being protected and defended by the Lakota tribe, but it is being spoken for by them giving the audience a whole new frame of seeing the importance it has for the community and to sustain all life. Astor-Aguilera

(2016) writes, “Westerners see themselves not as animals but as superior to them as well as dominant over plants and Earth. In Indigenous cosmovisions, however, humans are not different from animals or even, depending on context, from plants or their environment” (p. 163). This ecocentric framework is one of environmental justice, flattened hierarchies, and mutual respect for all life (Corbett, 2006). The quotation above demonstrates this interconnectedness and the importance of reaching unity and coherence will all life, human and nonhuman, on Earth. While they act peacefully, they are portrayed using a metaphor of war that has been brought to the Standing Rock Nation due to the pollution that has been disrupting the calm order of water. In other words, the greed of capitalism and the DAPL has polluted the natural order of the land and the Indigenous way of life and has brought a war upon the community. In response, the Standing Rock protesters take on this “war,” but do so in a way that is coherent and in alignment with their own perspectives and cosmovisions. Therefore, we may understand their actions as justifiable defenses in the face of a war waged by others, but also come to differently understand what it means to go to war and the inevitability of human-human and human-nature violence.

Water Warriors

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that “metaphor can exhibit particular orientational qualities, as it possesses ‘a basis in our physical and cultural experience’ by orienting our understanding of certain concepts based on our physical environmental and spatial orientation” (p. 14, as cited in de Onís, 2012, p. 313). Where one lives, physically and culturally, can affect how one uses and understands metaphors. When “war” had come to North Dakota in the form of the DAPL, Indigenous communities were drawn by their orientations to defend it. However, this defense was not one of violence or war, but of peaceful protest, turning to prayer, and engaging in collective occupation of the land.

In parsing the metaphor of war as deployed in *Awake*, there are many ways we can see what the protestors did as being like engaging in a war, despite its peacefulness. For example, the Water Warriors fought against the building of this pipeline by serving on the frontlines of this "war" – putting their bodies on the line, much like "traditional" warriors do. It was a risk to engage in the peaceful protests, especially as *Awake* showed armed police often outnumbering the protesters, potentially turning violent at any moment. Many rhetorical choices were made in *Awake* to show the audience the protesters' interactions with officers. These scenes invited a sense of eco-guilt from the audience who may likely be positioned on the side of the officers due to their Western terministic screens. Alternatively, those who are already aligned with climate change activism may feel guilty for not doing more to help the protesters. For example, an interviewee stated regarding a conversation they had with an officer,

> Those officers drink water from the Missouri River. I told them the other day, what are you gonna say when you go home tonight and your son or daughter wakes up in the middle of the night and says, 'Dad or Mom, can I have a drink of water?' Are you gonna tell them that you were there, protecting that source of life for them, or are you gonna tell them that you had a gun pointed at my head for protecting that water for your children? (Interviewee, 25:12-25:34)

This interviewee highlights the irony in the officers having water freely available to themselves and their own children but, as part of their jobs, deny that same water to the protestors. Such a scene may prompt self-realization from audience members about their own water consumption and how freely available water is to them, further putting the crisis of the DAPL into perspective. Quoting Burke, Bloomfield (2019) says, "[Terministic] screens are important not only for what they highlight, emphasize, and 'select,' but also for what they 'deflect' from consideration"

(Bloomfield, 2019, p. 325). Water is so commonplace and freely available for us all, its preciousness and precarity for some communities may be deflected from everyday consideration.

In *Awake,* filmmakers work to correct these deflections and bring to light how oppressive and exploitative power structures such as *extractivismo* continue to operate to threaten water security for Indigenous populations. Highlighting these moments can produce eco-guilt by inviting the guilty parties, from those actively contributing to *extractivismo* to those passively unconcerned, to correct their behavior. Moore and Yang (2020) speak about eco-guilt as a moral emotion, arguing that "the concept of eco-guilt, [is] derived from an individual's guilty feelings induced by behaviors that are harmful to the environment (p. 523). Furthermore, eco-guilt "can motivate future efforts to protect the environment, partially mediating the relationship between feelings of responsibility and environmental activism" (Mallett, 2012, as cited in Moore & Yang, 2020, p. 523). Appealing to the emotions of the audience and encouraging self-reflection about the environment perhaps otherwise deflected from consideration, guilt becomes a primary motivator to become more environmentally active. *Awake*'s audience is not only able to visualize DAPL's role in trying to colonize Indigenous land, but they also see the Water Warriors protectorship and the violent behavior they must face in order to defend their land. Instead of the Indigenous communities embodying war, it is the officers and pipeline companies who are war-like, invading Indigenous land, to which the tribes must defend and protect, adopting a warrior like screen in the process.

Even though others act violently toward the land and the Indigenous communities, they do not respond in equal measure. An example provided in the film is when a member of the Standing Rock Nation is in front of a sign that states "Indigenous Sovereignty. Protect Water" and they say,

> Being a native person, we are taught to be gracious hosts. We are taught to be inviting people. To feed whoever is coming into our homes. To feed them and make them feel comfortable, and that's what happened. People came over and they were lost, scared, cold, and we warmed them, fed them, taught them the land, and helped them. But it totally flipped. That gracious host mentality was taken full advantage of. (23:12-23:36)

Instead of a war metaphor that creates an "us" versus "them" mentality, *Awake* shows how the entire planet, human, nonhuman, protesters, and officers, all are linked in the collective protection and defense of the land. Indeed, Indigenous people were welcoming hosts who valued sharing and mutual benefit but were taken advantage of by Western ideology, colonial greed, and domination.

Victor Toledo (2001) speaks about indigeneity and the connection to the land. Toledo (2001) states that through an Indigenous cosmovision, people have a sacred interconnection between nature and life. He continues,

> For indigenous peoples land and in general nature, has a sacred quality which is almost absent from Western thinking. Land is revered and respected, and its inalienability is reflected in virtually every indigenous cosmovision. Indigenous people do not consider the land as merely an economic resource. Under indigenous cosmovisions, nature is the primary source of life that nourishes, supports and teaches. Nature is, therefore, not only a productive source but the center of the universe, the core of culture and the origin of ethnic identity. At the heart of this deep bond is the perception that all living and non-living things and natural and social worlds are intrinsically linked. (Toledo, 2001, p. 6)

It would thus be against the Indigenous cosmovision to create additional strife and violence, even in response to the actions of the officers and others supporting the pipeline. Instead, the

community "fights back" in their own ways, changing how we think of "war." For example, one interviewee stated, "We are not fighting back in violence. We are still living how we always do. We are something very old. We are warriors of peace. We won't surrender" (19:37). The Indigenous communities are continuing their actions and lifestyles in alignment with their perceptions of sacred human-nature relationships instead of engaging in violence and war. They are committed to these ways of life as sacred and will not back down despite the potential violence and risk posed to them in continuing to do so.

These juxtapositions between war and peace further highlight the irony and perspective by incongruity of the war metaphor. It is ironic to call the Lakota tribe "warriors" when their fight was intended for peace and they did in fact, protest amicably. Moreover, in creating this character of the water warrior, we also reflect on the warrior on the other side of the battleline. Portrayed in *Awake* as the aggressor of the battle, the often nameless and abstract enemy of the officers and DAPL are shown through the tactics they use to be fostering Western, colonialist, extractive violence. For example, an interviewee from the Lakota tribe said, "our weapon is candy, love, and hugs" (3:00), inverting the meaning of "weapon" as a violent tool to cause bodily harm to mean expressing kindness and gestures of mutual care and respect. This quotation emphasizes the peaceful ways of the protesters and their commitment to defend Standing Rock harmoniously.

However, also shown in the documentary was the police using their dominance and power to aggressively attack the Standing Rock Nation. DAPL protectors sprayed tear gas, shot rubber bullets at protesters, and started a fire in order to demonstrate hierarchy and superiority over Indigenous folks. Police acts of violence manifests Western perceptions of being at war – namely, physically destroying land and causing pain to other people. It also gave another visual

framework of who and what is being harmed by the current practices of capitalism or *extractivismo*. In a particularly disturbing scene, protesters are asked not to approach Turtle Island, an ancient burial ground where they traditionally gather to pray, remain peaceful, and show their ancestors that they were still there because it was a day of mourning (Interviewee, 24:00). This occurred on Thanksgiving, appropriately named by Standing Rock as "Survivor's Day." One interviewee stated, "Today, as Americans may know is Thanksgiving. As Americans may not know because of what we've been taught in our lives is that Thanksgiving is actually a massacre" (22:29-22:38). Thanksgiving is a day that reminds Indigenous folk about the genocide of their people and colonization of their land. Indigenous folk feel a kinship to their ancestors, so it is extremely important for them to feel connected on a day like Thanksgiving, both spatially on the burial land and temporally on that particular day.

As protestors build a bridge across the water to visit the island, officers threaten and label them as being non-compliant and showing violence. The officers repeatedly call for the protesters to cease building a bridge, framing a peaceful act as an act of disobedience against their commands. DAPL protectors saw this bridge as a threat, continuously stating that they were acting aggressively and sprayed the Lakota Tribe with water restricting their access to Turtle Island. White Bull (2017) says, "The day after Survivor's Day the police put a razor wire around Turtle Island as if they owned it. It belongs to the land. We belong to the water" (25:50-26:00). This quotation highlights the cosmovision of Standing Rock protesters as embodying interconnections between land, water, people, and life and rejecting claims of land ownership by the DAPL.

Regarding the mountain interaction, one interviewee stated, "It is illegal for them to be there, and it is illegal for them to even lay their heads or even pepper spray us with their weapons

on our land. Our ancestors are buried on that mountain behind them" (16:44-17:00). The legality of the presence of the police officers is disputed; they claim they have the right to occupy the land and keep the protesters off of it, but the Indigenous communities there claim their own form of legality and sacrality over the mountain. While the protesters use peaceful actions, such as chanting and dancing, yelling "water is life" (46:01), the police force is aggressively trying to maintain power and dominance over the Lakota Tribe by using violence and occupying their land. One interviewee says, "To be unarmed, saving water, no fear makes our ancestors proud on Thanksgiving. We are rewriting history. Thanks-taking. Rewriting as peaceful, prayerful action that shows life" (22:38-23:03). Specifically using the language of rewriting history, protesters are aware of the Western understandings of holidays and wish to provide new interpretations of them guided by their Indigenous cosmovision.

This violent retaliation was made by police and DAPL security to ensure they maintain their hold on the land and perpetuate the need for security officers and weapons to face the Lakota tribes in a "war." The bridge-building scene is important to note because it highlights the metaphor of war and Western terministic screens occurring near DAPL. It is likely that these are Western perspectives that the audience holds as well. By giving the audience a chance to see the different perspectives and sympathize with the peaceful actions of the Indigenous community is an opportunity for growth, change of perspective, and new imaginings of human-nature relationships.

The war that the DAPL protesters are fighting is not a single moment in time but stretches to the U.S. violent colonial past and to the future generations who will also settle on the land. In this sense, the Water Warriors are not just protecting the water, but the land, the women and children, and the Earth as well. One member of the tribe said,

> This fight we see here, what's happening here on the ground in Standing Rock Sioux Nation, it matters to fight this pipeline to the communities here, to the people here, but it also matters because it connects to the greater struggle for us to protect Mother Earth and to protect our future generations from destructive climate change. (1:00:43)

These scenes draw into sharp contrast the utility of the war metaphor to describe what the officers are doing but the inability for the metaphor to capture the peaceful, defensive, and bridge-building actions of the protestors. In other words, the film asks, what type of war is *this* war over the DAPL where one side is the clear aggressor, and the other side defends peacefully? Such a juxtaposition calls into question the legitimacy of the war being waged against the protesters and shows, to the film's audiences, a different, peaceful way to fight, protect, and advocate for decolonialization and land autonomy.

The war metaphor, then, is better attributed to the actions of the officers, instead of the protesters and it is through the metaphor being applied to the protesters that the audience can recognize the incongruity. Bloomfield (2019b) speaks about the metaphor of war as it relates to climate change and the environment through a Western, Christian perspective. She states,

> In response to their enemies' attacks, separators position themselves as the defenders of their faith and the heroes of the war, solidifying the separation between themselves and their perceived enemies. The adoption of a war frame also serves a legitimizing function in the separators' argument by which an ongoing war validates aggressive argument strategies in response to mainstream environmentalism. (Bloomfield, 2019b, p. 32)

Similar to the climate separators, *Awake* shows the DAPL officers using their force to respond to the Indigenous protesters. The metaphor of war thus "legitimizes" the officers' violent and armed

tactics in the Western narrative that Indigenous communities are dangerous and have no right to the land (but extraction-based companies do).

Consequently, the irony of the metaphor paints the officers as unjustified aggressors and the protesters as legitimate, peaceful resistors to violence that had been brought to them. Ultimately, *Awake* "solidifies the perceived enemies" as DAPL advocates who visually abused the Indigenous communities and care not for the land, but for its resources (Bloomfield, 2019b, p. 32). Furthermore, audience members sympathetic to the position of the DAPL or neutral on the topic are drawn into the war and forced to pick one of two sides: the one acting war-like and violent or the one inviting shared, collective unity for all life. In this sense, *Awake* invites audience members to experience eco-guilt and thereby look into changing their behaviors to be more in line with the Standing Rock protestors. I call this a performance of ecological transcendence, whereby society can be vindicated for their mistakes by recognizing their part in universal guilt toward polluting the environment.

Redefining War

The metaphor of war creates the conditions for an ecology of transcendence as a way to heal the violence and pollution caused by the DAPL. Audience members can make sense of human-nature relationships not through war, but through active engagement and resistance. Specifically, *Awake* prompts an ethos of responsibility toward the Earth because we are all connected to it. Unlike personalized and individualized guilt as performed through scapegoating, an ecology of transcendence calls for communal and united changes toward human-nature relationships. Lakoff (2010) says, "Many frame-circuits have direct connections to the emotional regions of the brain. Emotions are an inescapable part of normal thought. Indeed, you cannot be rational without emotions" (p. 72). In visualizing the war frame, this utility of changing

perspectives is initiated due to a connection with our emotions evolving to care for the protesters and question the DAPL advocates. Therefore, our terministic screen "directs the attention" (Burke, 1966, p. 45) of our perception of the world toward an Indigenous cosmovision. *Awake*'s images and interviews are rhetorical choices that express the Standing Rock tribes' ethos of responsibility toward the Earth. By physically seeing and hearing the Lakota tribe's resistance, how they are threatened by the officers, and the language they use to describe their view of themselves and all life, the audience's focus can shift to those silenced voices. Consequently, the audience is invited to abandon Western terministic screens and instead embody an Indigenous way of knowing the Earth, one another, themselves, and human-nature relationships. Through this new perspective, the documentary fosters stronger advocacy for the environment, being against the pipeline, and respecting Indigenous ways of thinking.

Part of this shift in perspective comes from listening to Indigenous voices and bringing to light what is typically deflected or hidden from consideration. Instead, *Awake* highlights these things often left behind or normalized as a way to encourage audience reflection on our collective role in environmental pollution. As one interviewee said,

> When we talk about this pipeline, we have to talk about where the oil is coming from. When we talk about where the oil is coming from, we have to talk about the man camps[3] that are there that threaten the very lives of our women and children. That's the thing that climate change isn't just about the Earth, it isn't just about the environment. Climate change is about our relationship to each other, and how we treat each other and it's about climate justice. That's what it's about. Justice. (1:00:43-1:01:23)

[3] Privott (2019) defined man camps as "temporary barracks- style housing for construction workers" during the building of the DAPL. The "man camps" become risks to Indigenous women as sites of sexual violence.

Instead of limiting themselves to talking about climate change, this interviewee expands the audience's scope of reference to larger struggles and relationships between people and between all life. The audience is invited to experience or at least recognize an Indigenous connection to the Earth. This may then evoke a sense of eco-guilt inviting them to explore a relationship to the Earth and act in line with an Indigenous cosmovision and ethos of responsibility.

Additionally, the film cultivates a sense of eco-guilt because the different parts, separated into different chunks of time, continuously show how DAPL uses their power to dominate the Lakota tribe. Specifically, DAPL violated several Indigenous constitutional rights over their land, therefore, many of the Standing Rock Nation had to fight laboriously to achieve their warranted rights. For example, one interviewee stated,

> We're not going to stop standing up. So, we've got to pay attention. We've got to get the word out. We've got to make sure that our water protectors are protected. Know your laws, 1st and 4th. Know the rules and laws. For Indian people it's double. We know federal laws; we've got to know state laws too. Man, it's hard to be Indigenous, you know. We've got to know cultural law protocols. It's not easy but we can do it (1:04:47-1:05:30).

This quotation expresses a type of Indigenous "double-consciousness" where Indigenous folks have to be aware both of their own cultural laws and also the laws of their oppressors in order to survive, constantly having to see themselves through Western (white) understandings (Du Bois, 1897/2014). This interviewee expresses their frustration at living in this "doubled" space, which can evoke a sense of eco-guilt from audiences who may not have considered this hardship and may be themselves implicated in creating it. Throughout the film, audiences are invited to become aware of the hardships Indigenous folks face when fighting for their land, opening

themselves to new knowledge and considerations. This may also evoke an Indigenous cosmovision and ethos of responsibility because the audience can align their ideologies with those of Indigenous folk to be more ecocentric.

Indigenous land and spaces are sacred in their culture, but also in their identities, stories, traditions, and roles as members of their nation. Dan Eshet (2017) says,

> [Indigenous] stories also explain the roles, duties, and purpose of the members of these nations, thus providing them with a well-defined identity. The centrality of land in indigenous worldviews goes even further: as in many other religions, place, especially sacred places, plays an important role in grounding Indigenous Peoples in the physical world. Therefore, when those places are taken away, or their names are altered, the indigenous spirituality, identity, and perhaps even existence as a distinct group are undermined or even destroyed. (para. 2)

While Indigenous land claims may violate the "order" of Western, capitalist way of life, we can also consider that the exploitive acts of *extractivismo* and capitalist gains by DAPL violates the natural order of the Indigenous identity and upsets the natural order of Indigenous life. For example, one interviewee states,

> I'm here to protect the water and to connect back to my roots and remember who I truly am and what I am here to accomplish. Because along the way we've lost it by working and not having time to ourselves to get to know who we truly are and what we're here to do. (20:26-20:41)

This quotation sets up the juxtaposition between the endless work and labor of capitalism separating the interviewee from their authentic, Indigenous self. As Burke (1966) argued in his "Definition of Man," humans are separated from their natural condition by tools of their own

making. In the case of this interviewee, it is capitalism and work offered by Western worldviews that have intervened into Indigenous ways of knowing and purpose and separated us from those more "natural" and nature-oriented perspectives.

The Water Warriors connect their identity to the land which inherently means the water as well, necessitating their responses against the violence of the DAPL advocates. Because the Indigenous cosmovision sees all life as interconnected, *Awake* does not call out or scapegoat specific individuals for transgressions or call for punishment. While we might think of the DAPL and officers as convenient and obvious scapegoats, *Awake* does not construct a simple melodrama of good vs evil to represent the protests. Alternatively, in many scenes, the officers are far away and seen more as abstract figures than individuals, a type of formless mass that the protesters are facing as a way to collectivize the fight and move away from scapegoating.

In addition to anonymizing the enemy, *Awake* also refers to the "blacksnake," which represents the environmental destruction that would happen with the assembly of the pipeline as a snake wending its way through the nation. "Blacksnake" becomes an abstract figure on which to place guilt, meaning that anyone who is against this enemy can join the side of the Standing Rock protesters, thereby performing transcendence that does not ask for individual scapegoating or sacrifice. Using the term "blacksnake" is also a transcendent move because audience members can see themselves as part of a collective activist community striving to stop the construction of the pipeline. It will take more than individual actions of recycling and carpooling to stop the blacksnake; it will take the upending of entire systems of domination and extraction that view the land and Indigenous communities as expendable. The guilt fostered by *Awake*, therefore, is not individualized but becomes collective and centered around humanity's relationship with nature

and one another. The audience is redeemed for their mistakes through action and joining the fight and instead guilt is assigned to systemic colonization and extraction.

Conclusion

Integrating Burkean concepts with Indigenous points of view reiterates the importance of different ways of knowing and the necessary selections and deflections present in various worldviews and perspectives. One way we can understand these varying worldviews and perspectives is through the metaphors we use (Bloomfield, 2019b). In *Awake*, the metaphor of war became a tool for modifying behaviors and attitudes toward the environment by comparing the actions of the DAPL advocates to the protestors, changing our perceptions on the protests and also the utility of war, and proposing a collective, transcendent way to advocate for the coherence and unity of all life.

In the next chapter, I will examine the metaphor of the dream. In addition to the metaphor of war, *Awake* also relied on metaphors of dreaming, sleeping, and (a)waking. I will analyze the cosmovisions and terministic screens associated with the different versions of sight, as well as the Indigenous way of seeing and thinking. I will also explore the film's adaptation of being awake versus being asleep and the role eco-guilt and transcendence play in gaining environmental activeness and attentiveness. In analyzing the metaphor of dream in *Awake*, I attend to how dreams play an important part in Indigenous community rituals. Similar to the metaphor of war, the metaphor of dream is strategically deployed in *Awake* to foster eco-guilt and provide audiences with a different perspective on the Standing Rock protests and human-nature relationships.

Chapter 3: Metaphor of the Dream

My continued analysis of *Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock* shifts focus from the metaphor of war to the metaphor of the dream. A prominent metaphor in the document, as evidenced by its full title, makes references to dreams and dreaming, inviting the audience to adopt Indigenous movements and the goal for future change against the goals of DAPL. If the metaphor of war illuminates a change of perspective, the metaphor of the dream actualizes that perspective into potential action. Therefore, my argument in this chapter builds on the previous in highlighting the rhetorical work that metaphors do within *Awake* to reflect Indigenous perspectives and share them with likely Western audiences. Specifically, the metaphor of the dream offers a call for action and change from audience members to join the Standing Rock protesters.

This invitation is perhaps most apparent during an opening sequence narrated by Floris White Bull. I will describe this scene in more detail in the analysis, but I want to describe one portion that highlights the dream as invitation. White Bull (2017) says, "But this is not a dream. I am fully awake. I am blessed to be awake during this dream. Will you wake up and dream with us? Will you join our dream? Will you join us? (2017, 29:20-29:38). This quotation illustrates two important points I will go over in this chapter. First, the invitation is to change one's behaviors and collaborate with the Indigenous protesters by "joining" them. The second is the fluidity with which the film discusses states of dreaming and waking up where both can be times of enlightenment and growth. Whereas a Western perspective would see being awake and "woke" as more enlightened, Indigenous cosmovisions value dreams as visions from ancestors that can both guide and educate. Irène Hirt (2012) says, "Dreams and dreaming have manifold social uses in Indigenous societies. They are mobilized for directing collective action, healing,

facilitating communication between the living and the dead or the spirits, and predicting events" (p. 6). The interplay between dreaming and waking, therefore, mirrors the inversion of the metaphor of war to provide audiences new perspectives informed by Indigenous ways of thinking.

My rhetorical analysis in this chapter is influenced by the use of metaphor as an invitation towards action, in addition to how metaphors portray things in terms of others. As Kenneth Burke (1984) argued, "Call a man a villain, and you have the choice of either attacking or cringing. Call him mistaken and you invite yourself to attempt setting him right" (p. 4). The function of naming and metaphors extends beyond understanding something in a new framework; they also function to invite action. Taking this approach is important because the documentary pushes on power structures and promotes future progress and change within the new perspectives it provides. It is not only educational but also calls for actions to be taken regarding the Standing Rock protest. The use of metaphor invites the audience to open their eyes to a new way to disrupt hierarchy and take action. For example, Erica Cardwell (2017) writes about *Awake*, "As Floris's dream – a consistent theme of the film – can attest, these acts of resistance not only respect sacred land, but also act as a bridge in acknowledging our humanity" (p. 73). The dream metaphor acts as a reminder of the power of peaceful resistance and builds a connection to future change and challenging dominant systems of power and oppression for audiences to join. In the following sections, I build on this analysis by highlighting additional moments in the film that complicate the waking/dreaming dichotomy and how the metaphor of the dream can be linked to an ecology of transcendence as opposed to ecological scapegoating.

Dream Metaphors in *Awake*

Although White Bull (2017) sets up the documentary by asking if the audience "will wake up from the dream" inviting the audience towards action, the metaphor of the dream can be seen throughout the entire documentary. The documentary is called ***Awake**, A **Dream** from Standing Rock* (emphasis added), suggesting that the audience needs to wake up a dream, but also that being awake is also a type of dream. In naming the documentary *Awake*, the dream metaphor can be interpreted as directly inviting audiences to wake us up and create change. Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1980) says, "Metaphors simultaneously create interventional possibilities and impose interventional constraints. Adopting one metaphor, for example, often entails abandoning another" (p. 54). *Awake,* however, is calling for less of an abandonment of previous ways of viewing and more of a recognition of their inconsistencies with Indigenous ways of knowing.

In the documentary, the filmmakers use the metaphor of dreams to connect with the audience's potential agency that being awake and waking up to the realities of Standing Rock are progressive acts of knowledge and awareness. As previously mentioned, when White Bull (2017) says "But this is not a dream. I am fully awake. I am blessed to be awake during this dream. Will you wake up and dream with us?" (29:30-29:38), she talks simultaneously about being awake during a dream and waking up and dreaming. This inversion of expectations and blurring of strict lines between being awake and dreaming invites audiences to think about the compatibility of different perspectives and what it means to be knowledgeable about different cultures and experiences. Instead of abandoning, we could say that the film's shifting metaphors invite critical self-reflection in audiences by questioning taken-for-granted language and assumptions.

Moreover, the film functions to make people think about those who are in dominant positions of oppression, and to be critical of Indigenous oppressors. Consequently, the dream metaphor is inviting the audience to think about their own role as environmental actors and as supporters or bystanders of the DAPL. The audience is invited to act by waking up from the dream but still embodying a dream of what future human-nature relationships that respect Indigenous ways of knowing might look like. This wake-up call disrupts dominant power structures, hegemony, and hierarchies ultimately creating future progress and change. Therefore, such a metaphor can help invoke an ethos of responsibility by introducing a new way to think of action, awareness, and being "awake" to our environmental crises.

Furthermore, the metaphor of the dream highlights different approaches to making knowledge, which I call Indigenous cosmovisions and Western terministic screens. *Awake* reconfigures our ideas about dreams by showing the value of them in Indigenous cultures as a way of getting ancestral knowledge and advice. For example, one interviewee stated,

> Right before I got here, I had a dream about my mom who had passed away, and in my dream my mom asked me for water that I wasn't able to give to her. So, I just woke up and started fundraising to bring supplies to Standing Rock. (59:55-1:00:05)

This quotation shows the interviewee seeing dreams not as meaningless diversions from the waking self, but a direct link to actions that should be taken once awake. Dreams can give insight, advice, and guidance instead of being frivolous. Hirt (2012) says,

> Because spiritual revelation provides people with information that they are not able to derive from observation alone, they have no doubt about the validity of these sources of knowledge Neither subjective nor objective, a revelation is quite simply a true experience, an integral part of the real. This differentiates the Indigenous perspective

radically from Western traditions, which associate dreams with the subjective, the imagination, fancy, and illusions, all which are considered to be separate from "reality." (pp. 5-6)

Unlike Indigenous folk, Westerners believe dreams are "separate from 'reality.'" Dreams are not direct sources of guidance, although they might be sources of inspiration. One example may include someone has a "dream" job, car, or home. Consequently, in order to achieve these types of "dreams," one must participate in capitalism. Included in the fall out of such capitalist progress and gain is *extractivismo*, which destroys much Indigenous land (Coulsen-Drasner, 2018). In *Awake*, DAPL guards could not wake up to the Indigenous dream of water protection, however, they were awake for their Western, capitalist dream of pursuing their job despite its harmful outcomes for the Standing Rock land and communities.

The interviewee who discussed their dream about their mother needing water also highlights how they see Standing Rock protesters as similar to their mother, or as family that must be cared for and given water equally. For this interviewee, their dream activated an ethos of responsibility to engage with the protest and provide resources to support the cause, modeling a potential avenue for engagement for audiences. This person felt a need to participate in the protest simply after visualizing it in their subconscious due to the importance of her indigeneity and the power that dreams hold as spiritual visions. Therefore, when speaking about the metaphor of the dream, it has the utility of changing our perspectives and inverts another Western terministic screen as a universal way of knowing.

The metaphor of the dream is centered around different ways of gaining knowledge and guidance. Specifically, Indigenous cosmovisions, some directly through the act of dreaming, can invoke an ethos of responsibility because they are compelled to help the Earth due to their

relationship and interconnectedness with it. However, the documentary demonstrates that Westerners themselves are "asleep" to Indigenous issues, thereby working within a terministic screen that deflects them. For example, an interviewee said, "The cops have no clue about Indigenous issues. They just know they're on assignment. This is predating Western contact" (1:00:02). Although there is not direct mention of being asleep or awake, the concept of "having a clue" is related to the metaphor of seeing as gaining knowledge (Gallup Jr. & Cameron, 1992; Osborn, 1967). Similar to having one's eyes open when awake, discussion of knowledge and awareness are often, in Western perspectives, rooted in metaphors of sight (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Osborn, 1967; Poole, 2020).

Lawrence Prelli (1989) argues that "once we are induced to accept particular terministic screens, we gain entry to the orientation invoked by those terms. We will treat those terministic screens as unquestioned presuppositions, if only provisionally" (Prelli, 1989, pp. 89-90, as cited in Bloomfield, 2019b, p. 9). Left without the awareness-raising experience of watching an environmental documentary about Standing Rock, audiences might never question the Western orientation they have adopted. The unchanged perspective is represented by the DAPL guards who have accepted their screen of being on assignment, a capitalist screen of single-minded labor, closing their eyes to the dream, and deflecting the role they play in destroying native land. However, audiences can reject this limited perspective and begin to question this way of seeing in favor of exploring or at least acknowledging an Indigenous cosmovision. *Awake* thus invites audiences to recognize and thereby avoid the deflections experienced by the nameless, abstract police force and DAPL, replacing a narrow terministic screen with a more expansive cosmovision.

Awake vs Asleep

Awake frames seeing through being awake versus being asleep, laying the foundation for the metaphor of the dream. For example, White Bull (2017) says, “We have the chance to change the globe forever. So, I’ll ask you once again. Will you join us? Will you join our dream?” (1:23:04-1:23:16). It is through the dream of the Standing Rock protesters that new human-nature relationships can be forged and Indigenous land protected. White Bull frames audiences as currently awake vs dreaming, but only to Western perspectives. It is by joining “our dream,” the dream of the Lakota and the Water Warriors, that audiences can truly “wake up” to meaningful action. Per Prelli (1989), the Western terministic screen subconsciously deflects the human-nature relationship we need to have with the environment. However, in becoming awake, an Indigenous cosmovision is evoked because we are able to visualize a relationship with nature and take action. Hirt (2012) argues,

> For Indigenous peoples, dreaming is a social act of communication that depends on a nexus of culturally shared beliefs. Dreams, like visions, intuitions, unusual events and the intrusion of higher powers, are forms of spiritual revelation that, together with traditional teachings and empirical observation, are among the sources of knowledge that are valued in Indigenous societies. (p. 5)

As opposed to individuals experiencing dreams that are separate from “reality,” an Indigenous perspective on a dream is that is it social, ancestral, and revelatory. In establishing the metaphor of the dream and using terms like “join” and “wake up” the audience’s ideas about dreams are reconfigured to that of an Indigenous cosmovision, and they are invited to reflect on their own awareness and “wokeness” regarding the Standing Rock protests. Thus, the film engenders an

ethos of responsibility toward the Earth and shared identity with the protesters, with the potential to spur action in future audiences.

In analyzing the metaphor of the dream, we can see there are many ways the filmmakers framed waking up from the dream of capitalism and Western perspectives and embracing the dream of a better world as an important tool toward action. In the film, a narrator notes that the protestors of Standing Rock began to put an end to the construction of pipelines all over the world, stating,

> We have woken up millions of people all over the world. Will you wake up? Will you join the millions of people that are taking their money out of banks that fund these pipelines in a massive divestment campaign? Will you join the Water protectors rising up in the streets across the nation? (1:21:11-1:21:17)

Arendt and Matthes (2016) found in their research study that those who have a strong connectedness with nature and the self are likely to donate to organizations centered around environmental protection after being exposed to a nature documentary (p. 468). Scenes in *Awake* may similarly prompt self-realization from audience members about waking up from their Western terministic screens in order to take action in forms such as donating, divesting from harmful organizations, and supporting the Water protectors. This scene also provides a pathway for audiences to purge eco-guilt by providing clear routes to redemption. Instead of having audiences sit with feelings of inadequacy or guilt, *Awake* channels such emotions into restorative action.

Rhetorical Choices in "Awake"

The way *Awake* is filmed marks specific rhetorical choices that lead the audience toward consciousness and mindfulness of what the dream metaphor signifies. For example, the film begins with White Bull (2017) explaining a fearful dream she had. She says,

> I had a horrible dream last night. I don't know why…As I climbed into bed something flashed across my mind. Like a shock from far away. An explosion. I tried to catch it, but it disappeared. That's when the dream began. A long dark moment unfolded as if I was traveling across hundreds of years. All things became afraid. All living things fought to survive. Trees became fearful of being chopped down. Rivers ran scared of being poisoned. Even the air ran for its own breath. It was the fear that had contaminated the world. (1:01-5:15)

This opening sequence of the film echoes the nightmare being described. The trees being scared and rivers running away further illustrates the nightmare of capitalism or *extractivismo* because the Indigenous perspective is that all life is valuable. It is also important to highlight the pollution and "contamination" of the air because the act of colonization is like the act of suffocating Indigenous ways of being, figuratively and literally. Along with White Bull's words are images of people having to leave their homes because they are getting sprayed with tear gas and places are getting lit on fire.

This aforementioned sequence shows DAPL moving in, pushing Standing Rock out and violently seizing their land. The film opens with White Bull (2017) making a strong emotional connection with the audience and highlighting the urgency of the protest. By opening and continuing with the dream metaphor throughout the film, the audience is invited to feel a sense of eco-guilt that they have participated in the creation of this nightmare, but also that they might

be part of its replacement with a new dream that fosters collaboration, growth, and self-autonomy for Indigenous communities. Furthermore, the rhetorical choices fostered in the creation of this film speak to the non-Western ideologies of the filmmakers and the importance of the audience waking up from their current dream state.

The documentary was filmed in three different parts and with three different filming styles. The three parts signified the different styles of the filmmakers who captured different facets of the protests: the first teaches the audience of the background of what is happening at Standing Rock, the second shows life in the camps as the Water Warriors lived peacefully and prayerfully and DAPL acted in violence against them, and the third gives the Indigenous point of view, filmed and produced by Myron Dewey, who points out the violation of several Indigenous treaties (Bock, 2018).

This style of filming varies from traditional filmmaking that has one coherent voice through the process, privileging one perspective and a single narrative. Alternatively, this type of filmmaking "bricolage" puts together different voices and techniques to provide varying perspectives and understandings of the event, occupying different temporalities, spaces, and styles (Ono & Sloop, 1995). Emma Kowal (2015) states, "By virtue of possessing culture, authentic Indigenous people inhabit an unchanging anthropological present that produces a profoundly different relation to time from that of Western observers" (para. 12). This is significant to the way the film is produced because the three parts in the film seemed unending and continuous without a clear chronological sequence or even pacing. Those unending parts are comparable to the dream metaphor because dreams are also boundless and without limits. We make up for the ambiguity in our subconscious once we wake up in reality and put the pieces together, but such temporal linking is not necessary in the more cyclical pacing of Indigenous

time (Lake, 1991; Simpson, 2007). The three-part documentary might also contribute to the audience's sense of transportation through the film because they are taken out of the expected film structure and into more of an experiential engagement with the protest. The audience can experience three types of co-presence with the protesters, identifying themselves with their struggle and their dream for a better world.

Toward the end of the documentary the filmmakers highlight how the current dream of Western occupation of Indigenous land is a nightmare. In particular, they showed the police holding the members of Standing Rock nation up at gun point, a violent collapse between the metaphors of war and dreaming. One is often safe while sleeping and only is at risk once awake, but the "nightmare" of colonial occupation of Standing Rock places the community at risk constantly. At one point in the film an interviewee stated, "Who protects the people from the police?" (1:11:09), highlighting the risks being experienced by the protesters.

Awake presented other visual representations of this risk by explaining how in mid-February, 2016 the Trump administration allowed the digging of the pipeline to occur and sent federal and state troops to clear out the protesting campsites. These officers came in with military force and slashed tipis with knives and arrested many Water Warriors. Although the protestors engaged peacefully, the police acted brutally, tackling folk, and holding them at gun point even elders. The members of Standing Rock Nation felt disrespected from these acts and burned their structures in ceremony as an act of protest against their oppressors. The fire was "the physical manifestation of our dreams [going] up into the sky in smoke and flames" (White Bull, 2017, 1:19:00). The fire represents us waking up from a nightmare. The only thing that you can do is wake up and be active to stop the fire. Privott (2019) notes that an ethos of responsibility calls us "to speak out against any kind of decision" that promotes violence against Indigenous

communities. Because all life is connected, human and nonhuman, thinking more ecologically and adopting an Indigenous cosmovision entails caring about Indigenous lives and the Earth that they protect. Seeing Indigenous lives and the Earth at risk, precarious, and vulnerable to the nightmare of capitalist, Western living, audience are invited to become remorseful and act differently in relationship to the Earth.

Conclusion

Similar to the metaphor of war, the metaphor of dreaming challenges traditional perspectives and offers less rigid and more fluid understandings of taken-for-granted ideas. Instead of seeing dreaming and waking as separate and oppositional, *Awake* frames the current situation as a nightmare for Indigenous communities and invites audiences to become a part of creating a new dream and vision for the future. As opposed to dreams being meaningless distractions from reality, dreams can be sources of creativity, innovation, and awareness that can shape future actions in keeping. If the metaphor of war begins to break down assumptions and people's perceptions of the protesters, the metaphor of the dream builds on these inversions by complicating what it means to be active, inactive, asleep, and awake to the injustices of DAPL.

In the conclusion of this thesis, I will revisit the importance of linking Burkean terminology with Indigenous concepts to better capture the significance of artifacts like *Awake,* and to counter the Western biases within Burke's work and rhetorical theory writ large. I will also summarize the overall thesis, the metaphor chapters, and some limitations I found in doing this research. Finally, I will discuss future projects and additional questions for the field given this analysis.

Indigeneity, Burke, and Next Steps for Environmental Rhetoric

In this thesis, I link Burkean terminology with Indigenous concepts to gain a better understanding of how we come to know and care about the environment through our symbolic choices, ideological deflections, and representations of human-nature relationships. In viewing Western perspectives as necessarily deflecting Indigenous ways of knowing, combining Burkean theories with Indigenous concepts helps to reduce deflections and recover important rhetorical concepts for new applications. Terministic screens provided a way for this project to start. However, I felt the need to go beyond Burke, post-Burke (Condit, 1993) to effectively, accurately, and sincerely capture my artifact of *Awake, A Dream from Standing Rock* and to respect the various non-Western ways of viewing the environment. Kent Ono and John Sloop (1995) argued that selecting artifacts is itself an important rhetorical argument, because it shows the voices that we value and who gets to matter in rhetorical theorizing and criticism. *Awake* is a rhetorical artifact that is explicitly about Indigenous peoples and tells the story of the peaceful protests and resistance led by Native people at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation or Lakota Tribe in North Dakota through Indigenous filmmakers.

In the selection of my artifact and by incorporating Indigenous concepts such as cosmovisions and an ethos of responsibility, I sought to recenter Indigenous voices and contribute to rhetoric's expansion of non-White, non-Western, and non-Global North perspectives. While these new trends are promising, rhetorical theory thus far has been mostly dominated by white voices such as Burke, so I prioritized Indigenous voices and focused attention on them as the original environmentalists. I do, however, also use Burke in this project, recognizing both the risks and deflections in selecting Burke as an anchoring theorist and the value of Burkean ways of seeing to understand guilt, symbolic choices, and pollution.

Using this blended methodology, this thesis critically analyzes the documentary *Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock*. I argue that the documentary invites viewers to feel eco-guilt, or personal attachment to environmental loss and pollution, but offers an ecology of transcendence instead of scapegoating as a route to redemption. This project operates under environmental rhetoric because of the symbols and frames used within the document to speak about and represent the environment and how audiences may come to think about the environment. In my analysis I focused on two different metaphors that were pervasive and important rhetorical features in the documentary: the metaphors of war and the dream. In examining these metaphors, I attended to how the film selects and deflects aspects of Western and Indigenous ideologies to foster new understandings and perspectives in audiences about the environment. Specifically, I argue that such new understandings occur through challenging audience perceptions, encouraging self-reflection on their role in environmental crises, and fostering sympathy for the peaceful protesters against aggressive, but nameless, DAPL police forces.

In Chapter 2, I analyzed the metaphor of war. This metaphor captured the battle the protestors had to take on to protect their land. They "fought" with the "weapons" of peaceful protest, so the metaphor of war encourages people to open their eyes to Indigenous trauma and the colonization of their land against much forces that typically resort to more direct and harsh forms of violence. In doing so, the metaphor of war and what Westerners would consider "war" is disrupted and located as more fitting for the DAPL advocates. Referring to themselves as "Water Warriors" changes our preconceptions about war – from violence and patriarchy from a Western gaze, to protectorship and defense.

This new perspective on war through Indigenous cosmovision invites audiences to adopt an ethos of responsibility toward the protesters and, consequently, the environment. This

metaphor of war develops the setting for an ecology of transcendence to heal the brutality and pollution caused by DAPL through collective action. Human-nature relationships as championed by the Standing Rock protesters are not made through waging war, such as the violent, brutal one brought upon them by DAPL, but through environmental action.

In Chapter 3, I analyzed the metaphor of the dream. The significance of the dream metaphor is set up around the value of dreaming in Indigenous rituals as a way of reaching enlightenment. The dream metaphor invites the audience to think about their own role as environmental actors, what "dream" they are currently a part of, and what dream they would like to help build. In order to wake up from the dream of capitalism and colonialism they may not have been aware of, the audience must become active and resistant to Western hegemony. In waking up from this dream, the audience embodies a new dream of what an interconnectedness to the Earth looks like and respect Indigenous identities and ways of knowing. Once the audience wakes up from the one dream, dominant power structures, hegemony, and hierarchies are disrupted which helps to create future progress and change. Therefore, the metaphor of the dream invokes an ethos of responsibility by proposing new ways to think of action, awareness, and "waking up" to environmental detriments of the current system. Individual actors are thus called to transcendence to change not only their own frameworks, but also work against structural problems that oppress Indigenous populations, the land, and, really, all of us.

Chapter 3 also explored the rhetorical choices in crafting the film that challenged a Western, chronological narrative structure in favor of a more fluid, cyclical, dream-like structure. These choices reflect the non-Western ideologies of the filmmakers and the importance for the audience to wake up from their Western dreams, expectations, and ways of seeing. For example, the documentary was filmed in three different parts with three different filming styles. These

three parts represent the filmmaker's different styles and how they captured the different dimensions of the protest. In filming this way, one single voice is not privileged, therefore the filmmakers disconnected themselves from the traditional style of making a documentary and recognized the need for collective action and respecting multiple perspectives.

Moreover, the metaphor of the dream confronts traditional ideas and offers a more adaptable understanding of our terministic screens that may be taken-for-granted. *Awake* frames dreaming and being in our subconscious as a nightmare for Indigenous communities. In order to break away from this horrendous situation, the audience is invited to wake up and become a part of the development of a new dream for the future. The metaphor of the dream makes audience members aware of their terministic screens and evokes an Indigenous cosmovision and ethos of responsibility by developing a relationship with the Earth and points toward activism. *Awake* also purges eco-guilt through an ecology of transcendence by showing that the exploitive acts of DAPL can be corrected if we can collectively wake up from one dream and together forge a new one.

Implications

Research itself naturally contains selections and deflections and even conscious decisions can lead to limitations. It is important to mention my positionality as a white woman as influencing this project, my interpretation of the film, and my arguments. Although it was my goal to center Indigenous voices in this project, I am not an Indigenous person and I understand my privilege and the space I do take up in this field and the necessary gaps I will have in understanding different worldviews and perspectives. Considering this, it is very important to constantly recenter Indigenous voices, especially when speaking about environmental justice; however, as a white person I must try not to become a savior, be fragile, or take up the space

reserved for BIPOC. Similar to the filmmakers, of *Awake*, I made conscious choices to cite Indigenous scholars, make use of Indigenous terminology, and write respectfully and in support of the Standing Rock protesters, so that the project, while written only by me, embrace a collective spirit of scholarship.

Another implication of this project was the shutdown of the pipeline in 2020. Although it is hard to draw direct causality between documentaries and policy outcomes, it is notable that enough public concern was mustered around this crisis, likely from a variety of sources, that helped defeat the construction of the pipeline. Even if the fight against DAPL is over, there are many more fights to be waged, land to be given back, and Indigenous voices to be heard. In other words, while there may be a sense of resolution for the central focus of *Awake*, the documentary is still important to analyze rhetorically for its modeling of different perspectives for future instances of environmental activism.

The final implication of this project was the contribution of Burke. By developing research like this, I had to turn Burke's statements about selections and deflections against his own work. This ultimately pushed back against his original analyses to make room for Indigenous identities. The disciplinary knowledge within rhetoric is deflecting other ways of thinking about language, human-nature relationships, and symbols, therefore, combining Burke reduces those reflections. For example, placing war into our rhetorical toolbox. Now, we have a correct tool to analyze artifacts that are not operating within a western frame because of this new rhetorical tool. However, I could not abandon the work of Kenneth Burke because he gave so much to the study of rhetoric. For that reason, this project moved him forward and was productive with him, a both/and approach to Burke.

Future Projects

Due to the importance of *Awake* and the need to continue blending rhetorical theory with Indigenous and non-White perspectives, there are many additional projects I wish to undertake. I plan to develop this thesis into an article for publication because I believe environmental justice and the protests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe are meant to be heard. Other projects could include research beyond media representations and instead focusing on documents related to the building of the pipeline, political statements about it, news coverage, and in-person, *in-situ* analyses. Gathering additional rhetorical texts would give further depth to research about DAPL and its consequences/implications for Indigenous communities. Relatedly, I believe future projects should also explore other pipelines, sites of *exctravisimo,* and protests around the world to expand our recognition and understanding of ongoing colonization and land exploitation. This thesis was the start of an important personal journey towards my work in justice research and removing my own terministic screen of hegemonic Westernization and patriarchy. Furthermore, I hope the project might spark additional questions for the field of rhetoric: how can we continue to re-apply and re-imagine Burkean terminology? Can we continue to motivate audiences based on guilt alone? As someone who "woke up" after watching this documentary, I think it is important to be not only active environmentally, but also committed to the Indigenous dream. As it is stated in the documentary, "What do we do when our land is under attack? Stand up fight back!" (16:30). That is exactly what needs to be done in order to center those silenced voices, challenge hegemony, and become protectors and warriors ourselves.

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