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A GENRE OF SURVIVANCE: NARRATIVE CRITICISM OF BOARDING SCHOOL
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A Genre of Survivance: Narrative Criticism of Boarding School Stories

“The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by... But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.” -Zitkála-Šá, *The School Days of an Indian Girl*

For centuries, American Indians have been reduced to a character in the story of the United States; figures like Tonto or Pocahontas come to mind, but beyond these caricatures, American Indian people are mostly absent from the American collective memory. American Indian writers have always used the power of storytelling to counteract this inaccuracy by telling their own stories. At the turn of the twentieth century, books written by American Indians were popular because they validated the mission of assimilation. But were these American Indian authors doing more than patronizing the dominant discourse? Using narrative analysis, I examine two popular early American Indian autobiographies to argue that boarding school narratives exceed literary genre conventions because they are a rhetoric of survivance.

As a method for studying inter-genre stories, narrative criticism is a natural fit because the method itself is so interdisciplinary. It involves analyzing literary features of a story, such as setting and characters (Foss 327), but it is used in many different academic fields, including the social sciences, rhetoric and writing studies, and communication (Foss 321-22). The roots of narrative criticism can be traced all the way back to classical rhetoric with Aristotle and Quintilian (Lucaites & Condit), but it was not fully refined as a research method until 1928 with Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*. Since then, two of the most influential works on narrative criticism are Wayne Booth’s *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, published in 1961, and Walter

Fisher's *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*, published in 1987.

My approach comes from Sonja Foss's *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. When selecting an artifact for narrative criticism, Foss says that for a piece to be considered a narrative, it must "contain at least two events and/or states of affairs that are temporally ordered, and the earlier events in the sequence should be necessary conditions for later events" (323). The boarding school narratives I have selected fulfill these requirements of describing a causal, temporal relationship between events. After selecting an artifact, Foss says that the two steps for conducting narrative criticism are "(1) identifying the objective of the narrative; and (2) identifying the features of the narrative to discover how they accomplish the objective" (325). Based on Foss's guide for narrative criticism, I argue that boarding school narratives inhabit multiple narrative types as a tactic of survivance.

Objective: Survivance

The term "survivance" has a complicated history. Originally a legal term associated with property inheritance, it was used by Derrida in a lecture to mean a state between life and death (194). Gerald Vizenor popularized the term as we know it in 1999 to mean "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry" (vii). Since then it has been utilized in many disciplines when talking about American Indians, and has particularly become one of the foremost theories for analyzing American Indian rhetorics.

Recently, scholars have applied survivance to writing pedagogy (King et al.), but one of the most influential works on the topic is Malea Powell's "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing." Written in response to the question "what do American Indians

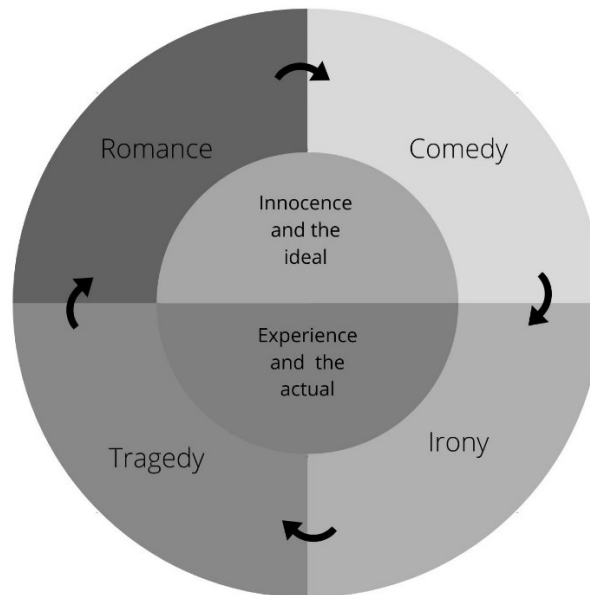
want from writing?” (Lyons), Powell’s article sees survivance, or “survival + resistance” (400), as a subversive tactic used by American Indians to maintain their agency (405). This word *use* comes from Michel de Certeau, meaning a type of appropriation, a way of adopting aspects of the dominant hegemony for one’s own purposes (32). According to Powell, 19th and 20th century American Indian authors were able to use white views of American Indians to give their peoples agency, which was an act of survivance (400).

Survivance as I use it in this essay can be seen as occupying the hegemonic culture without sacrificing one’s own marginalized culture. When writing autobiographies—and particularly boarding school narratives—American Indian authors adopted many different tactics. One tactic they employed was using a repertoire of identities, or multiple rhetorical personas, to promote American Indian rights while staying within the boundaries of the white American rhetorical situation (Katanski). I believe this tactic of survivance is the main objective of American Indian boarding school narratives, and it is most clearly communicated in the way American Indians wrote about their boarding school experiences without maintaining white literary genre conventions.

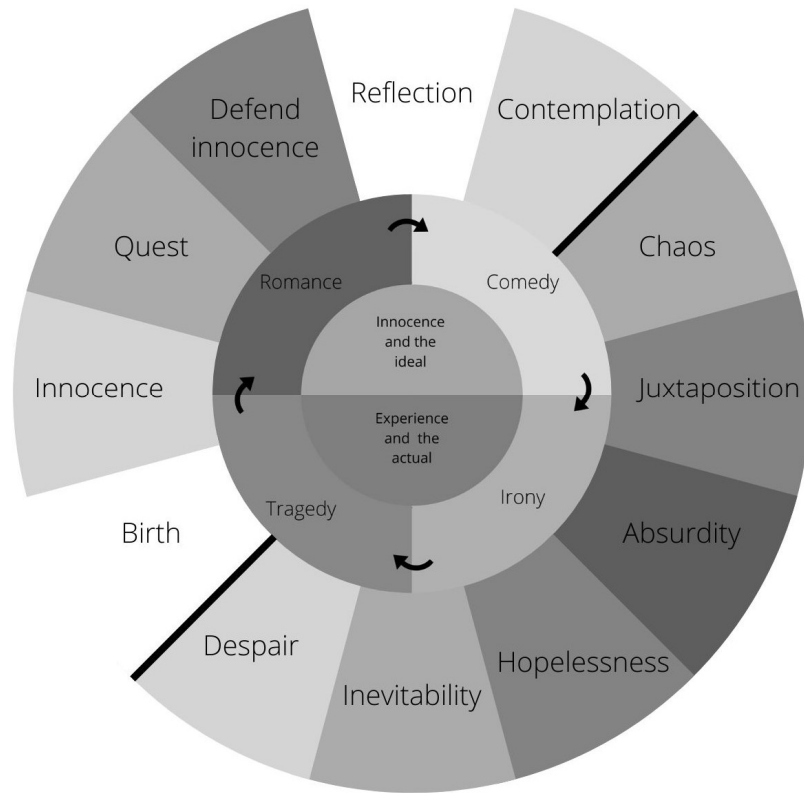
Feature: Narrative Types

The theoretical lens I am applying to these artifacts comes from Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism*—specifically his third essay, “Archetypal Criticism.” This type of literary criticism is actually rooted in Frazer’s anthropological book, *The Golden Bough*, which explores cultural myths of life and death cycles. Frye advanced this study of life and death myths and used this cyclical pattern as a lens for analyzing literature. In this essay, Frye argues that there are four narrative patterns which stories follow: romance, tragedy, comedy, and irony (162). These narrative patterns, or what he calls “mythoi,” are split into two separate categories, with romance

and tragedy on one side characterized by themes of innocence and the ideal, and comedy and irony on the other side involving themes of experience and the actual.



Frye sees these two categories as being two halves of a circle that situates these mythoi in mutually exclusive pairs—“tragedy and comedy contrast rather than blend, and so do romance and irony” (162). Literary critics have found fault with Frye’s approach for different reasons, including a dismissal of ideology as a critical element of stories (Bogdan). The most salient critique is that Frye’s mutually exclusive categories seem to leave out entire genres like “tragicomedies” (Dubois). In my analysis of American Indian boarding school narratives, I noticed that the authors did not stick to these mutually exclusive mythoi. In fact, the two narratives I use for this analysis enacted both romantic and ironic narrative patterns, which Frye says cannot happen. I posit that this supersession of archetypes is a rhetoric of survivance, American Indian’s supersession of life and death. Frye outlines six phases for each mythos, and a narrative analysis of *The School Days of an Indian Girl* and *My People, the Sioux* reveals that these narratives move through the six phases of both mythoi.



The two boarding school narratives I will be looking at are two of the most well-known. The first is *The School Days of an Indian Girl* by Zitkála-Šá. Originally published as a series of essays in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine in 1900 (Dominguez), this work was published as part of *American Indian Stories*, a collection of Zitkála-Šá's writing, in 1921 by Hayworth Publication House. The first five "chapters" tell about Zitkála-Šá's experience at a missionary boarding school. The second narrative I use comes from *My People, the Sioux* by Luther Standing Bear and published in 1928 by Houghton Mifflin. This autobiography is much longer than *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, and for the scope of this project I am only drawing from the three chapters that specifically talk about Standing Bear's experience at Carlisle school. Both of these narratives are situated within a larger life story, but I am focusing on the portions that deal specifically with the authors' boarding school experiences because they most clearly demonstrate the authors' tactics of survivance.

Romance

The narrative pattern of romance involves a story about a hero fulfilling a quest, or what Frye calls “a sequence of marvelous adventures” (192). The first phase of a romance mythos is “the birth of the hero” (198). Frye means a literal birth here, but this phase can be interpreted as the introduction of a protagonist at the onset of a narrative. This phase is often brief, and I will be combining it with the second phase— “the innocent youth of the hero” (199). Frye compares the phase to Adam and Eve’s time in the Garden of Eden (199), and we can understand it as a transitional period that moves the reader into the quest, which takes up most of a romance. These two phases play an important role in a romance because they situate the audience’s attention of the protagonist as opposed to the setting or plot, and both Zitkála-Šá and Luther Standing Bear adopt these introductory phases as a way to establish themselves as the protagonists of their own stories.

Zitkála-Šá opens her book by describing the group of American Indian children she traveled with. She tells us that she was with “three young braves” and “two tall girls,” and that there were three “little ones, Judewin, Thowin,” and herself (23). These characters reappear throughout the story, and it is important here that Zitkála-Šá is establishing herself not only as the hero, but as part of a community. The second paragraph of Zitkála-Šá’s narrative tells about how excited the children had been to travel east. She says that they had been “very impatient” to start their journey, and that they were looking forward to a “sky of rosy apples” (23). The children apparently “anticipated much pleasure” (23), and this naïve understanding of the situation they were walking in to aligns with Frye’s understanding of the hero’s “innocent youth.”

Luther Standing Bear summarizes these first two phases in the first two paragraphs of his boarding school narrative. He opens by telling how he spent the summer of 1879 playing with his cousin Waniyetula in perfect weather, and says that his father's business was prospering (65). We find out later that he was around twelve years old at this time, and this opening situates him as a young boy—a character any audience would understand, regardless of race. This sublime scene situates the reader in Frye's first two phases of romance because they perfectly capture the introduction of our hero and the innocent playfulness of a twelve-year-old boy yet untouched by assimilation.

The third phase of a romantic narrative is the quest undertaken by the hero. This phase takes up most of a romantic story, and it can involve any number of tropes, such as the “dragon-killing theme” (189). Frye breaks this phase down into three distinct stages: “the perilous journey,” “the crucial struggle,” and “the exaltation of the hero” (187). For this analysis, I have chosen to examine “the perilous journey” as one unit because of the content of these particular narratives, and my next section will look at “the crucial struggle” and “exaltation” in conjunction with the fourth phase.

The theme of a “perilous journey” clearly relates to the literal train journey the students had to take to get to the boarding schools. Zitkála-Šá tells us about her ride on the “iron horse” and the shameless scrutiny of the white passengers who had never seen Indians before (23). This marks a transition between the naivety she felt before leaving home and the uncomfortable reality she was traveling toward. While not physically perilous, this is when the tone shifts and the children begin to understand the “quest” they have undertaken.

Much like in Zitkála-Šá's narrative, the “perilous journey” phase of Luther Standing Bear's story is a literal journey east. The children “did not know where [they] were going, only

that it ‘was east somewhere’” which must have contributed to their sense of peril (66). In fact, this journey was so daunting that when the time came to board the boat for the first part of their journey, some children, like Luther’s sister, “refused to go aboard, and nobody could compel them” (66); even once they had boarded the boat, Luther overheard some of the boys planning to jump off and run for the woods (67). Luther stuck to his quest, though, and eventually made it to the train. Like Zitkála-Šá, his group was subject to the rude scrutiny of white people, saying they “acted so wildly at seeing us. They tried to give the war-whoop and mimic the Indian and in other ways got us all wrought up and excited, and we did not like this sort of treatment” (68). Finally, Luther and his peers arrived at Carlisle, where the bulk of his narrative takes place.

The majority of a romantic story focuses on the quest of the hero, and in *The School Days of an Indian Girl* and *My People, the Sioux*, this means the struggles and victories of the protagonists. In Frye’s understanding, a romance would revolve around one major struggle, like the slaying of a dragon mentioned above, but these narratives are organized in such a way that the authors write about multiple daily struggles and how they overcame them. For this reason, I will be combining these two stages with the fourth phase, “the maintaining of the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience” (201) to analyze scenes of struggle and triumph within the narratives.

Two accounts stand out as fulfilling the theme of a successful quest in Zitkála-Šá’s narrative. First is when she is made to mash turnips as a punishment, and because she hated turnips and had a “fire in [her] heart” she “worked [her] vengeance upon them” and beat them to a pulp (29). She was scolded, but says she “felt triumph in [her] revenge” (29). Her second account of a battle was when she was taught about the devil and had a terrible nightmare about being pursued; she “took [her] revenge upon the devil” by using a pencil to tear the picture of

him in the Bible book (30-31). Although small, these successes helped give Zitkála-Šá hope to carry on.

Luther Standing Bear's narrative is full of "successful quests," but two stand out as being the most important. First is his triumph over learning to write English. He recalls the challenge of trying to learn English without proper teaching, and says "this was the first time in my life that I was really disgusted" (71), but eventually he succeeded and was able to use this victory to write his boarding school narrative later in life. The second example of a successful quest is his resourcefulness in adapting to the changes in his appearance. The school forced the students to wear uncomfortable clothes and cut their hair, and the students were distraught by these changes (72-73). However, Luther was able to accept his "bald head" (72) and used his spending money to buy more comfortable clothes (73-74). Again, these small victories are not comparable to "slaying a dragon," but within this narrative, these successes were crucial for the survival of the protagonist.

The final two phases of a romance move the reader from the action of an adventure to the protagonist's feelings about the completed quest. The fifth phase is "a reflective, idyllic view of experience from above," and the sixth is "a movement from active to contemplative adventure" (202). As with the first two phases, these portions take up a small part of the actual narrative, but they are crucial because they leave the reader with a deeper insight into the protagonist's experience. In the boarding school narratives I analyzed, these phases show up as a certain level of acceptance of assimilation.

Zitkála-Šá's "idyllic view of experience" comes in the second-to-last paragraph of her time at the boarding school. She writes of a friend's death because of negligent treatment, but says "as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman" and was soon

back to her subversive ways (32). From this account of her resilience she moves right into her concluding “contemplative adventure” where she muses about “the melancholy of those black days” and urges her audience to listen carefully and compassionately to her story (32). This conclusion gives the reader a sense of Zitkála-Šá’s feeling about her time at the boarding school; she felt the trials for what they were, but maintained her adventurous, romantic spirit throughout her quest.

In Luther Standing Bear’s narrative, the reflection and contemplation come in a slightly different form. Standing Bear ends the narrative by telling about a series of events back home that ended in the death of the last “head chief” (80-81). The children heard about this story from their families back home, and Luther chose to end his narrative with this story because it showed the juxtaposition between the old life they had left and the new, assimilated life the students were adapting to. As with Zitkála-Šá’s narrative, this conclusion leaves the reader knowing that Standing Bear had gone through severe loss, but he chose to view his experiences at Carlisle as a way to move into the future.

Satire

A satire is a story which unveils the chaos of everyday life, characterized by “the sense that heroism and effective action are absent, disorganized or foredoomed to defeat, and that confusion and anarchy reign over the world” (192). Frye describes irony as “a parody of romance” (223) and says that it is “the non-heroic residue of tragedy, centered on a theme of puzzled defeat” (224). To this end, the first phase of irony establishes “a world which is full of anomalies, injustices, follies and crimes” (226). Frye writes that to establish the ridiculousness of the way things are, an author might include “a plain, common-sense, conventional person as a

foil for the various *alazons* of society” (226), and in the boarding school narratives, the author-narrators function as this character as they are introduced to the world of white people.

A clear example of this theme occurs shortly after Zitkála-Šá arrives at the school. The students are taken into the dining room for a meal, and Zitkála-Šá is left in dismay because everyone else is familiar with the convention of praying before the meal (26). She first sits when she was supposed to stand, and then looks around in confusion as everyone bows their head and a man mutters aloud, and then stands when everyone else finally sits down (26). She feels embarrassed because she stands out due to her unfamiliarity with this ritual that everyone else takes for granted.

This phase is also clear in the first few paragraphs of Standing Bear’s narrative when he arrives at Carlisle. As the children explore their new surroundings, they realize that the way things are at Carlisle is very different from what they had back home (69), which causes them confusion and deep homesickness. They had to sleep on the cold floor, and they only had bread and water to eat (69). This realization of their bleak new reality is a useful way to think about the first phase of irony as Frye sees it.

The second phase of an irony moves to a juxtaposition of the way things are with the “sources and values of conventions themselves” (229). This phase involves “the setting of ideas and generalizations and theories and dogmas over against the life they are supposed to explain” (230). In my analysis, I found that this was the phase that most clearly related to the underlying theme of survivance in the boarding school narratives. It is in this phase that the authors most clearly critique the practice of forced assimilation and cause the reader to question the motivation for the treatment these children were subjected to.

The juxtaposition between actions and values is best seen in the excerpt when Zitkála-Šá's hair is cut off. This scene perfectly captures the irony in the assimilation movement: the students' hair was cut to "help" them be more civilized, but this "help" was delivered by "being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair" (27). It seems obvious to modern readers that the value of benevolence did not align with the action of physical abuse, but to the staff at the boarding school, this action was necessary and even good.

In the first part of his narrative, Standing Bear enacts this ironic theme by taking time to tell the reader about how Carlisle was founded, which serves to show the juxtaposition between the way things are and the values that supposedly influence them. He talks about how Colonel Richard Pratt founded the school to educate Indian children and "help their people" (69), but also mentions the ties to the prison system embedded in this foundation. As with Zitkála-Šá's narrative, this benevolent inspiration might have been sincere, but the way it was executed did more harm than good.

According to Frye, the third phase of an irony goes one step further and urges the reader to "let go even of ordinary common sense as a standard" (234). This phase brings to light the deepest absurdities of reality, and in the boarding school narratives of Zitkála-Šá and Luther Standing Bear, these absurdities are blatantly obvious to the reader, although they apparently eluded the schools' staff.

Zitkála-Šá experienced this theme most clearly after being caught playing in the snow after being told not to. Her friend Thowin was beaten by one of the missionaries because she mistakenly replied to questions like "are you going to obey my word the next time?" with the only English word she knew: "no" (28). Finally, the woman asked a question for which "no" was

an appropriate response, and she let Thowin go, because “perhaps it occurred to her that brute force is not the solution for such a problem” (28). As Zitkála-Šá sat in the hall and listened to this happen, she felt the absurdity of the situation, but to the woman this action was the most sensible solution to perceived disobedience.

The clearest example of common sense looking foolish in Standing Bear’s narrative is the scene when he describes the students picking white names. He says that the teacher wrote a series of white names on the board and handed the pointer to the students; when Luther’s turn came, he “took the pointer and acted as if [he] were about to touch an enemy” (71). The boys had no idea what the writing meant, but after they pointed to a name, it was sewn onto their shirt and they were only called by that name (71). The mission of assimilation was so important that the staff at Carlisle resorted to this ridiculous way of imposing whiteness on the students.

With the fourth phase of irony, narratives turn from establishing reality to emphasizing the hopelessness of that reality. This fourth phase “stresses the humanity of its hero...and makes as much as possible of human misery seem, in Thoreau’s phrase, ‘superfluous and inevitable’” (237). It is in this phase that the author works to stir the reader to sympathize with the protagonist, and this sympathy comes naturally in the stories of Zitkála-Šá and Luther Standing Bear.

One of the clearest examples of this theme is Zitkála-Šá’s chapter “The Devil,” an account of her learning about the devil and being told that “this terrible creature roamed loose in the world, and that little girls who disobeyed school regulations were to be tortured by him” (30). Not surprisingly, she then tells about a nightmare she had that night where the devil chased her around her mother’s kitchen. As a reader, this scene stirs immense feelings of sympathy for the

children like Zitkála-Šá who were subjected to horror stories and trauma just to incite good behavior.

Luther's narrative contains two major points where the reader is lead to sympathize with him. The first is when he had his hair cut, which he says "hurt my feelings to such an extent that the tears came into my eyes" (72). This is the point of the story when the reader most clearly sympathizes with Luther who says "I felt that I was no more Indian, but would be an imitation of a white man" (72). As his narrative progresses, Luther also invokes sympathy when he talks about the busy schedule the students had to keep. He talks about having to work in the tin shop in the mornings even though he hated it, and having classes in the afternoon, along with all the other things he had to hurry to and from, like band practice (75). This forced hurry could not have been healthy for the students, and toward the end of his narrative, Luther writes about how this daily stress suddenly killed one of his classmates (80). Although the overall tone of Standing Bear's narrative is more lighthearted than Zitkála-Šá's, these scenes cause the reader to understand the deep pain he was in and sympathize with him.

In the fifth phase of irony, the reader's focus is on the inevitability of reality, because "the main emphasis is on the natural cycle, the steady unbroken turning of the wheel of fate or fortune" (237). In this phase, the focus shifts away from the protagonist and toward the circumstances they are trapped in. As with the fifth phase of romance, this phase involves a certain level of acceptance of assimilation in the boarding school narratives.

Zitkála-Šá's final chapter in her boarding school narrative reflects this theme even in the title of "Iron Routine." She tells about the strict schedule the children were kept to and how they were punished if they failed to meet the school's expectations, saying "it was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing" (31). This

feeling of being trapped in circumstances beyond her control is an excellent example of Frye's fifth ironic phase.

This theme of inevitability is also reflected in the final portion of Luther's narrative, when he tells about the events back home. The news of assassinations and revenge back home prompted the boys to fear for their lives (80). They did not feel safe or comfortable at Carlisle, but this story drives home the point that the old life they had know could never be returned to. At the end of the story, Luther says "that was the end of our 'head chiefs,' and we have had none since" (81), a line which communicates sadness at things lost that can never be returned.

The sixth and final phase of irony "presents human life in terms of largely unrelieved bondage" (238). The focus now extends beyond the hopelessness of the protagonist's situation and offers a bleak view of humanity as a whole. This makes sense as a conclusion to a boarding school narrative, because after reading about the horrors these children faced, it would be nearly impossible not to walk away with some skepticism about humanity's goodness.

Although a theme of hopelessness can be felt throughout these narratives, Zitkála-Šá's final three paragraphs develop this phase fully. She tells about the death of her classmate due to not receiving proper nutrition or medical attention, and even as she returned to her rebellious state, she knew she was "tightly bound... like a mummy for burial" (32). Despite Zitkála-Šá's best efforts throughout her narrative, she is unable to counteract the apathy of the boarding school staff, who represent the dominant white culture as a whole, and she ends her narrative with the feeling that forced assimilation is a harsh reality that must be accepted.

Luther's concluding lines also show the hopelessness the children felt in their new "home." He says that "we felt that we were in a very tight place, miles away from our homes, and among white people, where we felt that at the least show of trouble we would all be killed"

(81). These poor children had to live in constant fear for their lives, and regardless of their bravery and resolve to be warriors, they could not turn the tide of assimilation.

Inter-Genre Writing as Survivance

Clearly, American Indian boarding school narratives move through both romantic and ironic mythoi, despite Frye's claim that a story cannot do both. Zitkála-Šá and Luther Standing Bear each write their story as both an idyllic, heroic quest and a bleak commentary on reality. Besides being influential pieces of literature, though, these stories offer insight into American Indian rhetorical practices. The romantic aspects of the narratives reflect early 20th century audience expectations. Frye tells us that "in every age, the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance" (186) and that's exactly what these American Indian authors delivered. Conversely, the boarding school narrative genre also "attempts to give form to the shifting ambiguities and complexities of unidealized existence" (223) vis-à-vis satire. This is especially important to the rhetorical goals of the narratives, because "two things, then, are essential to satire: one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, and the other is an object of attack" (224). Far from being solely a parody of romance (223), this satire blends with the conventional romantic mythoi to enact survivance.

The key to understanding boarding school narratives as a rhetoric of survivance is understanding the intended audience. Because both narratives were published by mainstream publishing houses, we can reasonably assume that the authors intended for white audiences to read their stories. Because of their audience's cultural norms, any one genre could not have achieved the author's purposes. A purely ironic story, as a parody of romance, would have either been misinterpreted or dismissed as too militant. By embracing both mythoi the authors were

able to use literary conventions to appeal to the pathos of white audiences while still pursuing American Indian rights.

By reading the mythoi of boarding school narratives as a rhetoric of survivance, we can better understand their apparent incongruities. I am suggesting that while Frye's four mythoi are quite logical and generally applicable to Western literature, survivance offers a new way of reading American Indian literature rhetorically. Where a non-Native author might blend or adapt mythoi for artistic reasons, Zitkála-Šá and Luther Standing Bear were subverting them to survive and resist.

Survivance is an appropriate adaptation of Frye's theory because it expands and enriches dichotomies. Just like survivance is a tactic of simultaneously surviving and resisting, in this case it spans the gap between romance and irony. For Frye, literary genres followed these patterns because of cultural myths about life and death, so naturally a story could only be in one genre—a story cannot be both romance and irony because a person cannot be both dead and alive. Derrida's interpretation of survivance as a state between life and death fits American Indians because they are very much alive, physically and socially, but certain pieces have died—specifically land rights and the related ties to land. Finally, survivance is a way to bridge the gap between literature and rhetoric by revealing the rhetorical goals of these narratives by using a literary criticism lens.

Conclusion

By viewing boarding school narratives as a rhetoric of survivance, scholars can expand their understanding of written communication. First, this connection validates the relationship between literature and rhetoric for American Indian peoples. By coupling rhetorical theories like rhetorical sovereignty with literary theories like Frye's mythoi, we can bridge the gap in the field

of English and develop a more holistic understanding of American Indian writing. A second conclusion is that viewing these stories as a rhetoric of survivance could be a way to read other, similar narratives with apparent incongruities. An avenue for future research could be the application of survivance to other American Indian stories to see if the blended genre of satire and romance is a continual trend, or if perhaps other so-called binaries are intertwined via survivance. Finally, through my analysis I hope to demonstrate the continual relevance of American Indian people and their writing; we are more than historical, stereotypical characters from the wild west—we are our own heroes, and we continue to survive and resist.

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