

ENGLISH – TRACKS & CHARLIE’S COUNTRY PRACTICE ESSAY

Compare how the natural environment is both alluring and threatening in *Tracks* and *Charlie’s Country*.

The film, *Charlie’s Country*, and Robyn Davidson’s memoir, *Tracks*, portrays nature as an alluring and threatening environment, through the struggles of the protagonists. Similarly, both texts explore the landscape’s natural dangers but also the prominent beauty that significantly provides personal growth for the protagonists. *Tracks* features Robyn admiring the vastness of the desert, which she reflects upon her self-perception. On the other hand, Charlie’s Indigenous background is heavily emphasised to belong in nature and therefore, highlighting the cultural significance it holds. However, the solitude and risks of the landscape in both texts, are suggested heavily to be threatening to both protagonists. Thus, *Charlie’s Country* and *Tracks* signify how the natural environment can be both alluring and threatening to a significant degree.

Tracks emphasises how solitude and natural beauty of the desert contribute to Robyn’s developing identity, yet also bring about danger. Robyn progressively becomes more instinctual and independent, contradicting the “weaker sex” disposition forced upon her by her surrounding society. This is highlighted by how the “stars all made sense to [her] now that [she] lived under them,” and her newfound self-reliance to “follow [her] instincts.” This exemplifies her positively improved self-perception due to inorganic resources, such as clocks and radios, becoming superfluous in the desert. Instead, Robyn interpreted the emptiness and vastness of the desert to reflect her freedom and identity, as “the self in the desert becomes more and more like the desert.” Contrastingly, the longevity of Robyn’s solitude in the desert caused her to be “emotionally isolated” and socially distant with society. Therefore, the natural environment had also resulted in Robyn becoming emotionally distraught, in which is evident of her culture shock symptoms when she returned to urban society. Furthermore, Robyn’s encounter with the wild camel bulls also posed a physical threat to her. However, these struggles may have also contributed to Robyn’s independent and compelling identity. Thus, Robyn has undertaken personal growth as a result of the alluring and threatening aspects of the desert, as portrayed in *Tracks*. This is in distinction to *Charlie’s Country*, where the natural environment is the origin of Charlie’s identity but also a source of crisis. Charlie’s close link with his culture is derived from the struggles of his ancestors in the bush before colonisation. This is demonstrated by Charlie’s powerful desire to