

THE AESTHETIC OF SURVIVAL IN TRACKS BY LOUISE ERDRICH

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Abstract

This work aims to show that in Tracks, the understanding of the concept of survival is not simply a rejection of the dominant culture, but rather reflects the active and ongoing process of resilience to overcome decades of domination, victimization and extermination. Rooted in a pluralistic theoretical perspective, this study examined the survival of native's identity in terms of valuing the love of indigenous kinship and sustaining their cultural assets.

Key-words: *survival, resilience, victimization, identity, cultural assets*

Résumé

Ce travail vise à montrer que dans Tracks, la lecture du concept de survie ne se résume pas à un vain rejet de la culture dominante, mais conduit plutôt à la compréhension d'un processus actif et permanent de résilience qui vise à surmonter des décennies de domination, de victimisation et d'extermination. Ancrée dans une perspective théorique pluraliste, cette étude a examiné la survie de l'identité autochtone en termes de valorisation de l'amour de la parenté indigène et à la préservation de leur héritage culturel.

Mots-clés : *survie, résilience, victimisation, identité, héritage culturel.*

Introduction

For many generations, Native Americans have been culturally portrayed from the world around them. These fabricated texts of decimation and victimization are surpassed by contemporary Native American authors in their struggle for individual and cultural survival. For some scholars like Vizenor, the understanding of cultural survival is not simply a matter of dismissing the dominant culture or returning to a tribal past; it also reflects an active and continuous process of resilience to surmount decades of dominance, persecution, and eradication. It is obvious that the concept of survival goes beyond its mere physical aspect.

In this context, survival, as discussed in *Tracks* by Louise Erdrich, is a continuum, an abandonment of the life of the Natives. It is true that many Native Americans have died and have even been victims, but their

story is not one of victimization. Survival, assert academics Anna Lee Walker and Peggy Beck, involves seeking life by reconstructing the native's identity that is grounded on the enhancement of the native kinship love and on the preservation of their cultural values. But this fact does raise questions. Indeed, how could the survival instinct that dwells in the Native Americans reinforce this love of parentage? Better, how could it serve to preserve their true cultural identity? In order to address these queries, we shall employ a pluralistic theoretical frameworks, since our topic convenes the history and the literature of two cultures. Likewise, as the novel surfaces the firmness of the volition of the Native Americans to survive, we shall better understand this survival instinct firstly in re-reading the concepts of victimization and isolation in *Tracks*, then explain also how the paradox of violence and sexuality underpins the process of survival in the novel, and finally find out the way humor serves as a survival lever for Natives in this narrative.

1. A Re-reading of the concepts of victimization and isolation in *Tracks*

Survival as defined by Joel Salzberg “is living or continuing longer than another person, thing, or event; in other words, it's an outliving” (1990:128). From this definition, one can barely start to understand what survival is all about, the daunting impediments that must be fought and the tribulations that must be surmounted. In Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*, survival is a central question. In the novel, the main characters have to undergo many hard struggles, some of which harm them mentally and physically. All through the narrative, they are isolated and victimized. In the perspective of the vision of Margie Tower to get through this situation, survival, of course, will enable them to do just that (1992:99). In *Tracks*, the mixed-bloods are victimized as equally as the Native Americans in general. They are in the center, unappreciated by the Indians and the whites, because they are also not totally both. The whites considered them inadequate, and the Natives saw them as those who profited from their failure. Like the Morisseys, for example, they are an example of mixed-bloods who benefited from the purchase of land lost by others because they were incapable of paying taxes. Pauline being a mixed-bloods herself, she was a victim of it, but not necessarily for the same reason. Pauline is even severely victimized by those she loves the most. Even Nanapush, the other voice makes jokes at his expense. The

other protagonists, along with Nanapush, shared the old man's secret jokes. Erdrich illustrates it through, "Nanapush jabbed and laughed at my stumbling shuffle. He shot dart after dart of foolish questions and overcame my resistance." (1988:146)

In addition, Pauline was a victim of the cruelty of the others. This victimization has made Pauline an outcast in some respects, she has been stigmatized. This is what generally occurs when we deviate from the norm. When Pauline left, she gave up most of the traditions of the Native Americans. This victimization was just one more barrier to her lifestyle, one more thing to surmount, which she did. She eventually regained confidence and tradition and was a powerful person for that. As it has been stated, mental strength is necessary as well as physical strength to survive. And this mental toughness, when she finally came to be accepted after her victimization, helped her survive. About the victimization that Pauline goes through the critic Jennifer Sergie writes it is because, "Nanapush grows up Christian in a Jesuit school, but later chooses life in the woods and Chippewa tradition" (1992:279); for Ruth Rosenberg, "the other narrators, Pauline, is a mixed-blood raised in the tradition of the Native Americans, but she wishes to be white and eventually become a fanatical nun, constantly at war with the pagans who had once been her relatives." (1995:42)

Moreover, they are very different people. Nanapush, an elderly person, is very respectful of his culture. While Pauline, who was born a Native American, is disrespectful to the same culture. Formerly they were family, now they are close enemies. Nanapush is victimizing her for her insolence. It may be justified. Nevertheless, the victimization of Pauline is most probably a contributing factor to her growing sadistic mentality, but it strengthens her. Being a victim harms an individual, but it also allows them to grow, to become more conscious. This consciousness helps an individual in cases that they may encounter later. This initially embarrassing victimization ends up helping Pauline in her ultimate survival. Also equally significant to the victimization of Pauline from inhumanity are the characters in the novel, the victimization from rejection.

This victimization was not just placed on Pauline, it affected the whole tribe. Native Americans today as well as yesterday are almost ignored. The government places them on reservations and forgets them, it borders on racism. An example of this type of victimization is given by Erdrich in these words when, "[t]his doctor was known to refuse Indians

to our face, but did not dare say no to a priest” (168). This quotation reinforces the above-mentioned idea of ignorance towards the Indians. This doctor did not want to treat Indians; he was victimizing them. Accordingly, since victimization is fundamentally about making someone the victim of a situation or event, and a victim is defined by Joel Salzberg, “as, [o]ne who is harmed by another” (1990:132). It is clearly seen that the Indians were in fact victimized according to Joel Salzberg. This harm includes physical and psychological pains. Both types of pains are experienced by the characters in the novel. The Native Americans fight against this victimization and become stronger as a result. They overcame their victimization and, in doing so, managed to survive. They lived longer than they would have if they had not survived, so it is clear that they were survivors.

In addition to the victimization the characters in *Tracks* go through, they also experience isolation. For Margie Tower, “isolation is essentially separation, being secluded” (1992:112). This may be the roughest thing the characters have to suffer. Survival through isolation could be seen as overcoming hindrances, because in order to survive, one must first surmount this impediment. They must not only survive, but also feel lonely. The characters experience this isolation from both society and family. In the novel, the characters are separated from their families in different ways.

One of the main protagonists of *Tracks* and one of the two narrators, Pauline lives in isolation away from her family. Not only has she chosen. It appears that throughout the book, the mixed-bloods have isolated themselves as a whole. Pauline goes a little further, she has left them. In a way, this separation is essential for her to survive. She needs to get away from the difficult situation in which she is actually living. For example, Erdrich states that, “Pauline’s isolation is shown when she is trying to find food she asks, [y]ou wouldn’t have a little scrap to eat [i] have no family [i] am alone and have no land [w]here else would I got but to the nuns” (142). Furthermore, this quote indicates that the fact that Pauline is a mixed-blood, she was isolated. And contrary to others around her, she was thoroughly christian. Because Pauline abandoned her family, Fleur and Eli, the only people who were really nice to her were deceived. This isolation from the family made things difficult for Pauline. She did not have the support family of her.

The value of the family is again highlighted here. After a short conversation, Pauline was finally forgiven. Although she had no loyalty

of her own, her family had loyalty to her. It is this loyalty that saves Pauline from ultimate isolation, and enables her to survive the famine, and therefore to live longer. For Louise Stookey, “a prominent writer agrees that loyalties play a large role in *Tracks*, without the loyalty to one another there is no way they would be able to survive” (1999:58). The isolation Pauline had suffered would presumably have been her death. Since she said she had nowhere else to go, she would probably have starved to death.

Nevertheless, thanks to the loyalty of her family, Pauline overcame her problems of isolation and survived. As well, the characters are actually isolated from society. In a representation of the positioning of the characters, Erdrich reports that Nanapush says, “[o]n the reservation, where we were forced close together, the clans dwindled [o]ur tribe unraveled like a coarse rope, frayed at either end as the old and new among us were taken” (2). As this quote shows, the Native Americans were put on their reservation and in the meantime the tribes are dying. Their tribe in particular is also reported to have lost members, many people died regardless of age. This is what their isolation has caused. On the reservation, they have no emergency services, no ambulances, and nothing like that in the interior of the country. This isolation is another brick in the wall, another thing this group would have to overcome.

The citation also indicates that they were forced to come together, that the family had to reunite, help each other to keep going. This is the way one sees survival, thanks to the strength of the family, they have been able to overcome the problems of dispossession, plagues and malnourishment. Joseph Bruchac agrees with this states that, “even through starvation and loss of land the Indian people were able to survive, this shows the immense strength of their culture and though many of them did die, they still lived on” (1987:75). In accordance with the aforementioned, the critic Peter G. Beidler obviously agrees that, “through all these dreadful events, the main characters were able to survive due to the strength of their culture.” (1999:98). Maybe that's the reason why Native Americans are so well known for their families and traditions. They are more closely related to each other than most other common family groups in America. They value their traditions and are better at it. Their legacy is what enables them to survive, the Native Americans have fought many difficult wars and are still standing. Consequently, thanks to their families, the Native Americans were

capable to overcome their social struggle of isolation, and by transcending isolation, they are an example of survival.

2. The paradox of violence and sexuality in the process of survival in *Tracks*

Both violence and sexuality play a key role in *Tracks*. Violence is an underlying issue in the whole novel and is repeated many times. Violence is a physical fight, a struggle that many people go through. Violence extends from benign hits to fist fights. In some respects, violence generally happens between people of different points of view, but it is similar points of view that provoke violence, the desire for something. In a world of racism and prejudice, it is difficult to survive. This is especially true for those who live in a minority such as the Native Americans in *Tracks*. When one is educated by a minority family, they often have to be taught different lessons. For example, a Native American family living on land where their possessions are repeatedly taken away from them, they must learn to struggle. When others try to dictate them their own human rights, they must stand up and take those rights back. Although the violence in *Tracks* is somehow very different. It is perhaps more violent. For example, survival of characters is shown in a fight with Morrissey in this narration of Erdrich, “[a]s for Clarence [Morissey], he had all he could do to wrestle me to the ground and knock me half unconscious then sighed, rose and smashed me” (112).

Moreover, violence is very openly present throughout the novel. Violence prevents most people from surviving, it's usually violence that leads people to their loss. It is in violence that one can see how strong someone is. Strength, both physical and mental, determines in many circumstances whether an individual will live or die. Through physical struggles like this one, one can grow and learn. They can evaluate themselves based on how they fought, and whether or not they were successful. In this example, the character is half unconscious, which is quite serious considering that the character was just fighting on the ground. This statement refers to Nanapush, one of the two narrators of the story, and in telling the story it is quite obvious that he survived the whole thing. Nanapush was a real survivor. Going through violence helped him test his strength, and he realized that he had the strength he needed. By using that strength, Nanapush was able to survive. The critics Allan Chavkin and Feyl Chavkin Nancy write that:

“Erdrich sets up the Morisseys as an example of those who have profited by buying allotments others have lost to taxes [t]hey were well-off people, mixed bloods who profited from acquiring allotments that many old Chippewa did not know how to keep.” (1993:157)

So, this is where the violence originated. This quotation talks about the resentment between the two groups due to the fact that the Morisseys and the Lazarres bought land from poor Indians. Bitterness and hostility develop from such events, as is clearly seen here. It has been found that such events have indeed occurred, and that according to Catherine M. Catt, “Louise Erdrich did not embellish upon the facts” (1991:71). This can be considered true since actions like these have been described in many other Native American fictions. Almost as important was the violence with the most ferocious character, Lazarre. Additionally, to the above-mentioned example, Lazarre also introduces violence in *Tracks*, and these comments by Erdrich indicate that clearly, “Lazarre raised his fist, swung it casually and tapped my face [t]hen he shook himself angrily and drew a razor from his jacket. Lazarre had sliced Margaret’s braids clean off and now he was shaving the rest of her scalp” (113-115).

That fight between Lazarre and Margaret almost killed her. But by having Nanapush at her side, she was able to stay brave and present herself as a powerful and intimidating character. This appearance was enough to make her and Nanapush live. Although violence has many negative effects, in some circumstances violence also reveals good aspects.

Things such as love, loyalty, and instinct. In this event, all of the above has been shown, Nanapush confesses her love for Margaret, and both show loyalty to each other and instinct under risky conditions. Survival to such incidents does not always have to come from a single individual, in some cases, it has been said that the family can help when a person is in a situation of need such as this one. Ruth Rosenberg agrees in writing that, “the only real way the characters in *Tracks* were able to survive was through the spirit of family” (1995:42). In short, the heritage of the Native Americans rests largely on the family. Their family, or tribe, has remained together for many years and has spanned many generations.

This intimate attachment, these loyalties to each other, helps each member to cope. Seeing that Margaret was right next to Nanapush and vice versa was a great motivating factor, because one cannot survive if one does not have something to live for. Without purpose there is no life. As a result, because of the family and the violence she was

experiencing, Nanapush and several other characters were on the verge of overcoming physical struggles and surviving. Thus, thanks to their mutual loyalty, the characters were able to surmount the violence. Through violence, the characters were able to become stronger, gain greater self-awareness and overcome other physical struggles. And by overcoming these physical struggles, for Louise Stookey, “the characters in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* were actually able to demonstrate the concept of survival” (1999:122).

In addition to violence, sexuality and maturation play extremely significant roles in *Tracks*. Sexuality is a person's sexual inclination. Yet, it is another physical struggle, one that has to be surmounted and actually overcome in order to survive. In *Tracks*, the sexuality is particularly linked to two characters, Eli and Sophie. The two were together under the gaze of Pauline. This is when Eli pulled Sophie's hips against her. Sophie shivered; her eyes turned to white. Erdrich confirms it through, “she screamed God's name and blood showed at her lip, then she laughed” (84). This quotation illustrates Sophie's sexuality. This event involved witchcraft. It is allegedly the doing of Pauline. One said that she has charmed the two of them into having love. Pauline used them as puppets for selfish reasons. It's also the conviction of a quality critic. For Ruth Rosenberg, “he believes that Pauline wanted Eli to herself” (1995: 50). This attempt is finally abandoned, as she lets both go from her witchcraft. This sexuality could have turned out to be the death of one or all of the characters implicated.

However, amazingly with Pauline's help, they managed to win this fight. They lived longer for it. It is interesting that Pauline chose to let them live because she is often bound to death and her decision contradicts this dominant subject. To go further, in the above example, Sophie and Eli were together, she was naked underneath, as always, when it was hot. This statement by Erdrich corroborates it, “she bent, then pressed her bare self to his chest, T[h]e pass his tongue over her lips. [t]hey fell onto each other” (83-84). This act was part of a bewitching, enchantment. “The” she referred to is Sophie, and by doing this Eli is being unfaithful to his girl, Fleur. Although Fleur and Eli have already cultivated a relationship, and Fleur is discovering it, Eli is still able to survive this terrible turn of events. This fight is physical, one does not win, but does not lose in the end either. He ends up with Fleur, who shows their true love for each other. By overcoming this sexuality and conquering this

single physical struggle, the characters expose the idea of survival. In addition, according to the critics Allan Chavkin and Feyl Chavkin Nancy:

“The secret of Erdrich’s success is the way she spins the straw of conventional women’s romance novels into the gold of literature. she is able to write about erotic matters convincingly from a male point of view. She does it, or they do it, [in] the scene in which Eli Kashpaw and the nymphet Sophie Morrissey are bewitched into having sex.” (1993:170)

Furthermore, this quote shows that Eli and Sophie were charmed into having sex. In addition, the sexuality of the above quote was written from a male point of view, which for Louise Erdrich, being a woman was not difficult. Well, Eli managed to survive and live with Fleur. Together, Fleur and Eli, along with Sophie, rise above this sexuality and overcome this physical struggle, demonstrating the act of survival.

3. Humor, a survival lever for Native

There is an old saying that laughter is the best medicine to cure man's ills. Although this treatment may seem unorthodox, its value as a remedy dates back to antiquity, when hypocrites, in their treatise on medicine, emphasized the importance of “a gay and cheerful mood on the part of the physician and patient fighting disease” according to Mikhail Bakhtin (1984:67). For him ancient physicians considered laughter to be the pinnacle of human privilege, “Of all living creatures only man is endowed with laughter” (1984:68). Humor has a fundamental effect on the manner in which human beings conduct their lives. In Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*, humor offers potent healing as the Chippewa tribe strives for physical, spiritual and cultural survival in the emerging twentieth century.

While the capacity to address life with humor is not exclusive to a given culture, it is an inherent characteristic of Native American life. For Kenneth Lincoln, “There is, and always has been, humor among Indians . . .” (1993:22). In respect to their background, this can be depicted as conservation humor, one which according to Lincoln, “transcends the void, questions fatalism, and outlasts suffering” (1993:45). By their ability to derive mutual strength from a shared source of humor Lincoln argues that: “Native Americans prove the way, “kinship interconnects comically . . . [in] a kind of personal tribalism

that begins with two people, configures around families, composes itself in extended kin and clan, and ends up defining a culture.” (1993:63) In *Tracks*, the capacity of Native American humour to deeply impinge on the human condition is epitomized by the characters of Nanapush and Fleur. In his role as “Nanabush”, a central figure in Chippewa storytelling, Nanapush exemplifies the strength of Native Americans humor in his own life, when he defies the gods and tricks death, as depicted by Erdrich here, “During the year of the sickness, when I was the last one left, I saved myself by starting a story I got well by talking. Death could not get a word in edgewise, grew discouraged, and traveled on.” (46). The image of the trickster is typified as a multi-faceted man, with a duplicitous nature - good and bad - and often viewed as a sweetheart. He is a survivor, physically and psychologically. As an abiding person, he transgresses the timeless and serves as an assertive person. Ridie Wilson Ghezzi argues that the trickster is also, “central to the tribe’s worldview” (1994:444), with a power that extends beyond himself, guiding his people to a vision of themselves and of possibilities they might not have seen otherwise. To perform his role as a trickster, Nanapush employs humor as a potent remedy not only for himself, but also for his clan.

Nanapush deliberately runs her own brand of humor - raucous jokes - on Margaret, leading her away from her vision of life as a confirmed widow towards the possibility of a loving relationship with him. He provokes her by bragging about his sexual exploits, to which she is not at all responsive. Erdrich states that Nanapush refers to Margaret as, “headlong, bossy, scared of nobody and full of vinegar”, while she calls him an “old man [with] two wrinkled berries and a twig” (47). When he replies, “A twig can grow,” Margaret retorts, “But only in the spring” (48). By the means of humor, each one comes to see the other with new opportunities. From their jokes is born a deeper and more meaningful relationship that binds them together through strength, camaraderie and love.

With more subtle and gentle humor, Nanapush leads Eli Kashpaw, who is like a son, to a successful romantic relationship with Fleur Pillager, a union that is both an unfettered celebration of life between two lovers and a source of hope for the people of their people. When Eli asks for advice on how to court Fleur, Nanapush conveys the comic wisdom of a man who has had three wives and Erdrich reports it through, “I told him what he wanted to know. He asked me the old-time way to make a

woman love him and I went into detail so he should make no disgraceful error" (45). He also gave him, "a few things from the French trunk my third wife left . . . to help him in the courting process" (45). Nanapush is delighted to hear nothing more from Eli after his return to Fleur, reading this "as a sign she [Fleur] liked the fan, the bead leggings, and maybe the rest of Eli, the part where he was on his own" (46).

A passionate and intense love affair grows between Eli and Fleur, bringing comfort to themselves and inspiration to their tribe during a harsh winter, when there was no nourishment and little expectation, and the tribesmen made holes in the Matchimanito Lake to fish. Erdrich testifies it, when she says, "They stood on the ice for hours, waiting, slapping themselves, with nothing to occupy them but their hunger and their children's hunger" (130). From the hut of Fleur halfway up the frozen lake, people could hear feeble voices, and Erdrich brings it through, "uncontained by the thick walls of the cabin. These cries were full of pleasure, strange and wonderful to hear, sweet as the taste of last summer's fruit. Bundled in strips of blanket, coats stuffed with leaves and straw" (130), they pulled the blindfolds away from their ears to hear the delightful sounds that, "carried so well through the hollow air, even laughing whispers." (130). The people listened, "until they heard the satisfaction of silence. Then they turned away and crept back with hope. Faintly warmed, they leaned down to gather in their icy line" (130). The commemoration of two lovers' lives, born from the humorous wisdom of Nanapush in her advice to Eli, was passed on to the tribe as spiritual food and a chance for hope.

Nanapush releases a ruthless humor on Pauline, the dramatic, self-tortured personality, torn between her Chippewa legacy and her determination to refuse it, in order to divert her from her path to self-defeating. Nanapush attempts to force Pauline to adopt a new vision of herself, one that will end her long-lasting practice of self-mortification through denial of her heritage and allow her to regain her place within the tribe. Margie Towers ascertains that, "[W]hen Pauline has limited herself to urinating only twice a day, Nanapush tells a ribald story, fills her with tea, and tricks her into using the outhouse before she is supposed to" (1992:104). Sadly, Nanapush's endeavor at survivalist humor, which according to Lincoln can steer, "a neurotic from the shoals of self-torment" (1993:166), fails with Pauline, who rather prefers a path that takes her away from the kinship of the clan and the humor that could cure and rescue her.

With Fleur, Erdrich embodies the power of Native American humor to ridicule fate and overcome sadness. When Fleur discovers that she has lost her land to a timber company, Lincoln (1993, 166) argues that she works out a scheme that will enable her to “[alchemize] her suffering toward ironic perception and comic possibility.” She will have the last sarcastic laugh. If her cherished trees must fall, she will not let them be destroyed by the hands of white men. During the months that signal the timber company's march of devastation through the forest to his hut, Fleur employs a stolen axe and saw to cut almost, but not completely, through the bases of the last stand of trees surrounding his cabin. When the lumberjacks finally arrive at her doorstep, she is prepared to receive them. Fleur has alchemed her sufferings into an act of defiance that will give her the strength she needs to overcome the sorrow of her loss.

A strong sense of discomfort and premonition leads Nanapush to the hut of Fleur. As he walks through the desecrated wreckage of the trees, he realizes that all that lingers is, a fact Erdrich brings through, “the square mile of towering oaks, a circle around Fleur’s cabin” (220). When he attains her hut, Fleur stands at the front door, rounded by carts and lumberjacks, “waiting for the signal, for the word, to take down the last of the trees” (220). Nanapush expects to see sadness and despair on Fleur's side, but, “[h]er face was warm with excitement and her look was chilling in its clear amusement. She said nothing, just glanced into the sky and let her eyes drop shut” (222), deriving a silent force from the ironic success of her secret. Nanapush realizes what Fleur has done when “along the edge of the last high woods, a low breeze moaned out of the stumps” (p.222) and he hears the rustling of the first tree that crashes down beyond his eyes. As more trees fall, they move closer and closer to where the lumberjacks are standing, Fleur has “bared her teeth in a wide smile that frightened even those who did not understand the smiles of Pillagers” (223). One last gust of wind knocks down the remaining trees, and they fall away from his hut, as portrayed by Erdrich, “in a circle, pinning beneath their branches the roaring men, the horses . . . Twigs formed webs of wood, canopies laced over groans and struggles. Then the wind settled, curled back into the clouds, moved on” (223). In the calm shock of aftermath, Nanapush and Fleur, “were left standing together in a landscape level to the lake and to the road” (223). Although Nanapush exhorts Fleur to stay in the tribe, she declines her offer. “[W]ith her face alight,” she clings to a small cart that contains no goods, “only weed-wrapped stones from the lake-bottom, bundles of

roots, a coil of rags, and the umbrella that had shaded her [dead] baby,” and sets out alone (224). No force is strong enough to conciliate the profanation of her land, but through her act of ironic challenge, Fleur has gathered the energy she will need to survive.

In *Tracks*, by Louise Erdrich, Native American humor defies fate, nurtures the human spirit and gives power and confidence for survival. In accordance with this view, Lincoln claims that, “The powers to heal and to hurt, to bond and to exorcise, to renew and to purge remain the contrary powers of Indian humor” (1993:5). For the Chippewas, this humor is a powerful remedy for the physical, cultural and spiritual conservation of their tribe.

Conclusion

In summation, by the means of social, physical and emotional struggles, the concept of survival is exemplified in *Tracks* by Louise Erdrich. Thanks to the physical, emotional and psychological upliftment of the characters, they were enabled to mature and live on. They were capable of living through victimization, isolation, violence, sexuality, rebellious behaviours and psychological sufferings. Their growing and maturing demonstrated a capacity for adaptation and transformation, which is necessary for living. Even under difficult conditions, they managed to accomplish this exploit.

Consequently, a lesson drawn from this novel could be that anyone with a high will to live can overcome any impediment that stands in their path. Survival, at the end is exactly what it is, surviving, living longer than we thought. If a person with a mental disorder can do it like anyone else can. And if one lives in the environment in which the characters in *Tracks* had to live, survival is a feasible option for anyone. Do not give up, keep going and live. This ideal of survival was not one that lasted only a short period of time, it can still be seen today. Every day the media reports about an incredible rescue, an amazing recovery or something like that. All of these people can really call themselves the strong because they are survivors and have managed to survive.

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