

COMPARE THE WAYS IN WHICH CHARACTERS IN TRACKS AND CHARLIE'S COUNTRY UNDERTAKE JOURNEYS OF SELF-DISCOVERY.

The idea of self-discovery is an element that is inextricably linked with journeying in Robyn Davidson's novel Tracks and Rolf De Heer's film, Charlie's Country. In both texts, the cumulative hardships that characters face along their journey is explored with emphasis. While both the protagonists Robyn and Charlie are subjected to threatening challenges, both are able to ultimately discover strong qualities in themselves and recognise the true extent of their capabilities. However, what they experience in their journeys to self-discovery differs.

Both the protagonists are able to discover courageous characteristics in themselves along their journey from enduring great adversity. Davidson and de Heer accentuate the impact of dealing with hardships along the way in order to discover one's self. While both Robyn and Charlie are faced with a discriminative society each of their own, Robyn, as a "free-woman" chooses to explore Aboriginal culture by journeying to the desert. On the other end of the spectrum, Charlie decides to "live in the old ways" and leaves white man society behind in which he is dissatisfied with and goes "bush". Many scenes in the film feature long still shots of nature, reinforcing the symbolism of peace and comfort. In this way, both protagonist seek to immerse themselves into Aboriginal culture. While Robyn's main issue was training her camels and starting her journey, Charlie's was coming to terms with living in white man society after all his attempts to return to the "mother-country". The hardships protagonists had to deal with ultimately led both of them to show resilience and persistence. Robyn herself, recognised that she had a 'fiery' attitude and Charlie remained bold even whilst being questioned by the jury, stating that it is "his house" and "his country" with a lingering shot of his face showing determination and belief in himself.

Through experiencing hardships along their journey, the protagonists are able to discover the true extent of their capabilities. As a woman in a patriarchal society, Robyn experiences demeaning attitudes from men, such as those who would stare at her, "eyes fixed at chest level" as well as words of discouragement about her undertaking an independent journey. Nonetheless, Robyn demonstrates her strong mental ability to continue preparing for her journey despite all these. Further, she persists during difficult times, such as taking care of her large camels, highlighting her physical strength, this contradicts patriarchal generalisation of women's inferiority. Similarly, Charlie discovers his ability to persist by multiple attempts to "live in the old ways" such as joining the long grassers who also experience dissatisfaction with white man society. As well as that, he spears for barramundi and cooks it in nature rather than returning to society and eating white man food which may have been faster and easier. Although Charlie is imprisoned, he still questions the officer stating that the land is his and stays true to his values. From all their hardships, both characters are able to discover the true extent of their mental and physical capabilities.

The ability for characters to adapt to their current situations is highlighted in both texts. While Robyn is forced to face unforeseen random challenges such as her camels disappearing or getting injured, Charlie ultimately rebels against white society out of sheer anger, hence inflicting negative consequences on himself. This is exemplified through Charlie getting angry and attempting to punch a police officer which causes him to go to jail. Both characters are able to adjust to their situations. However, Robyn demonstrates this ability all throughout her journey due to all the random challenges thrown at her while Charlie only chooses to adapt to white culture because he has come to realise that is better to do so. From this Charlie decides to live in white man society while still remaining true to his values. On the other hand, Robyn has had to adapt or improvise to every hardship she faced along her journey. These include dealing with Kurt's abusiveness as well as her dog's death in order to reach her ultimate goal to learn more about Aboriginal culture.

While both protagonists face many challenges, they are both ultimately able to discover qualities in themselves such as persistence and bravery as well as the extent of their mental and physical capabilities. Davidson accentuates in her memoir, that along her journey she was able to recognise these qualities in herself, not knowing she had these in her. However in the end, both Davidson and de Heer emphasise that the protagonists are able to uncover their ability to adapt to less-than-ideal situations. The main difference, is that Robyn's main hardships were continuing her journey due to the random malice of fate, while Charlie's was finally coming to terms with white man society after failing to "live in the old ways".