

Tracks: Classwork & Homework : Chapter 5 Questions

Some answers from Jake – Please, if you use my answers to help you, you will need to write them in a way that makes sense to you.

5.1 Do you consider the example of anthropomorphism at the bottom of page 79 ‘true’? Or is she projecting? *Me: projecting... either way, shows the extremely strong bond she forms with animals that she treats them like people (and family).*

5.2 Using page 80 as a guide, **compare** the attitudes Robyn and Charlie have to money, and what underlies their attitudes.

Robyn: ‘had always been poor’ ‘living on a shoe-string’ – so used to not having money but NOW that she needs it – she becomes very stressed

+ does not want to borrow! = PRIDE and wanting her journey to be self-sufficient – to not have to rely on others.

“I wanted to do the thing on my own” “an attempt at a pure gesture of independence”

*Charlie: uses it to help his community; ‘material possessions belong to the community!’; and yet doesn’t have \$60 for a licence... ; then, out of hospital, uses money for others – buying/shouting faith and long-grassers money until he runs out, and then seems nonplussed. His attitude is very short-term – use it to acquire his immediate needs or desires and to help others – no sense at all or saving **lie the happy affluent white people on the ATM screen.***

BONUS: Note her first impression of Rick as a “boy” and “amoral immature photo journalist who would hop from trouble spot to trouble spot without being affected by it “= very judgemental.

5.3 record the quote that suggests another motivation for Robyn’s journey (p.81 towards end of paragraph). **SORRY – GOT NO IDEA WHAT IW AS LOOKING FOR HERE... anyone?**

5.4 Record this quote “He [Rick] also talked me into writing to *National Geographic* for sponsorship.”

Discussion: *First: let’s get to the bottom of this one!*

Do you think it is fair that she puts this onto Rick (without the extra knowledge that she had already written to *NG* – remember, we need to stay within the text)? Why do you think she does make this point? Should she take responsibility herself?

Also – note the avoidance of blame, that she was “drunk”.

Does Robyn strike you as the type of person who is easily ‘talked into’ anything, especially by a man or ‘immature boy’.

Note: the placement of this comment about Rick and *National Geographic* and having to ask for money, a page after her talking about hating being in debt and not wanting to ask for money.

5.5 Record the quote on p.82 that begins “Before I went to Alice Springs...” until “sense of functional design” – as this is a good quote to use in terms of **character development** – it allows for three points of comparison: her life before, where she’s at now, and later we can reflect on how she has grown (useful to include these three notes after the quote).

5.6 Write a paragraph discussing Robyn’s character and what we learn about her from her first ‘trip’ with camels to Utopia – pp.84/85 – 87, consider the following: what challenges does she face? How does she deal with them? What might this trip foreshadow or suggest about her upcoming trek? How does she use hyperbole/exaggeration? Why do you think Jen & Toly didn’t seem to struggle nearly as much as Robyn does? *The trip goes wrong in nearly every way; she deals with them with help from her friends; this foreshadows that things ‘might’ go more wrong than they actually do! This challenges Robyn to some deep reflections* **KP: moments of stress in the text lead to deeper self-examination and reflection for Robyn**

EXTENSION 5.1 / THINKING QUESTIONS

- a) Do you think Robyn is a 'bourgeois individualist'? – (you will need to read pages 88-89 to answer this) -
- b) In what way is the "internal landscape" the realm of the female? What do you think is meant by this? And what is Robyn's answer? What does she feel men would benefit from?

5.7 on page 90 – Why was the trip "beginning to lose its simplicity"?

IMP because people were starting to assign their own projected motivations onto her journey

- *to commit suicide (i.e. it was a suicide mission)*
- *to do penance for her mother's death (that she in some way might blame herself)*
- *that she wanted publicity (not initially)*
- *and the reactions of others: jealous, inspired, begging to come, threatening (?), thought shw was joking...*

Thinking/Discussion question:

What is your opinion on Robyn's acceptance of the *National Geographic* money "I had no choice" – did she have a choice? Do you feel, given her strong convictions against taking the money (in hindsight) that she should have taken the money?

= TURNING POINT – NAT GEOG SPONSORSHIP IS THE POINT HER TRIP STOPPED BRING A PRIVATE GESTURE – BUT IT'S ALSO THAT POITN THAT SHAPED THE REST OF HER LIFE AND HOW SHE BECAME (the camel lady, a famous writer and adventurer)

Discussion: Do you believe her trip always was "a personal and private gesture"? (e.g. was it something bigger? At what point does it become 'something bigger'? Is she being genuine or disingenuous?)

5.8 Record the quote from p.91 "what I wanted to do..." until "interference whatsoever"

what does it show? **GOOD QUOTE: HER MOTIVATIONS (at the time)**

- *be alone*
 - *test herself*
 - *unclog her brain from extraneous debris (find her true self)*
 - *to decondition herself from reliance on "social crutches"*
- = ALL = INDEPENDENCE – *from society, from others, from her past, from her false selves...*

5.9 Briefly outline the two sides of Robyn that are present on page 92.

- 1) *the reckless, unprepared, potentially self-destructive side*
- 2) *Charming, persuasive – 'little-miss-has-it-all-together'*

Extension 5.2/Thinking & Discussion question:

Using quotes from the text, explain what we learn of Robyn on page 93 – how do we/you feel about her after reading this? (e.g. Should she have treated Rick as a machine and not a human being? Do we sympathise with her after these admissions? Do we appreciate her honesty (knowing it would probably alienate her from some of her readers))?

5.10 How does Robyn describe/characterise Rick on page 94? (use words/quotes from text).

Naïve, a practised loveliness (passive aggressive?), fragile, introverted sweetness.

Discussion: What do you think about the questions she asks herself on page 94? Do you agree/disagree with any of them?

is she bring too precious about her trip?

Is she a selfish child (hard for us to know?)

A bourgeois individualist (e.g. a pampered white-person with first-world problems - .wanting independence and to find herself)

5.11 Literary Technique: What is the effect of the simile "there to grow and fester like botulism" (p.94) on the reader? How effective is this quote, and what might it foreshadow?

Shows that she has not dealt with these questions/issues, and that they will re-surface in her isolation or at key moments in the text.

5.12 on 98 she gives one of the few memories of her family, and her mum – why does she do it at this point in the narrative? What do we learn? What does it add?

Theme: family (non surrogate)

*GUILT – that she and her sister and dad could have been more... [understanding/helpful/aware] of what mum was going through – **that in some way she blames herself** = GOOD EVIDENCE.*

IMPORTANT POINT – because of the danger of Robyn's trip – that she might not survive, it is forcing her **family** to be more honest with one another, to talk about things they would rather not – before it is too late (like it was for mum)...

She+Sis feel now like they need to protect "Pop" – whereas as teens they either blamed him, or just acted out because of the trauma of losing mum...

Her trek means a lot to her dad – but also family "she conjectures" that in some way her trek is a symbolic "walking away" of their trauma...

Extension 5.3- textual feature: record the quote/literary allusion from the poem *Hurrahing in Harvest* by Gerard Manly Hopkins "I walk, I lift up, ..."

Extension 5.4: **Good textual features and connection to Charlie's Country**

a) Discuss the use of Romantic language on page 101 – using some quotes, how does the description of her external, physical environment mirror her internal environment at this point?

b) How does she use a contrasting style (of writing) to 'break out' of this moment, and how does this relate to an exploration of artificial/human worlds?

Note: This can be compared to how de Heer consistently explores how Charlie's external physical environment affects his internal environment:

- His dissatisfaction is closely connected to the influence of colonial 'intervention' in his community – juxtaposition of shots of nature vs shots of the suburbanisation of his community – police-station, alcohol sign at start, fried-food;
- Being in the natural world 'out-bush' brings him peace and contentment; until...
- the rain while echoes his emotional turmoil at inability to live authentically as his ancestors did;
- The hospital – artificial/Western setting then leads to his strongest show of emotion;
- the 'long-grasser' life in Darwin (city – symbol of Western development) and the mise-en-scene to highlight this negative/destructive way of living;
- Back in his native environment the wide peaceful shots of nature and close-ups of insects, including Charlie's new campfire with the bush-background echo Charlie's 'more' contented state of mind (internal environment);

and others I've missed? How does Prison fit into this? Does it fit, or challenge this idea?

= *Charlie's internal environment is consistently influenced by his physical environment*

5.13 Comment on the ending to the chapter – do you believe she knew this at the time? Or is this insight endowed with the power of (two years) hindsight? = **narration** (as a textual feature)

"The last burning bridge back to my old self" = that's presumptuous – perhaps nothing would change

= **power of Davidson altering the narrative to include understanding of how it ended up changing her.**