

COMPARE HOW BOTH TEXTS EXPLORE THE IDEA OF FREEDOM.

The concept of freedom is a central aspect to Robyn Davidson's memoir 'Tracks' (1980) and Deheer's film 'Charlie's Country' (2013). Both texts examine a differing perspective on the interpretation of freedom within Robyn and Charlie's journeys and character arcs, where Robyn's liberty parallels with breaking down gender stereotypes for females within 1970s Australia, and Charlie's is restricted due to his identity as an Indigenous Australian. Both characters seek this liberation through isolation, but perceive it differently, Robyn, through a lens of white privilege, already has a sense of freedom of choice to undertake her journey, whereas Charlie's fight for freedom often is unattainable due to his circumstances and identity.

Both Davidson and Charlie search for freedom and liberation throughout their journeys from certain discrimination, fulfilling psychological freedom through physical isolations in remote settings. For Robyn, she is continuously seeking to flee from adhering to gender roles and stereotypes faced by white Australian women, for her, "it was such a relief to be free of disguises and prettiness and attractiveness". Davidson's understanding of freedom is "to be alone, to test, to push, to unclog [her] brain of all its extraneous debris" She satisfies this desire the most during her trip within the Australian outback, where she is "stripped of all social crutches" and can live without any expectations or responsibilities. In a similar sense, Charlie also searches for freedom from his marginalised community of Aboriginal Australians adhering to incompetent policies of white police officers in Ramingining, "I'm free now...and this is my country." He continues to struggle to find a house, practice traditional hunting for food, and is ultimately incarcerated when he is caught drinking with the long-grassers in Darwin and smashes a police car. Charlie also attains most of his freedom through spending time in the 'bush', where he feels most connected and in one with his "mother country". Both texts contend the idea that individuals who are marginalised due to either race or gender are constantly seeking freedom from that discrimination, and to live their life unoppressed and will go to extreme rationales to achieve that liberty.

Moreover, freedom is perceived as a different concept to Charlie and Robyn, where Robyn's quest is more for individual reasons whereas Charlie's is impactful to his whole Ramingining Aboriginal community. In 'Tracks', Davidson's freedom revolves around self-discovery through testing her limits, being independent and taking risks by travelling alone through the Australian outback, "To be free one needs constant and unrelenting vigilance over one's weaknesses." Her quest for freedom is only consequential to herself as an individual, although it may be seen as empowering for other young women at the time of her journey and publication through National Geographic, ultimately, she is the only person who gains liberation through her actions. To Robyn, her freedom is infringed upon when she partakes in sexual relations with Rick, the photographer on her journey. Her conformity to social standards is "one of the worst mistakes that [she] made towards [her] freedom.", an infringement she was able to control but was unsuccessful throughout her journey, impacting on her perception of her freedom. On the other hand, Charlie's lack of freedom is to a much more extreme, it is a necessity for his survival in his community. His entitlement to hunt, eat traditional food, dance, drink and smoke are all restricted to conform to White Australia's policies in the Northern Territory, "I'm not a recreational shooter. I'm a hunter." where unlike Robyn, he has no power over his social freedom and in contrast to her quest of self-discovery, his emancipation is a wide-spread action that will impact all of Ramingining. Both Davidson and Charlie's search for freedom poses the question of the difference between liberation from social standards and unjust legal policies that do not adhere to different cultures and traditions, and the extent to which they can be challenged by individuals.

Furthermore, through Davidson and Charlie's journeys, although similar in certain aspects, do not coincide with the levels of freedom that each individual begins with, or gains due to white privilege and Indigenous incarceration cycles. For Robyn, unbeknownst to her, her white privilege allows her a plethora of freedom that is substantial in contrast to Charlie. She has the freedom to travel around in the outback on her own terms, nevertheless as an isolated young female in the 1970s, she has the freedom to work, to make choices and indulge in practices of self-discovery without limitations as severe as Charlie's incarceration. This is visible through her images captured by Rick, where she is pictured behind a landscape of desert and ocean, strongly connoting physical freedom of travel and discovery. In saying this, her freedom is limited when considering patriarchal treatment from Kurt, 'a wizard with camels' who is a 'maniac' and creates difficult circumstances for her in Alice, however this is much less severe in contrast to Charlie's circumstances. As mentioned previously, his traditional way of life is strongly prohibited, perhaps he is at most marginalised through his incarceration, where he is stripped from his rights, land and even his unique hair, entering a monotonous cycle of institutionalisation, it becomes "hard to talk to [him] when [he] doesn't look like [himself]." This is visible through multiple medium shots of him with dim lighting, behind bars and cyclone fences, connoting his physical confinement. This juxtaposition of liberty poses the notion that Robyn's freedom is relied upon by cultural beliefs of women during the western culture of 1970s, which has ultimately progressed to allow more women freedom of movement, speech and voting rights, whereas Charlie's freedom remains unchanged 30 years later, as his is a bureaucratic issue that impacts a nation as a whole. (I want to say something more here about this but I don't know what to say).

Overall, the aspect of freedom plays a major role in the journeys undertaken by Charlie in Deheer's 'Charlie's Country' and Robyn in her memoir 'Tracks'. Both texts discuss the meaning of freedom to the individuals, where Robyn perceives it as a quest for self-discovery and abolishment of gender roles conformity, Charlie's freedom is survival of his Aboriginal traditions and ability to practice his culture and gain ownership rights to his own land. Although both texts see this theme differently, their journey of isolation and discrimination provide them with understanding of themselves and their communities and ultimately provide a sense of freedom by the conclusion of their journeys.